

Remember That Jesus Is Coming Back

2 Peter 3:1-18

What Does The Bible Say?

This is my second letter to you, dear friends, and in both of them I have tried to stimulate your wholesome thinking and refresh your memory. ² I want you to remember what the holy prophets said long ago and what our Lord and Savior commanded through your apostles.

³ Most importantly, I want to remind you that in the last days scoffers will come, mocking the truth and following their own desires. (2 Peter 3:1–3 NLT)

- **2:2: “Many will follow their evil teaching and shameful immorality.”**
- **2:3: “In their greed they will make up clever lies to get hold of your money.”**

- **2:10: “... who follow their own twisted sexual desire, and who despise authority.”**
- **2:14: “They commit adultery with their eyes, and their desire for sin is never satisfied..., and they are well trained in greed.”**
- **2:18: “With an appeal to twisted sexual desires.”**

4 They will say, “What happened to the promise that Jesus is coming again? From before the times of our ancestors, everything has remained the same since the world was first created.” (2 Peter 3:4 NLT)

People reject the doctrine of the Second Coming because they desire to live in a universe without moral accountability.

5 They deliberately forget that God made the heavens long ago by the word of his command, and he brought the earth out from the water and surrounded it with water. 6 Then he used the water to destroy the ancient world with a mighty flood. 7 And by the same word, the present heavens and earth have been stored up for fire. They are being kept for the day of judgment, when ungodly people will be destroyed. (2 Peter 3:5–7 NLT)

If God intervened cosmologically at creation and the flood, why wouldn't He do it again when Christ returns?

Remember, Peter knew firsthand Jesus' teachings.

8 But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. (2 Peter 3:8 NLT)

God is timeless.

9 The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. (2 Peter 3:9 NLT)

God is merciful.

10 But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment.

(2 Peter 3:10 NLT)

God is just.

How Can You Obey?

11 Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live, 12 looking forward to

the day of God and hurrying it along. On that day, he will set the heavens on fire, and the elements will melt away in the flames.

13 But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world filled with God's righteousness.

14 And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in his sight.

15 And remember, our Lord's patience gives people time to be saved. (2 Peter 3:11–15 NLT)

We should live holy and godly lives.

What does it mean to be godly? It simply means to reflect the character of your Creator.

17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. 18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the

glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. (2 Peter 3:17–18 NLT)

Don't get caught in the ways of the world.

Additional Notes:

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at www.crosswaveschurch.com/host. Cross Waves has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

Additional Notes:

The Tough Questions Segment was inspired by the book H. Wayne House and Timothy J. Demy, *Answers to Common Questions about Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2011), 13.

Explore:

KEY TRUTHS:

- 1. Christ Will Return as Promised (2 Peter 3:1-10)**
- 2. Believers Grow in Faith and Godliness While Watching for Christ's Return (2 Peter 3:11-18)**

HOW IT FITS: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the

Bible: Peter likely wrote this second letter to believers scattered throughout Asia Minor sometime between AD 64-67. He probably wrote it from Rome not long before he was martyred.

Explore:

In chapter 3, Peter was aware that believers may have been growing weary of awaiting the Lord's return and that they were experiencing mockery from those rejecting the event itself. With this in mind, he returned to the familiar subject of godly living, using the Second Coming as an incentive.

Christ Will Return as Promised

(2 Peter 3:1-10)

Chapter 3 begins with Peter addressing the readers as beloved. This was a term of endearment that he would use four times in this chapter alone, each time prefacing an important and solemn exhortation. The letter before this second one was most likely 1 Peter, meaning that both epistles would have been written to the same group of people. The apostle used a unique adjective when he described their minds as sincere (verse 1). The term in Greek

means uncontaminated or pure. Peter wanted to remind them of important truths so their thinking would remain pure and not be pulled away from the truth.

In verse 2, Peter reminded his readers of the truth of God's Word. He called them to remember the words of the Old Testament prophets and the teachings of the Lord Jesus passed on to them by the apostles, especially the teachings regarding the return of Christ. This teaching would serve to correct the false teaching Peter so passionately described. He targeted the most serious denial of the false teachers, namely, their mocking of the second coming of Christ and the judgment it would bring (verses 3-4). Their argument was that things had been the same since creation and that based on that, God was not doing what He promised.

The apostle referred to these individuals as scoffers or mockers. They dismissed the promise of Christ's return, claiming that God

does not intervene in this world. Peter pointed out that they had deliberately overlooked how God had brought a worldwide flood that led to the destruction of sinful humanity (verses 5-6). Peter assured the readers that this kind of scoffing was to be expected in the last days, the time between Jesus' ascension to Heaven and the day He returns.

Jesus will return and judgment will come (verse 7). Regardless of what the false teachers said, God's Word could be trusted. God's timing is not the same as man's timing. What seemed like delay to the false teachers was actually God's patient desire for people to come to repentance (verses 8-9.) Humanity cannot expect to understand God's timing since with Him, a thousand years is as one day and one day is as a thousand years. They cannot expect God to act and Christ to return according to their timetable. His reason? He desires that no one perish but that all would come to repentance.

It is important to understand these verses in context. Peter is speaking of God's patience and desire for all to be saved. These verses have nothing to do with Genesis 1 and Creation. They should not be used out of context to speak to the length of the days of Creation.

Christ is coming again! His return, along with God's judgment, will be sudden and without warning like the activity of a thief (verse 10). The heavens will pass away with a loud noise and the elements will be destroyed by fire. Nothing will be hidden from God. The earth and the works done on it will be exposed for what they are and brought to judgment. The expression, the day of the Lord, is an Old Testament concept that describes the full judgment of God but is also used by Peter and others to refer to Jesus' second coming. This day, according to Peter, will come like a thief or as an unexpected event.

Peter went on to vividly describe the events of that day. For instance, it will be noisy. The text affirms that the heavens will pass away with a roar, possibly with a sound like thunder. He moved on then to say that the elements or the heavenly bodies will be destroyed with a cataclysmic burning. Then, the apostle asserted that the earth and what is done on it will be exposed. Peter's point, according to Robert Picirilli in *The Randall House Bible Commentary: James, 1 and 2 Peter, Jude* is that "everything that mankind has accomplished here, has invested his energies in . . . will come to nothing."

Explore:

God wants all people to be saved. He offers salvation and forgiveness to all through faith in Jesus Christ.

Explore:

Believers Grow in Faith and Godliness While Watching for Christ's Return (2 Peter 3:11-18)

Peter wanted his readers to think about the holy and godly lives they (and we) should live with these events in view (verse 11).

Rather than trying to explain or debate what this day of the Lord will look like, Peter chose to address the ethical and moral responsibilities of the believers, in light of this coming event.

Lives of holiness signified holy conduct that they would live out before others. Godly referred to doing what is good and right before God. The word live is in the present tense indicating that this is to be the habitual, constant behavior of believers.

Believers need not dread this day, but instead, they should be eagerly waiting for it to come (verse 12). Peter then returned to the catastrophic events surrounding the day of the Lord about which he spoke in verse 10. The promise of His coming is settled and sure, and when He returns, we can expect it to be dramatic and catastrophic for those who are unsaved. But those who are saved wait for God to establish the new heavens and new earth (verse 13). While leading his audience toward

anticipation, Peter was somewhat vague in his descriptions of what is coming for the believer. The word new as used here signifies new in kind as opposed to new in time. Simply put, the heavens and the earth will be of a different kind and better than what is here now. The one thing he emphatically stated about the new heavens and new earth is that righteousness, and only righteousness, dwells there. Dwells implies permanent residence.

Since the believers were waiting eagerly for the new heavens and new earth, Peter instructed them to work hard to be spotless, blameless, and at peace, ready to meet the Lord (verse 14).

Again, as in 1:10, Peter challenged the believers to be diligent or eager, an expression that implies a sense of urgency. Spotless means being without sin, viewing sin as a stain or as a sign of corruption. By definition, to be blameless is to be without cause for fault-finding. The Him of this verse is the Lord Jesus, who will serve as the agent of judgment when the day comes. The

peace spoken of here refers to final peace, peace with God that is an attribute of every believer (Romans 5:1). While Peter had previously addressed the personal lives and conduct of the believers in relation to an unbelieving world, here he was referencing their standing before God.

In response to the coming Day of the Lord, these believers were to view the waiting as an opportunity for more people to come to Christ for salvation (verse 15). The scoffers of Peter's day were saying that the Lord's delay in returning meant that it was not going to happen. Peter, however, wanted the readers to consider it an opportunity for others to come to Christ and experience His forgiveness (see again verse 9). While the world at the present time has the opportunity to repent, this will not be the case when that day comes.

According to Peter, Paul had given these same instructions and the false teachers had distorted his teaching, along with the rest

of the Scriptures (verses 15-16). While we cannot be certain which of Paul's writings Peter had in mind, commentators believe he may have been referring to Romans 2:4. Why would Peter mention Paul? Many believe that both Peter and Paul had ministered to this same group of people. This would then serve as a way for Peter to communicate the fact that both are on the same page in regard to these issues. It is also a possibility that some of the false teachers Peter was condemning were using some of Paul's teachings to try and contradict the teachings of Peter.

Peter referred to Paul as our beloved brother. Considering the division between these two men in Galatians 2:11-14, it is encouraging to note that there were no permanent divisions between the two of them and that both had moved on to focus on the truths of God's Word and ministering to God's people. In verse 16, Peter referred to the false teachers as ignorant or unlearned, and unstable. These false teachers were twisting the

words of Paul and refusing submission to godly teaching. They did this to their own demise. It is significant that Peter identified Paul's writings with the other "Scriptures."

Peter warned his readers not to fall into such error (verse 17).

His pastoral concern was that they would be carried away into the error of the wicked and, by it, become unstable. Instead, they were to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord while they waited for the promised return of Christ (verse 18). Grow as used here is an ongoing action verb signifying a habit or way of life.

Explore:

In chapter three, Peter used two expressions or phrases that help provide clarity for the return of Christ.

1. The last days. This term refers to the time between the first and second coming of Jesus Christ. Believers in Peter's day

understood that they were living in the last days. This period continues today.

2. The Day of the Lord. This is the first time in either of Peter's letters that he used this well-known Old Testament phrase. In its simplest meaning, the phrase refers to any time when the Lord intervenes in human history. The themes of judgment and wrath are closely associated with this phrase. In the context of 2 Peter 3, Peter made no distinction between the promise of His coming (verse 4) and the day of the Lord. Compare Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians 4:13—5:11. Peter spoke in his first letter of the revelation of Christ, the end of all things, and of the One who is ready to judge the living and the dead. What Peter emphasized most about the day of the Lord was the coming element of judgment and destruction that will take place on that day. The day of the Lord is the day of judgment that the ungodly are destined for.

Explore:

Christianity is about more than going to church and living a good moral life. Being a Christian is about having a vibrant personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Every Sunday School teacher or Bible study leader should want to see each of his or her learners enter into this relationship—their eternal destiny depends on it. As you work toward this goal, keep the following in mind:

Following Christ is about more than a mere decision; it is about a lifelong relationship. Jesus called us to make disciples, not mere decision-makers. Aim for long-term faith, not momentary emotion.

Salvation is a matter of grace, not works. Our works do not save us (Ephesians 2:8-9), nor do they keep us (Galatians 3:2-6).

Good works are a product of salvation, not a prerequisite to it.

Don't confuse sanctification with salvation. Holiness follows salvation; it doesn't precede it. Don't try to impose "Christian" expectations on men and women who don't know Christ.

- Keep it simple. Being born again is not complicated. Here's a simple way to explain it:

- Acknowledge your sinfulness and your need for a Savior (Romans 3:10, 23).

- Trust in Christ's sacrifice for your sins and in His resurrection (Romans 10:9-10).

Surrender your life to God's transforming power (Romans 12:1-2).

Most of all, remember that your job is to tell the truth in a way others can understand, answer their questions, and give them an opportunity to respond. If you do that faithfully, some will respond and join the band of Christ-followers. When they do,

Heaven will rejoice!

Question 1 of 5

How would you explain What year was Jesus Christ born?

Question 2 of 5

How would you define a scoffer?

Question 3 of 5

Why can we be confident that God keeps all His promises?

Question 4 of 5

How should knowing Christ will return affect the way believers live?

Question 5 of 5

What will it be like to be in a place without sin and everything is good and right?

