**Where Is All This Heading?**

**The Word**

Read together 2 Peter 3:3-14

**The Big Idea**

History is heading towards a definitive event—the second coming of Jesus—where evil will be defeated and a new world of righteousness will emerge. We are called to live each day of our lives in view of that great event.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. Consider the scoffer’s argument in v. 3-4. Where do you yourself struggle with those same doubts, and what was helpful in Peter’s responses in v. 5-9?

2. The second coming is obviously a topic surrounded in some mystery. What questions or issues were raised in your mind from Sunday’s message?

3. In light of Christ’s return and the day of the Lord, what level of worldly treasures and pursuits is appropriate in this life? How do you know when you’ve crossed a line?

4. Consider Peter’s question in v. 11. As you consider the day of the Lord, is there anything specific you feel called to hold more loosely to now? Is there anything specific you feel called to pursue more wholeheartedly now?

**Sermon Outline**

I. History is heading somewhere

A. There are various perspectives on where history is heading (cyclical, random, linear)

 B. Christianity claims history has a telos: the second coming of Jesus

1. This is not a metaphor or a spiritual coming but a tangible, visible return

2. The Nicene Creed: Jesus will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

II. Peter addresses the delay in Christ’s return

 A. Scoffers will doubt his tangible return (v. 3-4)

 1. After so much time, his return seems increasingly unlikely

 2. The world feels solid and unmovable as it always has

 B. Peter’s response to the scoffers

1. God has destroyed the world before (v. 5-7)

a. The world exists “by God’s word”, and by his word he can make cataclysmic events take place

b. No one expected a cosmic flood, but God brought it about, so he can do it again

2. God doesn’t reckon time the same as we do (v. 8-9b)

An eternal being experiences time very differently, so what feels like a long delay to us may seem like a brief moment to him.

3. God has a beautiful motivation in this delay (v. 9)

He is patient and desires people to come to repentance/salvation

III. The Reality of Christ’s Return

 A. The day of the Lord (v. 10)

 1. The prophets often spoke of the coming day of the Lord

a. It was often spoken of in contexts of sin and evil (either outside of or within Israel)

b. It referred to a coming day when Yahweh would vindicate his holy name, bring about the destruction of his enemies, and gather his faithful people into a new, righteous kingdom”

c. See Malachi 4:1-2

2. In the New Testament Jesus becomes Yahweh’s instrument on this day (See 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10)

 3. Peter associates this day with a cosmic fire (v. 10 and 12)

a. Fire destroys and fire purifies (just like the water of the flood destroyed and purified)

b. The earth and the works done in it will be laid bare

- Imagine a Rainforest hiding a covert terrorist operation and then a fire scorching the forest and revealing/laying bear the evil within.

- See 1 Corinthians 4:5

- Everything not of the Lord will be burned, destroyed.

- Evil “Works”

- Evildoers who refuse to repent

 4. This is a sobering reality

 a. Especially offensive to westerners living in comfort and luxury

b. But for people who face real injustice and evil all the time, this idea of a good and powerful king defeating evil brings hope

c. Jesus “does all things well (Mk 7:37)” . . . including judgment. So we can entrust judgment into his faithful hands.

B. The new heavens and new earth (v. 13)

1. Isaiah first spoke of this (see Isaiah 65:17-25)

a. Notice how earthy and tangible the images are

b. Our final resting place is not in heaven but a new earth. We will not be spirits floating about, but humans with new bodies.

 2. Revelation 21-22 gives us our fullest picture of eternity

a. There are aspects of the garden of Eden (a river, the tree of live, no more curse

b. There are aspects of a redeemed city where human culture is thriving (streets, gates, nations coming in and out)

c. It is a picture of our original call: image bearers ruling and reigning with God

 3. Peter simply describes it as a place where righteousness dwells

IV. How should we live in light of this day? (v. 11)

 A. A fire is coming. How should we live in light of that coming fire?

1. What pursuits and treasures currently capture our affections that will be burned up in that fire?

2. There are many earthly things we can appropriately enjoy in this life with thanksgiving (see 1 Tim 4:4 and Col 3:17), but we need to hold it all very loosely and guard our hearts from overattachment.

 B. A new world is coming. How should we live in light of that coming world?

1. Whenever we pursue righteousness, we are laying up treasures in that coming world.

2. When we invest in/loving people for the sake of God’s kingdom, we are investing in that coming kingdom

C. A person is coming. How should we live in light of his coming?

1. Will the coming of Jesus feel like the coming of a distant stranger or our closest companion?

2. Pursue a pure and simple devotion to Christ.