



4: Awaiting His Arrival (2 Peter 3)

Why is Jesus taking *so long* to return? How can we know He *is* going to return? Simon Peter assures us why we should be living like we are **awaiting His arrival**.

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VISUAL NOTES



today's teaching

2 Peter 3:1-2 (NIV)

Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to **stimulate you to wholesome thinking**. I want you to **recall the words spoken in the past** by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.

We have the great privilege of reading from Old Testament **prophets**. We also have the words of **our Lord and Savior** Jesus, as shared through His **apostles**, in the New Testament writings. What is written in the Scriptures will challenge us & change us *if* we read and heed what is in there.

❓ Is that TRUE of YOU? ***Are you reading the Scriptures regularly and then living what you read?***

Scoffers Will Come

2 Peter 3:3-4 (NIV)

Above all, you must understand that **in the last days scoffers will come**, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "**Where is this 'coming' he promised?** Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."

- Peter and the 1st century followers of Jesus were living in the **last days**, the period of time between the first and second coming of Jesus (not a distant time in the future). **Last days** is used by several New Testament writers to refer to what was happening in their lifetime (Acts 2:17, Heb 1:2, 2 Tim 3:1).

*"Dear children, **this is the last hour**; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour."* (1 John 2:18 NIV)

Peter is writing this to prepare his ancient audience for what *THEY* could expect soon, since they were living in "**the last days**."

The first-century followers of Jesus seemed to think Jesus would physically return within their lifetime, but He obviously had not returned when Peter wrote this letter. The false teachers and enemies of Christ scoffed and made fun of Christians for believing in Jesus' return. 2000 years later, Jesus still has not returned. Could it be that we have been duped, that Jesus is NOT returning? That's what the scoffers were saying.

Simon Peter's Response

2 Peter 3:5-7 (NIV)

But they deliberately forget that long ago **by God's word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water**. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. **By the same word** the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being **kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly**.

By God's word everything came into existence. Peter is referring the creation of everything out of nothing.

- **The heavens** consist of everything we see in the sky & beyond - every star, planet, moon, asteroid, & comet.
- And **the earth was formed out of water**. God caused the waters to gather, dry ground appeared & separated them (Gen 1:9).

🕒 But God also used water, the source of life, to bring death to the **ungodly** during Noah's day. God won't use a flood next time; He will use **fire** to bring **judgment and destruction of the ungodly**.

God Isn't Late for the Appointment

2 Peter 3:8-9 (NIV)

But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: **With the Lord a day is like a thousand years**, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. Instead He is patient with you, **not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance**.

This phrase about **a thousand years** is not original with Simon Peter; it is used in the Psalms quoting Moses, who compared the short lifespan of humans to the eternity of God's existence.

Psalm 90:2-4 (NIV) Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. You turn people back to dust, saying, "Return to dust, you mortals." **A thousand years in your sight are like a day** that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night.

Jesus isn't late for the appointment. He will show up in the fulness of time, just as was true with His first coming (Gal 4:4). He has made a promise, that Peter likely recalled in his mind. When He saw Jesus ascend into heaven, the angels said, "*This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.*" (Acts 1:11). **This promise will be fulfilled.**

Why hasn't it been fulfilled yet? Jesus is **patient** with people. Rather than immediately strike down His enemies, God has been **patient**. The Scriptures are full of this kind of language about God. He is *compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, kind, and abounding in love* (Ex. 34:6; Joel 2:13; Rom. 2:4).

He is **patient** because He is **not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance**.

✗ Some Calvinist commentators (e.g. John MacArthur) claim that the "you" God is being patient with, only applies to those who God "elects" to salvation.¹

✓ The "you" applies to Peter's audience as well as **everyone** else that God is being **patient** with - giving them time to hear and respond to the good news of Jesus, by **repentance** - turning from sin and turning to Jesus. People stop living for themselves and start living for Jesus.

Several passages offer God's mercy to **anyone** and **everyone to come to repentance**.

Ezekiel 18:23 (NIV) Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign Lord. Rather, **am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?**

1 Timothy 2:3-4 (NIV) This is good, and pleases **God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved** and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Acts 17:30-31 (NIV) In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now **He commands all people everywhere to repent**. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead."

¹ John F. MacArthur Jr., 2 Peter and Jude, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2005), 123.

Jesus Will Bring Judgment

2 Peter 3:10-12a (NIV)

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? **You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God** and speed its coming.

If we knew that was happening this week, we would all suddenly be able **to live holy and godly lives**. The temptation to sin wouldn't be nearly as strong & we would be quick to forgive others & tell them about Jesus. So, why aren't we doing that NOW? Simply, we aren't acting like we **look forward to the day of God**. But we should be! What impact might we have if we started living like Jesus is returning?

What's the part about **speed its coming**? Scholars mention a couple of options:

- 1) Jewish rabbis claimed the Messiah would come only when all the people of Israel repented and obeyed the law perfectly for one day.²
 - 2) Isaiah 60:22 and several other Jewish writings before Simon Peter's day note that God is that one who will speed its coming.³ So, believers should look forward to the day with anticipation & excitement rather than anxiousness and fear.
- ❓ Why should Christians **look forward** to that day? And why should those who refuse to follow Jesus of the Scriptures be concerned?

Encouraging Words for Followers of Jesus

1 Thessalonians 4:15-18 (NIV) According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For **the Lord himself will come down from heaven**, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and **the dead in Christ will rise first**. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. **Therefore encourage one another with these words**.

✓ These are SUPER ENCOURAGING WORDS for followers of Jesus!

✗ There is *NO TALK* of being taken to heaven for 7 years while hell breaks out on Earth.

- After followers of Jesus see and celebrate being in His Presence, there is immediate judgment for the enemies of Jesus.

Words of Warning to Scoffers

1 Thessalonians 5:1-3 (NIV) Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "Peace and safety," **destruction will come on them suddenly**, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and **they will not escape**.

The "scoffers" Peter mentioned earlier will shut their mouths and bow their knees when Jesus returns.

Destruction and Renovation

2 Peter 3:12b-13 (NIV) That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with **His promise** we are looking forward to a **new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells**.

The One who made all things will destroy **the heavens** (everything in and beyond our atmosphere) as well as all the **elements** with **fire**. The heavens above us and the Earth below us will be obliterated and renovated and no one alive on Earth will be spared.

But...what will follow is **God's promise** of no more sin, no more lying, no more sickness, disease, or death. There will be no more sinners; just those who have been forever transformed by our Savior! Oh what a day that will be! Until that day, we have WORK to do.

² Douglas J. Moo, 2 Peter, Jude, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 198.

³ Peter H. Davids, The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2006), 290-291.

Living With Purity & Passion

2 Peter 3:14 (NIV)

So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with Him.

False teachers were earlier called "spots and blemishes" (2 Pet 2:13), so Peter was challenging those who read this to **make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with Him**. We can't do that in our own power. Instead, we approach the **spotless, blameless** Lamb of God who places our sin on His back. He has made us **spotless, blameless, and at peace with God**.

People awaiting His arrival...live in purity.

❓ *Is that TRUE of YOU? **Are you livin' forgiven?*** OR...have you discounted the depravity of your sin - you act like your sin is NOT a big deal to God, like Jesus didn't die for your sin?

2 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him.

Once our family and friends know the Lord, we want Jesus to come back and we can become impatient with others. We must remember, trust, and take our opportunities to share Jesus while we can, because...**our Lord's patience means salvation** for those who don't currently know Jesus.

If YOU aren't a follower of Jesus, God is being patient with you. Stop taking that for granted.

People awaiting His arrival...appreciate God's patience.

❓ *Is that TRUE of you? **Do you recognize and demonstrate that God is patient with people*** because more people need the **salvation** Jesus offers?

2 Peter 3:16 (NIV)

He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable **people distort, as they do the other Scriptures**, to their own destruction.

Even though Peter struggled to understand some of what Paul wrote, Peter did not dismiss or **distort the Scriptures** nor submit to what they say we should obey.

❓ Are you bending the Bible to fit your beliefs...OR...are you bending your beliefs to fit what the Bible says?

People awaiting His arrival...trust the Scriptures.

❓ *Is that TRUE of YOU? **Are you trusting or twisting the Scriptures?*** Are you obeying all that is written OR practicing Bible buffet where you take what you like and leave what you don't like?

The Last Recorded Words of Simon Peter

2 Peter 3:17-18 (NIV)

Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, **be on your guard** so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position. But **grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**. To Him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

People awaiting His arrival...are guarded & growing.

❓ *Is that TRUE of YOU? Are you **guarding** your mind from what is false, & **growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus?*** Or...are you allowing what is false to keep you from growing in truth? How much time are you spending in the Scripture versus social media, TV, and movies? How much time are you spending with godly people who speak the truth versus those who don't?

✓ Our Faithful King empowers & expects us to be faithful **to Him**. Our lives should bring Him **glory both now and forever - amen!**

heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

* Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), or another follower of Jesus soon!

* Or call our **deacons & wives**: Alan & Christy Androski (850-464-1428), Freddy & Joyce Howard (850-973-0047), Tim & Joni Hughey (850-464-1156), Mark & Dot Mancil (850-253-5405), Boss & Amelia Mulkey (850-464-6717), Jim & Derita Pinkard (850-464-6188), or Tom & Martha Waddail (850-973-0011).

discussionquestions

Take some time to discuss these questions with your family, friends, or group.

1. What challenged or encouraged you most from today's teaching? Explain your answer.
2. Why do you think war between Ukraine & Russia as well as inflating prices in the U.S. cause so many to be afraid?
3. **Read Acts 2:17, Hebrews 1:2, 2 Timothy 3:1, and 1 John 2:18.** Have you ever thought about "the last days" as being something that we ARE in, because that has been the case since the time of Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and ascension? If not, why not?
4. **Read 2 Peter 3:3-7.** What was Peter's response and reminder to scoffers?
5. **Read 2 Peter 3:8-9.** According to Peter, why hasn't Jesus returned yet? **Read Exodus 34:6, Joel 2:13, Romans 2:4, Ezekiel 18:23, 1 Timothy 2:3-4, and Acts 17:30-31** and dive deep to discuss God's patience, kindness, compassion, and desire for all to be saved.
6. **Read 2 Peter 3:10-15 and 1 Thessalonians 4:15-5:3.** Discuss the difference between the FUTURE HOPE and expected earthly lifestyle for the follower of Jesus compared to the FUTURE HOPELESSNESS for those who refuse to follow Jesus while living on Earth.
7. **Read 2 Peter 3:16-18** and discuss 1) how some distort the Scriptures 2) how Christians can guard themselves from being "carried away" and instead grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus.
8. Share prayer needs. Continue to pray for the Supreme Court decision that could overturn Roe v. Wade. Pray for our governing leaders and spiritual leaders. Pray for Ukraine.