

2 Peter 3:5-10
Hope in the Fight

All In Due Time!



Christians have had to wait for the promised return of Jesus Christ for 2000 years! That is approximately 70 -100 generations! That is a long time to wait! But back when this apostolic letter was written it was still just at the beginning of this 2000-years-and-still-period, and even then the apostles fully expected the Lord to return within their lifetimes! But by the time 2nd Peter was written, they were figuring out that they had been wrong. They didn't doubt for a minute that the risen Christ Jesus was returning, but it was dawning on them that it was not happening as soon as expected, and very possibly not within their lifetimes! It was beginning to register that when Jesus said that no one knows the day or the hour of His planned return but only God the Father, that their hopes and expectations did not matter in the great scheme of things! God had other plans! They also knew that if Jesus did not return soon, they would eventually be caught one by one and executed – which is what happened – according to church tradition. This did not deter them from continuing to preach the gospel and attending to the churches, and neither did it deter them from emphasizing this message that Jesus would surely return, and that when He returned, He would return as a wrathful God who would be bringing earth to its end, when God would start over!

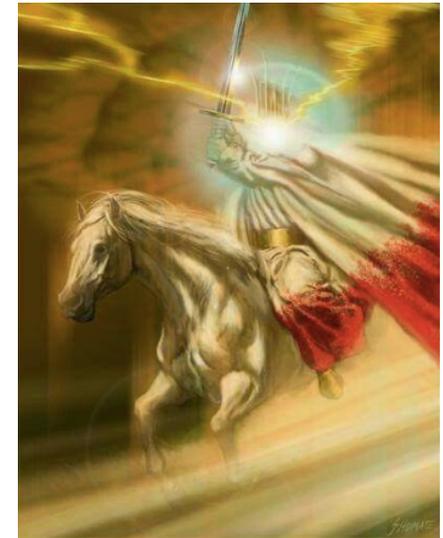


WAR OF REALMS

[19:11] And then the heavens parted wide – to-a white horse standing tall
And a rider seated on the horse – who is the Lord of all
He’s called the “Faithful and the True” – who judges and makes war
And all heaven waits to see – that He will right the score

[19:12] His eyes like orbs of blazing fire – with crowns upon His head
And-a tattooed name, a mystery – that is not known or read
He wears a robe that’s dipped in blood – He is the Word of God
He leads a stunning cavalry – a splendid sight that awes

[19:14] This white army follows their King – their tunics bright and clean
But it seems they don’t have much to do – for HE’s the war machine
For from His mouth darts a sharp sword – to strike the nations down
He’ll ruin them with His spoken word – and cow them with His frown



[19:15] He'll tread the winepress of the wrath – of Him who is Almighty
And rule them with a rod of iron – for He will not tread lightly!
On His thigh and on His robe – a noble Name is shared
“The King of Kings and Lord of Lords” – to-whom nothing can compare!



[19:17] And silhouetted in the sun, an angel calls the birds
“The great supper of God” he calls – *“is ready to be served!*
Come eat the carrion of men – from every walk of life
From kings to paupers they will die – for-they choose to stand and fight!”

[19:19] The Beast, and all the Kings of earth – gather for one great battle
They throw their armies on the sword – like so much worthless chattel
And so they die in monstrous heaps – and when it's all concluded
The Beast and his false prophet lie – in chains they've not eluded

[19:20] Into the burning sulfur of – the lake of fire they go
Their screams of rage and agony – echo above the glow
And back on earth the silence grows – for there are few survived
So God's wrathful meal is served – it's winged guests arrived!

~Jesus spoke of this terrible day of wrath in [**Matthew 24:21; 30,31**]

~Paul wrote of this same time from a Christian perspective in [**1 Thessalonians 4:15-18**] – a perspective of hope for the Christ-follower – He speaks of a taking out of the church – a whisking away of the followers of Jesus from here to there! Theologians refer to this as “***the RAPTURE of the church***”, equating its escape from the wrath of God, and emerging into the love of God and into His Presence with a state of great emotional bliss/rapture! Paul says that no Christ follower who dies before this great day will be left behind but will also be gathered – raised from the grave, or from the dust, to precede the living Christ-followers who will then also be gathered and taken by the angels to meet Jesus in the clouds, and from there, into the heavenly realms!



In **Vs 3:3** Peter points out that this apostle’s teaching on the return of Christ had caused many scoffers to pop out of the woodwork in the early church. Those that despised the apostles teachings were using this to discredit and undermine the apostle’s authority. They said “*Where is this return of Jesus?! There is no indication that anything unusual is happening or going to happen! Everything goes on as it always has! You guys are crazy! He’s not coming back!*” Of course, Peter and the other apostles only taught this because Jesus had **told** them that He was returning, and when He returned, that He was coming back as a conquering King to bring the wrath of God down upon a world that has been long overdue for it! Peter points back to the antediluvian times, when **in** His wrath against the humans who had so ruined and warped His beautiful creation, God destroyed the world with a massive flood - when the great waters suspended over the earth collapsed down upon the face of the earth and the oceans of water under the earth erupted, combining to smother all life except for one family and the animals God had caused to be saved on a great boat/ark they had built. Those people had responded to the preaching of Noah by saying exactly the same thing – “*Noah, you’re crazy. Nothing is going to happen! Everything is going on as it always has.*” Until suddenly, it wasn’t! Suddenly, catastrophe struck, as the Creator’s wrath submerged and smothered the earth!

But Peter says that wrath is coming again but this time it will be by way of fire! That doesn't sound good! But, he admits, no one knows when the end will happen. In fact, it could be in the very distant future! He says that we are dealing with a timeless God, because He has no limitations of time! When there is no limitations on time, time is never an issue! God could do it today or He could wait for a thousand years, or two thousand – which, interestingly enough, He obviously has!



"BUT," the mocker says, *"why would He wait?!"* And Peter has an answer! He is showing His patience! He is a God of judgment and wrath, yes, but first and foremost He is a God of love, mercy, and grace! I mean, what else could the cross of Jesus Christ mean?! He loved us in the most personally costly way that He could. God the Father gave His Son over to death, and the Word and Son of God gave Himself up to the mission that would intentionally cost Him His life as a man. By that given life, He has the right to purchase every soul that will repent, believe, and trust in Him! God is delaying because He most wants reconciliation! Peter is offering that even to his detractors! God doesn't want revenge! He wants reconciliation most of all!

But in the very next verse, Peter says that despite the fact that God is patient and does not want anyone to perish, there will come that day when His patience comes to an end, and this earth will literally melt from the heat of a universal meltdown. The universe will vaporize in a colossal explosion – apparently, everything except the earth, which will end up badly singed. Even the oceans will be boiled away! And the universe will be cleared of its stars and planets – the skies will be clear of the familiar lights of the planets, stars, and galaxies, and not even the sun will exist any longer! That claim begs the question, not just from the skeptics and mockers, but from every thinking person – how can life exist on this planet without the sun?

The apostle John gives us the answer in his Revelations - the Glorious Presence of God Himself will illuminate and warm the entire earth! I firmly believe that the temperature will not be too hot in some areas and too cold in others, but will be ideal everywhere on the planet! No mile-thick ice at the poles, no sun-baked equatorial regions. Just steady, even, ideal temperatures for human and other forms of life. Viruses and bacteria of only the friendly and productive kind! Can you imagine how generous the land could be under the nutritious 24-7 light and warmth that emanates from the very Author of Life Himself?! Whereas now it would kill us in its heavenly intensity and purity, **then** it will draw us, and envelope us in a protective and nurturing glory!



[Rev. 21:1-5; 23-27; 2:3-5] God will take the raw material that remains of the earth and drape it in a new garment of creation – of beautiful, lush, eye-popping-jaw-dropping life! Approximately 2/3rds of the earth’s surface is presently covered by ocean water – presently labeling us “**the blue planet**”. Imagine all that land surface presently underneath the water, and all its vast potential for being explored, farmed, mined – for being enjoyed and utilized in every conceivable way! Perhaps, (and I’m barely speculating here) since night is banished by Divine Glory, we will no longer possess the need to sleep 1/3rd of our time to recharge our brains and bodies! Imagine what we could do with a 24-7 flow of energy and health, and (think of it) without the curse of sin weighing us down and stealing our potential and inclining us toward the evils of **falsehood, excess, weakness, madness, dishonesty, laziness**, or any other kind of **selfish turpitude** (*turpitude* - any depraved or degenerate act or practice). All this with **no** Satan or his demons working behind the scenes to **tempt**, or **induce**, or **exploit** us! **WOW!** I mean **WOW!** Can we even really imagine the joy of living life under these new norms?! Today, it is human nature which so blights the human experience on this planet! Childhood starts out with wide-eyed wonder and hope, but by adulthood, all the promise of life has turned to mush! How disappointing! **But that is now, and not then!** **Then**, the love of God will be consummated, and the providence of His finished plans will bear good fruit in humanity – **sense, sanity, self-control, sincerity, sweetness**, and thus **hope**, will prevail!

The patience of God is epic - proven over and over and over again in salvation history! But when God's patience reaches the end of its tether, it is a terrible thing indeed! Right now, I'm not worried for people on that awful Day of the Lord! I'm worried for people that I presently know that are trying the patience of God **NOW** as they continue to resist the legitimate claims of Jesus upon their lives! When people breathe their last in this short earthly life, is when the patience of God God has run out for them! **That moment** is when they will face His all-consuming wrath – their Day of the Lord! That is when, being still outside of the atoning protection of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, they will experience the 2nd Death and the Lake of Fire, which the Bible describes as a place of catastrophic loss and suffering! I just don't get the risk that people are taking with their eternity, hoping that it is not true – that their death will just be the end of consciousness. But why take that risk?! The Creator says both life, or death, go on! If you are a skeptic, even a mocker, or just want to be in control of your own life, then, let's just suppose that the second death turns out to be real! Then you've made a horrible mistake! In fact, *"the mother of all miscalculations"* doesn't even begin to describe the tragedy of it! I urge you to delay no longer! Give Him what is owed Him – your **heart**, your **allegiance**, your **devotion**! Jesus calls to you from the vantage point of His cross – **"Come unto me!"** Please be afraid of the wrath of God – very afraid! But do not be afraid of the love of God! Just have a quiet conversation with God (He will hear you) and make your transition from God's wrath into His eternal love. Right now God is speaking to you and giving you one more chance. Let His love save you! Then we can look forward to the new heaven and a new earth together!

