“How to Be a Big Picture Christian”

2 Peter 3:11-18

What is to be a believer’s response to God’s future, universal judgment?

The answer is succinct and simple

Live a holy and godly life

Too many people today are primarily concerned about sharing their opinions and predictions then they are about the nature of their own personal character qualities

The most important thing, at any given point in time, is what God thinks about me

What characterizes my thoughts, words, and actions according to God’s point of view?

“‘Holy conduct’ refers to the way a Christian should live life – separate from sin. ‘Godliness’ refers to the spirit of reverence which should permeate a Christian’s attitude – that which rules the heart.” (The MacArthur Study Bible, pl 1959)

What I truly believe about God’s future agenda will determine how I live now

Our belief in what’s yet to come informs our moral standards and thus the choices we make on a daily basis

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In fact, Peter writes how the more I anticipate God’s future plans, the more my life will currently please God

Furthermore, there’s a way in which God’s agenda will advance more swiftly when you and I live in expectation of its coming fulfillment

This necessitates, as we have been already emphasizing, living with an eternal perspective, not only a temporal one

Peter again circles back to this by referencing the certain, future destruction of God upon the earth and heavens

His purpose behind this is to reinforce these facts in our minds

We are to live with a conscious awareness of this at all times

But having this recognition is not all about doom and gloom

It is not a call to be fatalistic

Rather, we’re looking for a bright, glorious future in which total righteousness dwells

There will be the absolute exclusion of anything that is sinful, dysfunctional or causes brokenness in anyone’s life

This is where Christmas has tremendous significance

There’s no future new heavens and a new earth without Christ’s first coming into the world to be our Savior

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He was and is God’s one and only rescuer, redeemer, and restorer

Without His supernatural entrance, born as a baby in Bethlehem, the end result for this universe couldn’t have a positive conclusion

He made verse thirteen possible rather than the conclusion being just verses ten and twelve

This was God’s promise from the Old Testament Scriptures

Isaiah 65:17: “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.”

Isaiah 66:22: “‘For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me, says the Lord, ‘so shall your descendants and your name remain.’”

There is an incredibly magnificent future for the people of God

Salvation is more than the total forgiveness of our sins

It is also preservation and provision

We are given protection from God’s judgment and we are going to be the recipients of a new eternal home

Never forget Christmas is all encompassing in its significance, from eternity past to eternity future

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Without Christ’s birth, Revelation 21:1-5 would not be a future reality

Notice as well how these verses are an affirmation of what Peter writes in this chapter

Righteousness will be an ever present, unending reality since God’s presence will dwell with His people

James 1:12 refers to this as the crown of life

Recognize it is not an easy path from the cradle to the crown

In between there’s the unfathomable suffering of the cross and God’s imaginable, cataclysmic judgment of this universe

The big picture Christian continually keeps all of these things in view

Again, a true believer’s life will show this through contented, holy living

There’s the abiding peace of knowing God’s sovereign control will not change

We should therefore have a spotless character and a blameless reputation

We should also be thankful God’s patient delay of judgment will provide more opportunities to share the gospel

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Peter turns next to the apostle Paul’s writings to substantiate everything he has communicated in this letter

By this time Paul was no longer living but his letters were still widely circulating among the churches of that time

Peter highlights how some of Paul’s teachings were challenging to interpret and thus comprehend since they were very profound and intricate in their theological content

The reality was unknowledgeable and unbalanced people were taking and purposefully twisting what he wrote about future events, according to God’s plan

They were intentionally and brashly doing this to manipulate others for their own selfish purposes

What they were practicing Peter brought into the light

So Peter concludes by exhorting his readers, first with a sober warning, then with an imperative call to action

Is it evident I have been continuing to grow in gracious Christlikeness?

Can I say I’m increasing in my knowledge of Christ?

This Sunday serves as a great opportunity for us to recommit our lives to God in Christmas season

Let’s do this together as I pray