



# THE EXHORTER

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***“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40***

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. ([prchurchofchrist.org](http://prchurchofchrist.org))

January 6, 2013

## JUMP START # 534

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**2 Peter 3:12** *"looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!"*

Peter is detailing the coming of the Lord in the context in which our passage today is found. He says that the coming of the Lord will be unexpected (like a thief in the night); it will change everything we know (the earth, the heavens and the elements will be burned up) but we will remain. This passage is not intended to scare but rather prepare people. Peter asks, "What sort of people ought you to be?" He answers his question by reminding the readers to be holy. Twice he states that there was an anticipation for these coming things.

There are many things we look forward to in life. Weddings are one such occasion. The end of school is something that many children look forward to. Workers look forward to retirement. Soon to be grandparents, as I found out recently that I will be, look forward to the birth of that grandchild.

Nothing is like what Peter described. It only happens once. If you're still around, you won't miss it. Jesus is not coming to start things, it is an end to things. He's not coming to establish a kingdom, that was done, He's coming to deliver the kingdom to His Father (1 Cor 15).

Peter says in these verses that everything will be destroyed, except the people. He uses the flood as an example. Then God destroyed everything with water, this time it will be by fire. The flood reshaped things and changed things. Have you ever noticed that in Genesis one when God made everything He gathered the water in one place and the dry land in one place? That's not the picture you get when you look at a globe. There are "seven seas" and many continents and islands all over the place. Some of the continents look like they could fit together like a puzzle piece. Very possibly, the opening of the earth to release the flood water, reshaped the continents. Have you noticed that before the flood people lived hundreds and hundreds of years, but after the flood they didn't? It was a different world after the flood.

Why would anyone be excited about our world burning up? Why would anyone anticipate the coming of the Lord? Why would this be something that people longed for? It seems that they would dread it and hope it never happened.

The answer lies in what is beyond this world. Peter has told the disciples that we are pilgrims and sojourners here. This is not our home land. This is not where we belong. That's hard to grasp, because this is the only place that we have been and the only place that we know. It sure seems that we belong here, but we don't. We can really like it here. We can become settled and satisfied here,

but we shouldn't. We shouldn't because this isn't Heaven. This world is on a schedule to end someday. This world has a harshness to it. The weather isn't always nice. Disease, disaster and bad news are a regular part of our world. Worse than that, death is a part of this world. We bury our loved ones. We bury our young people. We bury those that we are not ready to part with. That's this world. It's always been that way. Every family history has sad stories in it about death.

The coming of Jesus puts an end to all those things. The coming of Jesus defeats Satan's greatest tool, death. Before Jesus, death was the most feared enemy. Jesus died, but was resurrected. He was the "first fruit." Others would follow. All will follow. Death doesn't hold us any longer. Death ends when Jesus returns.

Peter is looking not so much to the blowing up of everything and the total destruction of everything as he is what lies beyond, Heaven. How beautiful Heaven will be. Peter's words remind us that we are getting out of this world with only ourselves-our character, what we have done, our relationship with the Lord. That's it. All the things we've collected and treasure-not going with us. Those family heirlooms that we pass on from generation to generation-not going with us. Which tells us that we often put more interests and more time into things that will not last rather than the things that will. If we dusted our character as much as we dusted our collectables, we'd be a better people. If we took inventory of our spiritual well being as much as we did our coins, baseball cards, autographs and so forth, we'd be a better people.

Peter is telling us to put out attention into the things that will last, our souls. We sing a song down at the church house that goes, "There's a great day coming, a great day coming..." There sure is. And all of this sure makes you think...just about everything you touch today will be destroyed sooner or later. It also makes you realize that as nice as our world can be, Heaven will out shine it. No one will be disappointed who is in Heaven. No one will think that it ought to be updated, improved or larger. No one. No one will say, "This reminds me of Disney." Nope. Nothing like it.

Until then, we must carry on. Catch your breath, pick up your bags and keep journeying. We're not done yet. There are things God needs you to do, even today. So onward we march, ever closer to that wonderful land.

Roger Shouse



