

***Sabbath School Today***  
**With the 1888 Message Dynamic**

***“Feed My Sheep”: First and Second Peter***  
**Lesson 12. The Day of the Lord**

Peter warns that “in the last days scoffers will come” (2 Peter 3:3), motivated by sinful desires and teaching: the world always continues in a steady state, without God’s intervention, without catastrophes, without end. They ridicule, “Where is the promise of His coming?” (vs. 4). The scoffers prefer “walking after their own lusts” and are uncomfortable with moral and spiritual prodding in view of the day of the Lord. They teach that everything stays the same, but Peter teaches catastrophe: The world is “kept” for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly people (vs. 7). Just as the fallen angels were kept for judgment (2 Peter 2:4), the unrighteous are also kept for judgment (vs. 9), and darkness is kept for the false teachers (vs.17).

How do you prepare for the day of the Lord and the seeming delay of the end? We puny people are impatient because our life span is so short. But God operates on a vastly different timetable, a day with Him is like a thousand years (2 Peter 3:8). So the Lord is not late as some understand slowness.

Another reason for the delay is that God is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (vs. 9). You are one of those who have been “called.” It depends on how you respond to the call as to whether you are “chosen.” *Christ has chosen all who will choose Him.* Our “election” is not something mysterious that depends upon the whim or fancy of God. God is voting for us, and Satan is voting against us; and it thus depends on our *own* vote which way the election goes! Those who simply choose Christ will be enabled by His grace to be faithful to the end. God waited patiently in the days of Noah. But His patience is not forever, for the flood did come.

One more point: “The day of the Lord will come like a thief” (2 Peter 3:10). A thief comes unexpected. The day of the Lord is the second coming of Christ and all the catastrophic events associated with it.

The practical consequences of belief in the day of the Lord is, What kind of people ought you to be? The question is answered by Peter: “What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness” (vs. 11).

So Peter urges us, “Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God” (vs. 12). Can believers really hasten that day, in spite of how God experiences time?

Has Jesus’ coming been delayed? (1) Has the Father inexorably fixed the time of His coming so that His people can neither hasten nor delay it? Or, (2) can His people

hasten His return as 2 Peter 3:12 suggests, "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God ..."? The original can be understood as either (a) longing for its coming or (b) as hastening its coming. Those who believe the Father has fixed the date inexorably hold to (a). Those who believe we can delay His coming hold to (b).

Jesus makes clear that the Father alone *knows* the time of His second coming (Mark 13:32), but that does not mean that He has *fixed* the time as Calvinist predestination. He has "appointed" the time in the sense that it is contingent on the completion of the gospel commission: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and *then* shall the end come" (Matt. 24:14). The when is up to us.

The character of God is implicated in this question. If He has *fixed* the time, then He has deceived His people by repeated messages telling them that it is "near." Some argue that when He says "know ye that it is near, even at the doors," He means something different than all human language means by "near," but again that implies deception. If I tell a hungry person that lunch is "near" when I mean next week, I have deceived him.

What does *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 69, mean which says: "When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own"?

It must mean what it says. What it speaks of is not an impossibility. It's what Christ died to make possible and what He lives and ministers in the Most Holy Apartment of the heavenly sanctuary to accomplish. Objections logically deny the possibility for human beings to "overcome even as [Christ] overcame" (Rev. 3:21). In this last hour of the great controversy, we must not deny the plan of salvation and rob the Son of God of His power and glory to save people from sin.

Has Christ's return been "delayed"? Ellen White seems to recognize that there has been a delay: "God's unwillingness to have His people perish has been the reason for so long delay." [1] "The coming of the Lord is delayed." [2] "He [Jesus] delays His coming." [3] "For forty years did unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The same sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. ... It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord's professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years." [4]

But five years later, the Lord sent the initial showers from heaven of the latter rain and the "beginning" of the loud cry message that must lighten the earth with glory. Speaking of the unbelief manifested at and after 1888, she said: "If every soldier of Christ had done his duty, if every watchman on the walls of Zion had given the trumpet a certain sound, the world might ere this have heard the message of warning. But the work is years behind. What account will be rendered to God for thus retarding the work?" [5] "Retarding" sounds like "delay."

What is clear is that the second coming of Christ cannot take place until the “marriage of the Lamb is come.” And Revelation 19:1-9 makes clear that the only reason that “marriage” has not taken place is that His Bride “hath [not] made herself ready,” for when she does make herself “ready,” the heavenly Bridegroom will not tarry. Thus this question involves the character of Christ Himself. Does He love that Bride-to-be? Does He *want* to come?

—Paul E. Penno

**Endnotes:**

- [1] *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 192, 194.
- [2] *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 10, p. 268; Letter 84, 1886.
- [3] *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 10, p. 265; MS 5, 1876.
- [4] *Evangelism*, p. 696; MS 4, 1883.
- [5] *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, Feb. 28, 1893, p. 419.

**Notes:**

Pastor Paul Penno’s video of this lesson is on the Internet at:

<https://youtu.be/kAFU8KNPRSA>

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