

Take-Home • Session Twelve

The Day of the Lord • 2 Peter 3:1-18

What We Found

The scoffers' question, where is the promise of his coming, met three answers: the world has already been interrupted (creation and flood), God's clock is not ours, and the delay is mercy aimed at repentance: the Lord is patient, not wishing that any should perish. The Day will come like a thief, and the fire we have tracked all study goes cosmic there: refining unto renewal, not annihilation, because the promise is new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Peter's last page called his public corrector our beloved brother Paul, ranked his letters as Scripture, and warned they can be twisted, which is why the Book lives in the Church that received it. His final written imperative: grow.

Voices of the Church

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St. Irenaeus of Lyons (d. c. 202), *Against Heresies*, Book V, Chapter 36

Against those who expected creation's abolition, St. Irenaeus teaches that neither the substance nor the essence of creation is annihilated, for he who established it is faithful and true; rather the fashion of this world passes away, and creation, renewed, will flourish in incorruption: new heavens and a new earth in which the righteous will dwell, as Isaiah and the apostles promised. Writing in the second century, St. Irenaeus stands as an early and influential witness to this reading: renewal, not destruction.

Voices of the Church

St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), *The City of God*, Book XX

Treating the last things at length, St. Augustine teaches that in the conflagration of the world the qualities of the corruptible elements that suited our corruptible bodies will utterly perish by burning, while the substance itself will receive the properties that befit immortal bodies: the world, made new and better, fitted to humanity made new and better. His careful distinction, qualities burned, substance transfigured, is 2 Peter 3:10-13 read with a doctor's precision.

Voices of the Church

St. Teresa of Ávila (1515-1582), the Bookmark Prayer

By tradition, found in her breviary after her death: let nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you; all things are passing; God never changes; patience obtains all things; whoever has God lacks nothing; God alone suffices. It is the spirituality of 2 Peter 3 in six lines: the passing world held lightly, the

unchanging God held fast, and patience, God's own virtue in 3:9, as the way to wait.

Live It This Week

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Going forward: (1) Memorize 2 Peter 3:13, and recite it at every funeral, diagnosis, and headline that tempts you to despair. (2) Keep the ladder card from Session Nine where you can see it; review your rung monthly. (3) Adopt one person from your 3:9 answer for daily prayer and one concrete act of witness this month. (4) Keep the lamp lit: choose your next Scripture study before this group disbands, tonight if possible. (5) Pray St. Teresa's bookmark in every waiting room of your life: all things are passing; God never changes; patience obtains all things.

Scripture Memory

"But according to his promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3:13, RSV2CE)

Before next session: The study is complete, but Peter's last imperative is not: grow. Choose your next step in Scripture this week, and keep the twelve memory verses alive; they are yours now.

Go deeper in the Catechism: CCC 673; 1037; 1042-1047; 2822