2 Peter 3:8-14 But do not forget one thing, dear friends; For the Lord, one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow to do what he promised, as some consider slowness. Instead, he is patient for your sakes, not wanting anyone to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. On that day the heavens will pass away with a roar, the elements will be dissolved as they burn with great heat, and the earth and what was done on it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be destroyed, what kind of people out you to be, living in holiness and godliness, as you look forward to and hasten the coming of the day of God? That day will cause the heavens to be set on fire and destroyed, and the elements to melt as they burn with great heat. But according to his promise we look forward to new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, dear friends, as you look forward to these things, make every effort to be found in peace, spotless and blameless in his sight. (Evangelical Heritage Version)

We are going to begin this sermon by speaking of something that clearly needs to be straightened out. There are some people who have proclaimed that because of what is said here we can understand the word “day” as found in Genesis to be a thousand years or more. So let’s make sure we have a grasp of that section before we speak of what else, the glorious what else is spoken of.

First, please note this text does not say “a thousand years is a day and a day is a thousand years.” It does not tell us that God has no concept of time or that God cannot accurately and precisely tell us what He did on the day of creation. For that matter, you need to understand that what is said here has absolutely no bearing whatsoever on the length of days found at creation (you know, basically 24 hours) or the length of days found today.

So what is this section speaking of? Peter wants to address the idea that some people think God is taking too long to get around to the Day of Judgment. Our problem is that we are not eternal as God is. Now, when we speak of eternal there are two ways to understand that word. First eternal can mean “endless time.” In other words, time just keeps flowing and flowing and never ends. That is what we as humans can understand because that is our experience in this world. The second meaning of eternal really pertains to God. It refers to the fact that God is “timeless.” That’s right, God exists outside of the realm of time. Don’t misunderstand. God created our time in this world. God set the boundaries of our time and its lengths because of the nature of our world. But God is above and beyond our time. This is important to grasp.

It is important to grasp because Peter here, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is telling us something about God. In God’s realm, in other words **“For the Lord”** one day or a thousand years is basically the same because He is beyond time. Remember this. When God created this world he created this world from beginning to end. Everything in every detail was accounted for. Every human to be born, every soul to be saved, every second that was or is to transpire is always before God. This is the reason that Jesus, crucified at one point in time, was able to die for all the sins of all the world for all of time, because God is above and beyond time. That’s why Scripture tells you that God knew you before you were born (Is. 49:1, Ga 1:15) or that God had already prepared in advance the good works you were to do and this even before the creation (Ep. 2:10, Mt. 25:31-39)!

So in a nutshell, we are being told to trust in God and not worry about how much time has passed or to not worry that God is being slow in getting done what He has promised. We need to trust God because when it comes to God he is far beyond our grasp and experience. When God knows that all things are accomplished as He planned them, then God will fulfill his promises. Remember Galatians 4? **“When the time had fully come, God sent his Son…”** Our later on you will hear from the book of Acts and it tells us that God has already set the time for the Day of Judgment. You keep your hope in God for God knows what he is doing and what time it is!!

And then comes that next section where we are being told about what will be at the great Day of the Lord, yes that Day of Judgment that God has told us will be. It will come like a thief. **“The heavens will pass away with a roar, the elements will be dissolved as they burn with great heat, and the earth and what was done on it will be burned up.”** Now for some this will be a day of horror! It will be that because on this day they will know for sure that Jesus is God and Lord and the Judge of all. But for you and me, believers in the Lord, this will be a great and glorious day. Our theme will be: **O GLORIOUS DAY!**

You should get the clue from my theme that I don't consider the Day of Judgment to be a horrible day at all. For that matter I do believe that even though the heavens and earth, as we know them, will cease to exist on that day, it will not be a terrifying thing but a thing of beauty and wonder. On that day we will be filled with utter joy. It is for this reason that I use the theme: **O Glorious Day!**

It is a glorious day because on that day our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will return. He will return because the Lord God has promised this as the final act of our eternal salvation. Acts 17:31 tells us, **"[God] has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed."** In Matthew we hear it put in these words, **"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him."** Such words and revelations don't surprise us.

They don't surprise us because when Jesus came the first time His very purpose was our eternal salvation. Jesus didn't come first to judge us, but rather to save us through His suffering, death and resurrection from the dead. This life of Jesus served as the complete act of atonement for you and me. Because of what Jesus did our eternal salvation is made absolute and certain. There is no doubt. There is nothing extra that needs to be done on our part. It is this way because Jesus won the victory for all of mankind. Never once does man play a part in the salvation of the world.

As Jesus came in humbleness the first time, in contrast He comes in all His awesome glory the second. Picture for yourself Jesus on the day of Transfiguration when His glory was briefly revealed and he shone with the brilliance of lightening. So glorious will be Jesus's second coming that all the world will immediately know that He is God and Lord. So glorious will be his coming that you and I as his children will know only joy and wonder at the sight. We are told that on that day, **“Every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.”**

A glorious day? You bet! All the more wonderful because all his children, all those who truly believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior will find themselves in the Kingdom God has prepared. We will find ourselves in the new heavens and the new earth where righteousness dwells.

What is this new heaven and earth? One of the places to understand this future kingdom of ours is in the book of Revelation. In Revelation 7:15ff we hear this description of the multitudes made pure through Jesus. **"They are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."**

How beautiful these words of the Lord. These words are but one of the descriptions of God's Kingdom where we will live with God forever. Another section that reveals what God has prepared for us is found in Revelation 21:1ff. It starts, **"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth..."** From there the picture is given us in such a way as to cause us to just ooh and ah. The city is described as shining with the glory of God and the brilliance of a very precious jewel (11). The walls are made of jasper and the city of pure gold (18). The foundations of the walls are decorated with every kind of precious stone (19). The twelve gates of the city are made of pearl, a single pearl for each gate (21). Such are some of the more basic descriptions given us of this place of wondrous glory that God has prepared for us.

All of these descriptions are a part of the wonderful promises that God has given through His Son Jesus Christ. It is this kingdom, this mansion that Jesus told us He was going away to prepare for us. This is the new heaven and earth we will become a part of on the great Day of Judgment when the Lord Jesus Christ returns again.

Perhaps the most wondrous portion of all of these mind boggling things is the second name our text calls this new heaven and earth. Our text says **"we look forward to new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells."** The implications of that little phrase shouldn't be overlooked.

First that phrase is a reminder of what we should know so well. Becoming a part of God’s kingdom is never a matter of what we are or how we act. Becoming a part of God's kingdom is the simple matter of hearing and believing the message of the forgiveness of sins as it is found in Jesus. Faith isn't a matter of living right or feeling right. Faith is a matter of knowing that God forgives your sins for Jesus sake. All else flows from there. In other words, for the second time in this sermon I give the reminder that works and human actions play no part in the salvation of mankind. Always in God's Word the term righteousness is used of God. Righteousness is either something God has as a part of his nature or righteousness is something God gives us as an act of his gracious love. God is always at the heart and core of righteousness.

The second thing our phrase speaks of is no doubt a reference to the very same thing St. John saw in his visions of heaven. In Revelation 21 again we hear this description, **"To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur."**

Again we read in verses 24ff. **"The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and the honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life."** It is the home of righteousness because it is where God is found and where God will openly be with us. We will live and dwell in the light of God’s righteousness and glory forever!

I encourage you then to be ready for the day when the Lord is coming. Don't be ready with fear or with the false hope of work righteousness. Be ready because you know Jesus is your Savior from sin. Be ready by keeping your faith alive and strong by hearing the Word and good use of the sacraments. Then you will know what I know of this day. It will be a glorious day. Amen.