

**Theme:** Faith in Exile – I Peter 1:17-19

**Title:** The Day of the Lord Will Come – II Peter 3:-13

**Aim:** Encouragement & exhortation concerning Christ's coming.

**Intro:** WAIT!!! Waiting may be the least favorite pastime of every man, woman or child in the world. No one likes to wait – whether it's waiting in line at the grocery store or for our food to come at a restaurant or waiting for Christmas to come or for a political campaign to be over. And we don't like to wait for promises to be fulfilled. This dislike for waiting is exacerbated by those who scoff at said promises, who deny the validity of such promises. It must have been very difficult for those exiles to whom Peter wrote to have people laugh at & ridicule them for their faith in Christ & their efforts to spread the gospel in the area of their exile. When false teachers sought to persuade them against their faith in Christ, they went to the heart of their hope, scoffing: "Where is the promise of Christ's coming? If all you believe is real, then why hasn't He returned as He said He would?" They not only scoffed at the promise of Christ's return, but at the teaching of creation, of the flood & the coming judgment. In essence, they were denying that anything the believers held as true, including the virgin birth, perfect life, substitutionary death & resurrection of Christ were real at all. As we said last week, such scoffing has continued throughout history up to our present day & shows no sign of ending, but only increasing. Theme: Faith in Exile. We who believe & follow Christ are indeed exiles in a world that is not our home. How do we live in such a world & not be overwhelmed? How do we live in such a world & do what God has called us to do, reaching others w/the gospel, making disciples for Christ? We must cling to the promises of God; we must cling to the God of promise. II Peter 3:8-13 [READ] I) **We must remember that God has a plan which won't be rushed.** God called Abraham to follow His lead & promised He would make him a father of nations. Abraham never saw

the “nations” his descendants became in Christ (Jew & Gentile alike), but it happened & is happening still. God promised His people the Promised Land, but they spent 400 years in slavery before God raised up Moses to bring them out of Egypt into that Promised Land. David looked forward to the coming Messiah, as did Isaiah & the other prophets. They were all gone before He came, but He came & died on the cross & rose again & ascended back to heaven, all according to the promise & plan of God. Jesus promised He would come again, & we wait. God’s plan takes time, but He isn’t in a hurry. Peter: “w/the Lord 1 day is as 1000 yrs, & 1000 yrs as 1 day.” As David Gudzik wrote, “W/God, what seems forever to us is but a short time.” God is not bound by time as we are. Peter took his thought from Psalm 90:4, written by Moses, who knew what it was to wait: ***“For 1000 years in Your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.”*** Adam Clarke wrote, “All time is as nothing before (God), because in the presence as in the nature of God, all is eternity; therefore, nothing is long, nothing short, before Him; no lapse of ages impairs His purposes.” Charles Spurgeon also wrote, “W/God there is neither past, present, nor future. He takes for His name, ‘I AM.’ He IS the I AM; I AM in the present; I AM in the past; & I AM in the future. Just as we say of God that He is everywhere, so we may say of Him that He is always; He is everywhere in space: He is everywhere in time.” The I AM will keep His promise – the Day of the Lord will come! II) **Any perceived delay is due to God’s patience toward the elect.** God is not slow or late. His timing is always correct. Peter wrote that God “is patient toward you” or “on your account” – “not wishing that any should perish but that all should reach repentance.” What does that mean? 1<sup>st</sup> of all, I think the word “wishing” is an unfortunate translation in this context. “Willing” is a better word, in my opinion. And to whom does “all” refer? To all who have ever lived? All in the last days? If that

were the case, then God's will is not done & His sovereignty is nullified, because not all throughout history have come to faith. I believe "all" refers to the elect. God is not willing that any of the elect should perish but rather that all the elect reach repentance, be saved. God gets what He wills. None of the elect will be lost. I'm so glad Jesus didn't come again in the winter of 1968, before I came to faith in Christ on March 10<sup>th</sup>. If you have not yet come to faith, now is the accepted time/day of salvation. We don't know about tomorrow. God is patient, but His patience will have an end, according to His purpose. And understand that repentance means a change of mind/heart, a turning around – from living for self to living for God, because you believe that Jesus is Savior & also Lord, to whom we must bow & surrender. The Day of the Lord will come, & God's timing will be perfect. III) **The Day of the Lord will come, like a thief.** What that means is very simply, it will happen when you don't expect it. A thief doesn't try to break into someone's house & steal their property when he knows they are home or awake – ready to defend the house. Rather, thieves break in when no one's home or awake, when they can do their dirty deed w/out being detected or caught. In the same way, Jesus is coming at a time when most of the world will be oblivious to it until it's too late. If someone sets a date when they predict Jesus will come, you can know it won't be then! On the other hand, know that Jesus could come at any time. It could be today! So, we ought to be ready. Jesus Himself said (Mt.24:44), "***Therefore, you must also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.***" IV) **The Day of the Lord will be a day of judgment.** The Church rightfully thinks about the Day of the Lord as a triumphant celebration – Christ coming to gather His own. But it is also a day of judgment when the world & all who are not in Christ, it: "the heavens will pass away w/a roar," a great noise. I can't even imagine how that will look or sound. "The heavenly bodies," which I

imagine means the planets, stars, meteors, etc., will be burned up & dissolved.” Astronomers have reported stars burning up/out occasionally but this seems to indicate all. “The earth & the works that are done on it will be exposed” – I think that means exposed to that some fire burning the heavenly bodies & thus also burned up. Think of the great works of man throughout history destroyed, great works of art, great triumphs of architecture & engineering, all destroyed by a fire so intense nothing can escape its devastation – all will be laid bare. In my finite thinking, it will happen like this: Christ will come, raise the dead, gather & take up the Church, all the redeemed (rapture), judge the world & destroy the world & the unredeemed. The Day of the Lord will come! V) **Since the Day of the Lord will come, how should we live until it comes?** Peter answers his own rhetorical question. We should be living lives of holiness & godliness. To be holy means to be set apart to God. Peter was urging his readers/us to remember who they were & to whom they belonged. God had set them & has set us apart for Himself, so they were/we are to live lives set apart to God, living w/Him in mind. In the midst of the scoffing, stand firm in Christ. It doesn't matter what others say or do. It matters that we in Christ belong to God. We are His children & we have dedicated our lives to Him. We're to live godly lives, Christ-like in our character & practice. Then, too, we are to be waiting for & hastening the coming of the Day of God. That word waiting means to be looking for in expectation – expectant hope. We should be mindful of God's promise of Christ's return &, in Paul's words, “love His appearing” (II Tim.4:8). Hastening doesn't mean that we can hurry up Christ's coming, which is set by God the Father in His time, according to His purpose. We can't make it happen any sooner. Rather, we are to desire earnestly. Our hearts should be burning w/desire for Christ to come. These ways of thinking/living will also mean that we will be about our Father's business, loving one another &

reaching out to others w/the gospel. VI) **When the Day of the Lord comes, all will be made new.** Yes, all will be destroyed in the fire of judgment, but then all things will be made new. God's promise is for "new heavens & a new earth in which righteousness dwells." God promised thru the prophet Isaiah (65:17): ***"For behold, I create new heavens & a new earth, & the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind."*** Some 25 or more years after Peter wrote this epistle, John was given this vision recorded in Rev.21:1-4 – ***"Then I saw a new heaven & a new earth, for the 1<sup>st</sup> heaven & the 1<sup>st</sup> earth had passed away, & the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is w/man. He will dwell w/them & they will be His people, & God Himself will be w/the as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, & death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."*** There, in that kingdom home, righteousness will dwell. Righteousness is that state of things that are as they ought to be. Those who are clothed w/the righteousness of Christ will be there, accepted by God because of Christ. God will have done away w/all evil, having given all their just due, & only purity & rightness will abide. As exiles in this world, we who are in Christ must cling to the promise of God; we must cling to the God of promise. The Day of the Lord will come! Until then, live by faith – faith in exile.