

The Coming of the Lord: A Lens for Your Life



September 1, 2019

Open: What is something you are looking forward to?

Read: 2 Peter 3:1-18

Discuss:

1. Peter's purpose in writing is to remind his readers of biblical truth they already know. (vv. 1-2; see also 1:12, 13, 15) Why do you think remembering truths we know plays such an important role in spiritual health? How does our desire to hear something new put us at risk spiritually?
2. Why does it help to know that scoffers will come in the last days (v. 3)? According to verse 4, what will these scoffers question, and how will they try to prove their point? How do you tend to respond when people mock your beliefs—especially your conviction that Christ will return?
3. What important historical facts did these scoffers overlook (vv. 5-6)? Of what future event do they seem to be ignorant? How does such information help us toward spiritual stability? In light of Peter's comments, how should we help people understand our beliefs in the Bible?
4. Peter says God's view of time is different than ours (v. 8). Why is this important for us to know? How is God's patience a manifestation of His grace, according to verse 9?
5. Why do you think Peter compares the coming of the day of the Lord to the coming of a thief (v. 10)? How does this contrast with the view of the scoffers (v. 4)? Is there a sense in which you don't feel ready for Christ's return? Explain. What should you do to be ready?
6. Peter insists that the truth about the coming of the day of the Lord should affect the way we live. According to verses 11-14, how should our lives look in light of His coming? In what way are these characteristics present in your life?
7. In verses 12-14 Peter uses the word "waiting" three times. What does it mean to wait in the manner Peter describes? What helps you keep the return of the Lord in focus in your life?

Apply: In verse 17 Peter indicates that the truth he has given about the future should help believers resist false teaching and maintain stability in their faith. How will knowledge about the return of the Lord and corollary events help you avoid error and pursue growth?

Pray: Pray that we will live with mindfulness of Christ's return—and that in light of that truth we will strive to live holy, peaceful lives free of sin.

2 Peter 3:1-18

¹This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, ²that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, ³knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. ⁴They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." ⁵For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, ⁶and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. ⁷But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

⁸But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you,¹ not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

¹¹Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, ¹²waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! ¹³But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

¹⁴Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. ¹⁵And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, ¹⁶as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. ¹⁷You 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. (ESV)