

Introduction:

- A. You’ve probably heard this old spiritual:

*My Lord, what a mornin’!
My Lord, what a mornin’!
O my Lord, what a mornin’!
When the stars begin to fall.
You’ll hear the trumpet sound
to wake the nations underground
Looking to my God’s right hand
When the stars begin to fall.*

I’ve seen that word ‘mornin’ spelled two ways; with a *u*—*mournin’*, making it a kind of dirge. And without the *u*, *mornin’*, an anthem of anticipation. “*My Lord, what a mornin’ with the stars begin to fall.*” How you sing it, I suppose, all depends on where you stand.

- B. That’s the very idea of our text this morning. Turn to **2 Pet. 3**. In chap. 1, Peter, who was nearing his death, reminded us that we have everything we need to live godly lives in Christ, and he emphasized the crucial importance of the Scriptures. In chap. 2 he took out after the false teachers who were undercutting both Scripture and the godly behavior of believers. In particular, they sabotaged Christian’s hope in Christ’s return and reign. Peter said, “*Blackest darkness is reserved for them.*” Now listen to **2 Pet 3:1-13**...
- C. So look back again at **v.1**. Why did Peter write this letter? “*To stimulate you to wholesome thinking.*” Put another way, “*I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder.*” ESV In other words, *I’m writing because I know you want to think well as believers; you want to be anchored in God’s truth.* To do that, he point us to what the

conventionally understood which he supposed was unobjectionable if no more likely than the coming of the Messiah.” [Moonglow, page unknown] Empty worship, no hope.

C. But the phonies are forgetting something—on purpose.

V.5... *“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.... God said, “Let there be light, and there was light.”* God’s **word** brought everything into being. I don’t know how *“the earth was formed out of water and by water.”* But it is clear that creation happened at God’s command. If God *didn’t* speak creation into being then these guys are right in assuming that God’s word, if there is such a thing, is impotent, and the only sensible thing to do is to follow your own desires, wherever they may lead you.

V.6, *“By these [waters and God’s word] the world of that time was deluged and destroyed.”* There was a great, universal flood but it wasn’t some kind of natural phenomenon. The divine Word that shaped water into the world commanded those waters loosed on the world, destroying everyone but Noah and his family.

V.7... The same divine Word that spoke creation into being and that loosed the waters to destroy the wicked world has declared that this *“present heavens and earth are reserved for fire”* on the day of judgment. The decree has already been made. It is a done deal. Now it’s just a matter of time. And the ungodly—including these false teachers doomed to deepest darkness—will be judged.

D. Christians whose thinking is healthy must understand what’s going on with the skeptics and scoffers. They *“deliberately forget”* the truth of Scripture; they’re “willful amnesiacs,” dismissing God’s word as inconsequential because they’re convinced God will never intervene.

opportunity to repent and be saved. Think how much farther God's grace has reached. Think how much richer heaven will be because the Lord is patient!

- D. This also underscores that we must be about the Father's business as emissaries of gospel grace in this world while it is still day. We're trying to practice a **1-degree rule**, endeavoring to be more proactive in our prayer/care/share approach to outreach. We're doing this because God is patiently waiting. There are people who will yet repent of their sins and turn to God. And it is our great privilege as individuals and as a church to be agents of that salvation.
- E. So good thinking means we realize that Jesus has not returned yet, not because God is slow in keeping his promise, but because he is patient, *"not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."*

That said, there is another thing we need to remember if we're to be clear-headed Christians. Listen again to vv.10-12...

III. KNOWING WHAT IS COMING, WE HAVE EVERY REASON TO LIVE HOLY AND GODLY LIVES (3:10-12)

- A. God's patience obviously reaches a long way but when his time is up, the end will come upon the world like a thief in the night. This is another Big Day—another Day of the Lord. Listen to how Jesus described it in **Matt 24:36-42**:
- ³⁶"But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.
- ³⁷As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; ³⁹and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood

Not only do our holy and godly lives give us a longing for “the day of God,” be they also “speed its coming.” That is a mysterious idea, but the plain sense of it is that holy and godly people accomplish God’s purposes in this world, which hasten the return of Christ. Jesus said in **Matt 24:14**, *“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”* We have a hand in that!

- D. Thinking Christians remember this promise and that the Lord’s “divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life.” We make it our business to add to our faith Christlike virtues, *“making every effort to confirm our calling and election.”* Godly people created a kind of gravitational pull to the gospel. The whole church preaches as a testimony to all nations. The approaching Day of God is our impetus. *It won’t be long! “Soon and very soon, we’re going to see the King!”*

Once more Peter reminds us to think in accordance with God’s Word: **v .13...** We are not “pie-in-the-sky-by-and-by” people.

We have a promise!

God said, through Isaiah, *“Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.”* Is. 65:17 **We have a promise!**

Jesus said, *“If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”*

We have a promise!

Jesus said, *“But in those days, following that distress, “the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’ At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And he will send his angels and gather his*

figment of sin, not a shred of evil. Everything will be *right*. Everything as it should be. And all the angels and saints will be without fault, or even the *thought* of a fault. Righteousness is the culture and character of the new heavens and earth, the love and language of the new creation. We, the redeemed, are clothed in bridal white which “*stands for the righteous acts of God’s holy people.*”

- D. John, exiled to a cave on the desolate island of Patmos, had a spectacular vision of what was to come. He wrote,
- Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” Rev. 21:1-4

Look forward to that! Think about that! Because we have a promise! *My Lord! What a morning!*