

TIME'S UP!

Scripture Reading: Read 2 Peter 3

In just a few short days from now, as I write this devotional, part 1 of the long-awaited movie, *The Hobbit*, will be coming to theaters around the nation. The movie, directed by Peter Jackson, is based upon J.R.R. Tolkien's book by the same name. Because the book is a prequel to the *Lord of the Rings* novel by Tolkien, it contains some of the same characters, such as Gollum, Bilbo, Gandalf and Legolas, just to name a few. In one of the sections of the book, Gollum gives Bilbo a riddle to solve. See if you can guess the answer.

**This thing all things devours: birds, beasts, trees, flowers.
Gnaws iron, bites steel; grinds hard stones to meal.
Slays kings, ruins town; and beats high mountain down.**

The answer to the riddle is "time". We're all familiar with time. In fact, in our culture, we're often obsessed with it. It's why we have fast food, express lanes, and microwaves. We want things delivered quickly.

So, how do we handle the fact that Jesus has not yet returned to rapture his church? This was the question being raised in Peter's day when he wrote his epistle and it applies even more so today over 1,900 years later. It's a problem that skeptics through the ages have raised: *"Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."*

Peter's response is masterful and includes three points:

- 1) The skeptics are incorrect. Everything has not gone on as it has since the beginning. God's judgment was unleashed once before in the flood. It will be unleashed again in the future, in the fires of judgment.
- 2) God's timing and our timing don't always coincide. God created the space-time continuum and, therefore, is above time. One day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like a day to God, which means the time between Christ's first and second comings is less than two days (or over 720,000 days!) as far as God is concerned.
- 3) The seeming delay is because the Lord doesn't want anyone to perish but all to come to repentance. We are in a season of grace where salvation is possible for all who turn to the Lord.

There will come a time, however, when the delay will end and God will say, "Time's up!" Jesus will return and judgment will be poured out. Because of what's coming, Peter commands us to live a holy life as we look forward to the return of Christ.

Action Step & Prayer Focus: We're told in verse 12 that it's possible to speed up the Lord's return. Consider what this means in light of verse 9 & Matthew 24:14. Offer yourself as Christ's ambassador to share the good news of salvation with the world before time's up.

Take-a-way: *The clock IS ticking. Share your faith before time's up.*