

The Certainty of the Second Coming

II Peter 3:1-4

INTRODUCTION:

After defining the characteristics of genuine believers in chapter one and the characteristics of false teachers in the second chapter, Peter now turns his eyes upward and forward to the time when Christ will come again. And once again we are encouraged to study and know the inspired Word of God.

If there ever was a subject that has been near and dear to the hearts of believers throughout the centuries it is the **return of Jesus Christ!** The return of Christ is going to be an exciting event that makes the endurance of our trials here on earth worth the effort!

There's nothing in this world that gives hope to the believer like the return of Christ. **The older we get** the more precious His return will be. **The older we get** the closer **we** get to heaven. **The older we get** the more friends and family we have waiting for us heaven. We all want to see them again.

But there is nothing that stirs the soul like knowing that one day we'll be in the presence of God with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Peter warns us to keep our minds on these things because the biblical message will come under severe attack. Because of the world's immorality, many people will question the Bible and try very hard to convince believers that they should doubt it also.

All Stand and Read Scripture

2 Peter 3:1-4 (NASB)

3 This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, ² that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior *spoken by your apostles.*

³ Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts, ⁴ and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For *ever* since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation."

As we prepare to look more closely at Peter's passage this morning, let's bow in a word of prayer.

Prayer

BODY:

I. THE PROMISE OF HIS COMING.

2 Peter 3:1-2 (NASB)

³ This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, ² that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles.

Peter has reminded us over and over to study and know the scriptures. He is once again reminding us of what we already know. It is through repetition that we can have the Word of God implanted in our minds. And through that knowledge we can correctly identify the truth and not be swayed by false teaching.

The Bible promises over and over the return of Christ.

Jesus himself said,

John 14:3 (NASB)

³ If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also.

Christ's return will be personal to the faithful. He says that when He comes again, He will receive **YOU** unto Himself.

We do not know when Christ will return, but we do know that everyone will know that He has arrived. It will not be a secret return, it will be accompanied with the sound of trumpets and everyone will see Him.

It will also be sudden. The scriptures tell us that He will come as a thief in the night when no one suspects His coming.

The return of Christ is going to be glorious! It's going to be glorious because when He returns we'll get to shed these old corruptible bodies for glorious ones!

Paul described it this way.

1 Corinthians 15:51-57 (NASB)

⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep (die), but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. ⁵⁵ O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; ⁵⁷ but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

As Christians we no longer fear death. We know that when we die we will finally be free from the sin that surrounds us and we can be in the presence of the Lord with a new eternal body that is free of pain, thirst, and hunger!

I can't wait for the day when our Lord Jesus Christ parts the sky with the sound of a trumpet in power and great glory! I can't wait to see His face shining in the brightness of His glory!

As the song goes:

“What a day that will be, when my Jesus I shall see!
When I look upon His face, the One who saved me by His grace,
When He takes me by the hand, and leads me through the Promised Land,
What a day, glorious day, that will be!

We live in an assurance of hope. The hope of the second coming of Christ. This is our motivation for our joy and our service.

Since it is true that the second coming has such tremendous potential for a spiritual motivation in the life of the church, it is also no surprise that Satan works very hard to deny the second coming.

II. THE MOCKERS OF HIS COMING.

2 Peter 3:3-4 (NASB)

3 Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, 4 and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.”

If Satan can effectively get the church to look away from the second coming or even deny it as a reality, then he can remove a rather significant spiritual hope and motivation.

Throughout the history of the church, there have always been skeptics who felt that it was their role to deny the coming of Christ. Churches have always had to deal with the denial of the return of Jesus Christ.

There are those who spiritualize it away and say the significance of the kingdom of Christ is nothing more than Christ ruling within your heart and Jesus is never coming back to this earth. *“It will never be any different that it is now, we will just keep on living and die and go to heaven in some sort of unending cycle of human birth and death”*. This type of teaching removes the motivation of hope and is a threat to the life, energy, drive, zeal, passion, and the effectiveness of the church in the world.

This is a ploy of **intimidation by sarcasm**. Scoffing, mocking, ridiculing. *“You’re not one of those **fundamentalists** are you?” “You’re not one of those **Bible bangers** are you?”*

This type of sarcasm can work on weak Christian because it is an emotional thing.

Remember, in the early church disciples believed that Jesus was coming back very soon. They asked Jesus questions like, “Will you at this time bring your kingdom?” and “What is the sign of your return?”

They believed it would be very soon! They tended to think that it would be in their lifetime. Their hearts were **filled** with anticipation!

The Thessalonians expressed one of their concerns to Paul. Some of their number was beginning to die. They called it **falling asleep**, because they knew it was temporary. As they began to die, the Christians became very distressed, because they thought everybody would sort of be alive and Jesus would be right back. And they began to grieve. And they began to be worried about those who died. Would they miss the second coming and the meeting of Christ in the air? Would they miss the kingdom? Would they miss Heaven?

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 (NASB)

¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep (dead), so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

Paul says don't worry about the faithful who have died, in fact they are going to rise first to see the Lord in the air, then the faithful who are still alive will rise behind them. There is no doubt, there was a high level of expectation. That, of course, was by God's design. He was not going to tell us that the Lord would come again after a few thousand years because the motivation to remain faithful and ready would not be as strong.

Why the delay? There were many Christians who had expected the Lord to come quickly. And when He didn't come, mark it, they became disappointed. They didn't understand it and their friends were dying. And when the mockers came and began to ridicule them, it was effective on those who were emotionally upset. No doubt, some began to wonder if Christ really had the power to return again. Maybe it was just a fanciful hoax?

So Peter writes, "Know This". In other words, you have got to understand how the scoffers are going to operate. I have got to warn you about their plan and how they work.

Peter starts verse 3 with the phrase "First of all." Peter is **not saying** this is the **first thing** I can going to tell you, but he is saying this is the **most important thing** that I am going to tell you. It is a priority that you understand how they are going to try to steal your hope. Because if they can steal your hope, they can feed your flesh and they can take away your motivation and your joy. Peter knows how critical a strong confidence in Christ's return **IS!**

And so Satan works very hard to take away that hope.

You need to know that Satan is going to make the effort to mock the second coming! Here we are setting here nearly two thousand years later and when the mockers come along and say **"Say folks, where is Jesus? Where is He? I mean, the folks in the first century were upset that He wasn't around and here you are two thousand years later and He still has not returned? When are you going to admit the whole thing is a HOAX?"**

Some people who do not yet have a solid faith may find this mocking to be pretty intimidating stuff. So they start believing that *"maybe this is just a "spiritual thing" and Jesus just comes to your heart and that's it. Maybe we just live our life and die and go to Heaven and there will never be a physical second coming of Christ. A spiritual kingdom really doesn't really exist. There will not be a judgment day."*

So Peter puts it in perspective here in verse 3...

³ ...in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts,

The "last days" is a common New Testament phrase that refers to the New Testament age since Jesus came the first time. The last days covers the entire time from Christ's first coming to His second coming. The apostles were living in the last days then and we are living in the "last days" right now.

Peter is saying that there were mockers in **his** day and there will **continue** to be mockers until Christ's return.

Jesus said this would happen also:

Matthew 24:23-24 (NASB)

23 Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' do not believe him. 24 For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.

III. THE REASON FOR HIS COMING.

Despite what man believes, one fact remains: **Christ IS coming again!** Either it will be a time of rejoicing or a time of distress and fear.

Peter warns us that many people scoff at the thought of Christ's return. "*Where is the promise of His coming?*" But, we must maintain our hope.

Even the disciples thought that Jesus was coming right back. That's why they just stood there looking up in the sky when Christ ascended into Heaven.

God's people have been preaching about Jesus coming back for 2000 years. Some people deny the return of Christ, others doubt it, dismiss it, and even debate it, but that doesn't change the fact that He IS coming again.

Jesus compared His return with the days of Noah.

Matthew 24:36-42 (NASB)

36 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. 37 For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. 38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be. 40 Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left.

42 "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.

It must have been a sad day when God flooded the earth. Noah had been warning people for years to no avail. Jesus said they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. In other words, they went on with life as though nothing was wrong. "*We don't want to hear that doom and gloom stuff! There's too much life to live.*" But when the flood came they sang to a different tune. But it was too late! They had been warned and given a chance, and when God shut the door it was shut.

Why is the return of Christ going to be troubling for many? Because they will have heard the gospel message over and over and over but have refused to get in the ark of Jesus Christ. You see, there's a flood coming one day – but it's not going to be a flood of water. It's going to be the judgment of God. And the only way to escape the coming judgment is

to get in Christ through repentance of your sins and putting your faith in Him to save you.

It's going to be troubling because when Jesus returns there's not going to be another chance for you to be saved. "Today is the day of salvation!" You'll be all out of chances. "Two will be in the field," but only those who have placed their faith in Christ for salvation will be taken.

CONCLUSION:

ILLUSTRATION:

I read about a small country church that was holding a revival in a packed building. It was so crowded that they had to put up chairs everywhere, right up to the pulpit. The evangelist was preaching about the second coming of Christ and was getting very heated up on the subject. He was one of those fire and brimstone kind of preachers that marched back and forth behind the pulpit. At one point of his sermon he leaned over toward the audience and shouted out Jesus' promise: "**I am coming soon!**"

He marched back and forth on the stage some more and then leaned out again over the edge of the stage and cried out, **Jesus says "I am coming soon!"**

Several minutes went by and again he shouted out, "**I am coming soon!**" But this time, he got tangled up in the microphone cord and lost his balance. Tumbling off the stage, he landed right on the lap of a couple sitting in the front row of chairs. The preacher got up and apologized to the couple, but the man replied: "**Oh, that's ok, you warned us three times!**"

I know people have been preaching the return of Christ for 2,000 years. But the fact that He has not yet returned is not a sign that He will not return. God is not bound by time.

2 Peter 3:8 (NASB)

⁸ But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.

So the two thousand years since Christ ascended into Heaven is like a couple of days to God. Christ IS coming back!

The question that each of you must answer for yourself is: Will it be a **glorious event** or will it be a **terrifying event** for you?

Have you placed your faith in Jesus Christ? Have you obeyed Christ's command to repent of your sins and be baptized for the remission of those sins? Are you remaining faithful? Jesus IS coming again. You must be ready for His return!

Jesus died to give you life. He was crucified as an innocent sacrifice for your sins so you can be found righteous before God on judgment day. He has spared your life until now. When your life ends, just as it was in Noah's day, your opportunity to accept and serve His Son is gone forever. He wants to give you His free gift of salvation. Will you hear His voice and follow Him?

He is Lord!