

2 Peter 3:11-15

Hope in the Fight

What Kind of People Ought You to Be?



The Bible is factual, but it is not just a big book of facts. The Bible is loaded with information that we classify as theology. Theology is the compilation of important conclusions and insights regarding the available information the Bible teaches on vital spiritual subjects such as who the Bible says **God** is, what He is like, and what He wants. That would be the **Theology of God**. Within that there is the theology of the **Trinity of God** – God being three, yet one. Then, conversely, there is the **Theology of Man**. Where does the Bible say we come from, and why have human beings capable of great love, generally been so mean and terrible to each other, and even more importantly, why are we so hostile to God?! Which leads to the theology of sin. What is wrong with us? The answer – sin! So, the theology of man answers those question from the much-needed information the Creator has compiled in His book, the Bible. There are the **Theologies of Heaven and of Hell closely connected to the Theologies of Salvation or Judgment and Condemnation!** What has God done to save people back to Himself? And does He require something of us to be saved? What happens to those that reject God’s overtures of love? Then there is the **Theology of Ecclesiology**, or what the Bible teaches about **the church**, what it is, how it functions, what its purpose is, etc. Then there is the **Theology of the End Times or Last Days** – or **Eschatology**, theologians call it. This outlines God’s final plans for His rebellious Creation! Fascinating stuff! Who doesn’t want to know how the world will end?!



The apostle Peter has just been speaking to the theology of the Last Days when suddenly He asks – So, knowing this, ***“what kind of people should you be?!”***

You see, we are privileged to have all these answers to our most important questions - answers from the mind and heart of the Creator/God! Yet, although the apostles taught all these things as knowledge that Christians needed to have – the knowledge of God – the apostles also taught that the word of God was not a static bunch of theologies. Marvelous knowledge such as this requires a response, and not a half-hearted one! This knowledge given by God always came back to this same question – if you know this about God, about the origins of man, or Heaven and Hell, or of the cost of salvation to God, or of the cost of condemnation to man, or of how the world is slated to end,.. and a new one formed, why then, ***“what manner of people should we be?”***! The world is ending in terrible fire! ***What kind of person should you therefore be?!*** But if this great judgment day – the Day of the Lord – does not come to pass in our lifetime, consider your own judgment day! One day you will die, and in that moment when you draw your last breath, the patience of God has run out on you! Your earthly time has run its course – and you may be old or you may even be young and in your prime, because death is no respecter of persons – it comes when it comes, and then, for you comes the judgment or at least a form of it! Jesus either says *“I know you, my beloved servant”* or He says ***“I never knew you! Depart from me!”*** If you did not give yourself to Jesus during your time here on earth, then you have only the rejection and wrath of God to look forward to – and what we know about God is that His judgment and wrath is terrible! So knowing is important! But **DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT** is much more important! If we **know** about the wrath of God, ***what kind of person should we be?!*** What should we do about it? A proper response is critical, I would think!



*When I was a boy I feared my father's wrath! There were certain behaviors that crossed the line in his book, and if I engaged in those behaviors or indulged myself in certain attitudes that I made obvious, I was going to know his wrath! So I avoided doing the things that aroused his anger against me – because I feared his wrath! He was normally nice to me, and I certainly knew I was loved, but when I crossed the line, I triggered his anger. I either got a good scolding, or if it was bad enough, I got a spanking. It was a given. It was always a question of responding correctly to what I knew about how my dad would react! I knew where I had him because he was very consistent. Maybe that is how I knew God is consistent. Being consistent is the right thing and God **always** does what is wise and right. I saw how that worked, mostly, I think, because my father gave me a good snapshot of what **that** strong, steady, reliable approach to a father/son relationship! He showed me what it should look like! It affected all my important decisions. It made me consider my options, based upon what my father would think. To me, as a child, I have to say that I drew a strong correlation between what my father thought would be the right thing to do, and what **God** thought would be the right thing (or the wrong thing)! It takes me back to this quote from the apostle Peter. ***“Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be?!”*** And then he doesn't leave it there but answers his own question. ***“I'll tell you what kind of people you should be! You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed it's coming!”*** A personal course of action based upon what we know about God!



But there is this phase, “**and speed it’s coming** (referring to the terrible Day of the Lord). We are to be aware that our behavior perhaps can move up God’s timing to bring this messy, corrupt, pain-and-tragedy-filled world to a close, when the Creator/God will then create a **NEW** creation whose greatest feature is not the elimination of the oceans, and the absence of the sun, moon, and stars, but what will really be sensational will be the joining of heaven with earth – the melding of the realms! I mean WOW!



Okay, so how do we speed this up?! Well, we have already been told that in **[vs. 9]!** God is waiting for this final day because, in His patience, **He does not want anyone to perish!** There is your answer! So, based on that, how do we speed His coming? Well,.. we get serious about **doing our job!** We get serious about **fulfilling our calling!** We take seriously our **mandate/commission given by Jesus Christ to go out into all the world and preach the gospel** to everyone! AND, we begin with that part of the world where we live – our **family**, our **friends** who we know do not have a saving relationship with Jesus, our **neighbors**, our **co-workers**. Just start with the people you know! If every Christ-follower did that, really focusing on that, praying about it, planning for it, being alert for any and every opportunity, talking about it with our fellow Christ-followers, brainstorming on how to do it, training ourselves by jumping into it - even if it is by trial and error, it can’t even imagine the impact we would have on our respective lives and upon our respective communities! Lunch breaks, coffee shops, while giving assistance, barbeques, s’mores around the backyard campfire, whatever, whenever! And then discipling them, getting the new Christ-followers to first to read their Bible on their own, then attend a Bible study and learn and be supported by other Christ-followers, who are being taught and also encouraged to go out and do the same – to make **second generation** Christ-followers, who then make **third generation** Christ-followers! And on it goes! We bring people into the Kingdom of God – people that God does not want to see perish! We don’t want to see them perish either!

In **vs. 15b**, Peter reiterates the terrible aspects of the day of God's final and terrible judgment on this world. This world is getting it's just deserts before God signs off on it! We don't have to like it, but we have to trust God on this! God will do nothing wrong. He will do only what is right! The justice system in our country does many terrible things to a great many people! They take years off of people's lives – those who break the rules of society! They actually end the lives of the worst criminals by executing them, hoping this will deter others from the taking of someone else's life! It is a terrible thing the judges and juries have to do, but it is **a good thing** they do. We rely upon them as a society to do it! It is righteous! It puts evil in it's place. It keeps order! It is certainly not perfect, as we have seen many times, but as human beings we can only do the best we can do. Justice is vital! So don't judge God for doing His job as a judge! He is in charge of the world! He says the world is guilty, and who could ever successfully contest it! All of history condemns the world! So we leave that to the God we trust with it. He will explain it all when we see Him! **I Corinthians 13** says that ***"Now we see but a poor reflection, as in a mirror (they had terrible mirrors in those days) but then we will see face to face. Now I know in part – then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known."***



Our job is to look forward to the new heaven and earth and speed it's coming. So, we look forward to our new home – the home of righteousness!