

(11) Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the Day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to His promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

(14) Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by Him without spot or blemish, and at peace. And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

(17) You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Think on these things:

- 1) V. 11 says because of what you just learned in verses 1-10 --- God has made predictive promises that some skeptics scoff at because they want to follow their own desires, deliberately ignoring His worldly interventions of the past to say Jesus won't be coming back --- what kind of people should we be as we wait on God, who patiently holds off His return to let more people repent?

We should be a holy people living godly lives as we await Jesus' return and 'hasten' the Day of the Lord. We 'hasten' the Day of the Lord by faithfully witnessing to others about saving faith and God's Word of truth. It is our part to play in spreading the Gospel until He returns.

- 2) Can you explain the two words that are the answers to question 1 above? Think of the first as an adjective about you; what does it describe? Think of the second as a verb of action; what are you doing?

The two terms are holiness and godliness. Holiness is defined primarily as "wholly dedicated to God and His worship." It means to be set apart for His purposes. Each class member is to consider the extent to which they are submitting themselves to God's work and ministry vs. pursuing their own ways in life. Godliness is God-likeness, that is, "How much of Jesus do people see in me?" A couple good standards are the Beatitudes (Matthew 5) and the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5). We are told that God intends for us to conform to the image of Jesus, God's Son (Romans 8:29).

- 3) When we live this way, how do WE impact the coming Day of God (v. 12)? Interesting idea...!

We 'hasten' the arrival of God's Day (i.e., the Day of Judgment, or Day of the Lord).

- 4) Sin reigns in our present world, the battleground between God and Satan for the souls of mankind. What reigns in the new heavens and new earth (v. 13)?

Righteousness will reign in God's new heaven and new earth. They will not be marred by sin.

- 5) V. 14 addresses our state of waiting for Jesus' return. There are three things we are told to focus on while we wait. Define what these three things are:

Be diligent to be found by Him – **We must be saved and working out our salvation (Philippians 2:12). Being in right relationship with Jesus should be the primary focus in our lives.**

Without spot or blemish – **We must have the righteousness of Jesus to be saved...not our own! (Also, Christians should not be living sinfully. We are to be 'dead' to sin and alive in Christ.)**

At peace – **Our lives should be free of worry, always trusting in Jesus (John 14:27). We should not be fighting with others to the extent that peace relies on us (Romans 12:18).**

- 6) What does the "patience of the Lord" lead to (v. 15)?

Eternal salvation of the soul for all who believe.

- 7) Peter now confirms and validates Paul's inclusion as an apostle of the Lord, even though he was never a disciple. God "inspired" Paul in his writings to the church, and they are to be considered "scripture." He also states that some things Paul talks about are "hard to understand." How do you deal with parts of the Bible you find hard to read and understand?

Personal answers. We can compare scripture with scripture to seek clarification. Often, we will bring up our questions to loved ones, pastors, teachers and scripturally-knowledgeable people. Others of us may search on the internet and/or consult Bible commentaries.

- 8) What do ignorant (lacking knowledge) and unstable (not fixed, wavering, unsteady) people do with the Bible (v. 16)?

They twist (manipulate) scriptures to mean what they want --- to their own destruction. They may ignore the 'whole' of scriptural teaching on a subject, and, conversely, narrowly interpret a single verse to form a philosophy or opinion. When they meet up with believers who don't share their interpretations, they argue with or avoid them. They then become unteachable....

- 9) What is the warning to Christians awaiting Jesus' return in v.17?

Don't get caught up with people found in Q8 above, those who twist scripture to their destruction. To be 'stable' Christians, we must know our Bibles (2 Timothy 3:16-17) and walk by the Spirit (Galatians 5:16) to avoid falling into biblical error. Look to Jesus, not others!

- 10) How to keep our "own stability" is actually laid out in v. 18. What do we need to do? See also Romans 13:11-14 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

We are to grow in God's forgiving grace, and also grow in our knowledge of Jesus. Romans says God's return is nearer now than when we first believed, and that we need to 'put on' the Lord Jesus and make no allowances for fleshly desires. 2 Timothy says that God's Word can train us to be competent (godly) Christians, plus equip us for all kinds of good works.

People and situations I want to pray for this week: