

LIVINGHOPE

BIBLE CHURCH

8 | 2 PETER 3:8-13

THE SECOND COMING

Jesus' second coming is the next event on our calendar. For the ungodly, it will be a shock, but his true bride is waiting and longing and ready for him to return. Come quickly, Lord Jesus!

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Call to Worship

Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! ²⁴ And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting! —Psalm 139:23-24

Songs

Blessed Be Your Name

Be Unto Your Name

Have Thine Own Way Lord

By Faith

Even So Come

Announcements

WELCOME: We are glad you are here! Be sure to grab a Welcome Packet if you are visiting with us.

Introduction

Jesus is coming again. He could return at any moment. We need to be always expecting his coming of the Lord. I have been so consumed with thinking upon his coming, that I sometimes dream about it. Have you ever had a **dream about the second coming of Christ**? That's happened several times where I dream about the clouds opening and seeing the glory and power

of Jesus. Suddenly I'm awake thinking at any second, I'm going to be with the Lord in the air, only to realize it's a dream. One day, it won't be a dream. Peter says it's a coming reality that could happen at any moment.

2 Peter 3:8-13 | But 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, 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.

Jesus will return. Can you imagine? Saints, when he returns our true life will begin. Your sin will be remembered no more. Most people on the earth live for this life only. They are not planning for eternity. They are so nearsighted that they just want to make it through the day. They put off thinking about the Lord's second coming.

Key thought: Jesus' second coming is the next event on our calendar. For the ungodly, it will be a shock, but his true bride is waiting and longing and ready for him to return. Come quickly, Lord Jesus!

1. THE SUSPENSE OF CHRIST'S COMING (3:8-9)

Jesus could come at any moment. He hates sin and is ready to judge the world, but he is patiently waiting. For the Lord, time is like a flash of light, a vapor, a blink of the eye. The Lord is outside of time.

BECAUSE THE LORD IS TRANSCENDENT

2 Peter 3:8 | But 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.

The Lord is coming, we can be sure of that. Sometimes it seems like such a long time, but we must remember that the timing is based on God's plan and prerogative, not ours. God is infinitely bigger than us!

One of the things that gives every Christian peace, if we choose to focus on it, is the Lord's transcendence. That means **God is so big, he transcends our problems**. He transcends the universe and exists outside of time and space. If it **seems like the Lord is delaying** his coming, it's because **time for God is nothing**.

Peter quotes the Psalm of Moses—Psalm 90—and helps us to understand why it might be taking so long for the Lord to return.

Psalm 90:4 | For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it passes by, or as a watch in the night.

Because God is so big, a moment is no different from an eon, and millenniums pass like moments to the eternal God. What may seem like a long time to believers, like a thousand years, is actually quite short, like one day, in God's sight. While Christ's return may seem afar off to us, it is imminent from God's perspective.¹ At any moment Christ may return.

Often in teaching about the last days, we get concerned about how the timing and events line up for Christ's return. What you need to know is that all the events have been in motion since the resurrection of Christ. He could have returned in the apostles' lifetime. Christ told us in Matthew 24 that all the **signs of the time were set in motion already**. We've been seeing these signs since the life of the apostles. Jesus speaks of many signs of his coming (Mt 24:4-22) including: **false teachers, wars and rumors of wars, persecution, famines, earthquakes, a falling away, increased lawlessness in the laws of society, discouraged but enduring Christians, gospel preaching**, among many other things.

Dear saints, God transcends us. He is exalted above the heavens (Psa 8:1; 57:5). He is enthroned on high (Psa 113:5) as the most high (Psa 97:9). No one is above him. He is separate from his creation and not dependent upon his creation in any way. We make a great mistake trying to measure time from our own puny, finite, human perspective. It is much better to surrender by faith to God's timing since he is the sovereign one.

BECAUSE THE LORD IS TENDERHEARTED

Tender in patience. God's heart matches the bigness of his person. He's patient toward sinners. The **reason he's delaying the coming of Christ** is not because he's forgotten his promise to renew all things, but he's calling sinners from everywhere to come to into the kingdom.

2 Peter 3:9 | The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

Tender in love. **God knows and loves your loved ones more than you.** If you have a burden for the lost, it came from God first. He "loved the world" in such an infinite way that he gave his own Son, the one and only Messiah (Jn 3:16). He's waiting because his love makes him patient.

Tender in mercy. **God is "not wishing that any should perish."** God is not indifferent toward the lost. **He delays so that sinners would repent.** Repentance means a "change of mind and perspective." It's a one-eighty turn to hate what you once loved and love what you once.

Tender to all. **God wants "all" to "reach repentance."** How do we reconcile this with the doctrine of election and predestination? I don't know, and I don't need to know. Spurgeon said the doctrine of God's sovereignty in salvation and man's responsibility in salvation are like two train tracks cannot be reconciled on earth but only when we reach the throne of God. **On the outside of the gates of heaven, it says, "Whosoever will may come." One the inside, it says, "Elect from the foundation of the world."** How God wants all to reach repentance. He has "no pleasure in the death of the wicked" (Eze 18:23). Spurgeon said it this way:

If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to hell over our dead bodies. And if they perish, let them perish with our arms wrapped about their knees, imploring them to stay. If hell must be filled, let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go unwarned and unprayed for.²—Charles Haddon Spurgeon

¹ MacArthur, *2 Peter and Jude*, 121.

² Charles Spurgeon, "The Wailing of Risca" in *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Vol 7 (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1861), 9.

God's love is not merely a New Testament doctrine. Listen to Yahweh in the Old Testament pleading with the house of Israel to be converted.

Ezekiel 33:11 | Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?

Let us be tender to the lost, not willing that any should perish, with a heart like our compassionate God. Let us never give up hope for any of our friends, family, loved ones, strangers, and even our enemies.

2. THE SHOCK OF CHRIST'S COMING (3:10)

There are many signs that precede the coming of Christ, which have been since the time of Christ's first coming. We've seen epidemics, wars and rumors of wars, natural disasters, and lawlessness increasing in our laws and society (i.e., homosexual marriage). The signs of Christ's coming are already here and have been increasing since the first coming of Christ. Each generation prepares for the second coming of Christ.

THE SUDDENNESS OF THE END

Jesus said, "concerning that day and hour no one knows" (Mt 24:36). Yet people try to predict it. No one will be watching except Christians. For the lost, Jesus coming will be like an unexpected intruder.

2 Peter 3:10a | But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.

I want to emphasize that though Christians don't know the day or the hour, **we are prepared at all times for the coming of Jesus**. It's the centerpiece of our lives. It's what we live for. We keep our lamps full of oil and burning brightly with extra flasks of oil (Mt 25:1-13).

For the lost, there is a shock to Christ's coming, but not for those who are born again. The parable of the house owner who knows the thief is coming stays awake.

Matthew 24:42-44 | Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Be prepared because the end comes suddenly. Listen to Jesus in Mark 13.

Mark 13:32-33 | But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come.

Paul gives us the application of Jesus words in his letter to the Thessalonians.

1 Thessalonians 5:2-6 | You yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. ⁴ But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. ⁵ For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. ⁶ So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober.

Stay sober! Don't numb yourself with media, substance, or immoral behavior. Stay far away from the temptation to find your joy and peace in the world. There is only pleasure in sin for a season. Instead, be filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit, looking forward to the moment when Jesus splits the clouds in glory and power, bringing with him the rest of the new creation!

Jesus gives us another parable to be watching for his coming at the end of time.

Matthew 25:1-13 | “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ² Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³ For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, ⁴ but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵ As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. ⁶ But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ ⁷ Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’

⁹ But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ ¹⁰ And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. ¹¹ Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ ¹² But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ ¹³ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

As believers, we have our lamps trimmed and bright, with the oil of gladness, ready to meet our Lord.

THE SEVERITY OF THE END

If you think you can make it through the second coming, you are seriously mistaken. The severity of Jesus' return is so fierce that the cosmos will melt. Planets and stars, the moon and the sun will be dissolved by the glory of our Lord's return.

2 Peter 3:10b | 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.

Despite the delay, the day of the Lord *will* come. It will mark the end of God's forbearance, and so it threatens the unrepentant, the proud, and the worldly. And Peter goes on to describe it in descriptive apocalyptic language from the Old Testament and the words of Jesus. Jesus had spoken of ‘signs in the sun, moon, and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity’ (Lk 21:25). Peter turned to his Old Testament for further illumination. Passages such in Isaiah (13:10–13; 24:19; 64:1–4; 66:16) and Micah (1:4) would have come to mind, especially Isaiah 34.³

Isaiah 34:4 | All the stars of the heavens will be dissolved, and the sky rolled up like a scroll.

With the rumbling of thunder, and the crackle of flames, the sky will be dissolved, rolling up like a scroll. The earth will be aflame. All the earthly treasures that people invested in will burn up. All the beautiful cars and houses and boats will perish. All the luxurious vacation spots will vanish. All banks, all money, all treasures will be gone forever. The world will be shaken, and that which cannot be shaken—our faith—will remain.

³ Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 161.

3. THE SANCTIFYING EFFECT OF CHRIST'S COMING (3:11-13)

As we consider that earthly things are eternally worthless, it should affect how we see the present state of the world.

OUR FAITHFULNESS

2 Peter 3:11 | Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness.

Christ's coming compels us to faithfulness. As God's people, we see what the lost cannot see. We are loyal to the King of kings. Unbelievers are blinded to the beauty of eternal things. They have no problem doing unseemly things and **numbing themselves to the pain of this world through any means possible**. Only believers in Christ can truly appreciate the temporal nature of things and live a sanctified life.

Since everything we see with our eyes is going to perish, we ought **not hope in the things of this world**. Instead of loving money and pleasure, we ought to have pleasure in expanding Christ's kingdom, first and foremost, by living lives that are in conformity to Christ. Peter covered this in chapter 1. **If we do not choose to live in holiness**, Peter has already warned us that **a Christian can become "so nearsighted that he is blind"**, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election" (1:9-10).

Godliness matters. This is what Peter has told us to grow into in his first chapter, "add to your faith—virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, *godliness*" (1:6-7).

Godliness means walking in love with God. Godliness means we live out our reconciliation with God and our union with Christ. **We live in holiness, not in worldliness**. We live, maintaining a clean conscience with nothing condemning our hearts—nothing that is questionable whatsoever. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom 14:23).

Godliness results with walking in love with one another. As we live in love with God, our godliness and holiness imply that we live in harmony with one another. We cannot say we love God if we do not love our brother.

1 John 4:20 | If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

OUR FOCUS

As believers we understand the futility of the earth. We groan with all creation for the new creation to arrive. We wait and hasten Christ's coming.

2 Peter 3:12 | Waiting 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!

Our focus is quite different than the lost. Our focus then negatively is that we must live lives separate from the ways of the world (1 Jn 3:15-16). The lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh and the pride of life should never characterize the saints of God. Positively, we should have our focus should be on "things above."

Colossians 3:1-4 | If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things

that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Why should we, the saints of God, be interested in any of the worthless things on earth? The truth is, we cannot even begin to joy life the way God designed it until we are surrendered to him. We enjoy family because Christ is at the center. We enjoy food and the pleasures of life because Christ is the center of all we do. “Whether we eat or drink or whatsoever you do,” Paul says, “do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31). Life actually cannot be enjoyed without our hearts completely surrendered to Jesus.

We also do the work of evangelism and share the gospel, and as we do, we participate in speeding the return of Christ. God already knows how many and who will be saved, and when that number is fulfilled, the end will come (Mt 24:14; Rom 11:24–25). Don’t go overboard on this, though. There’s no way for us to know who or how many, so even though it’s true that our work of evangelism hastens the end, we may be doing our work in the middle of his timetable!⁴

OUR FUTURE

“This world is not our home! We’re just a passin’ through. My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue!” Our future is not in the ways of this world. Our life is just “a **vapor that appears for a little** while and then vanishes away.” What fools we would be to lay up our treasure on earth.

2 Peter 3:13 | But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

When many Christians think about eternal life, often the thought is **only of “heaven.”** Here Peter envisions not only a new heaven but also a new earth, presumably the dwelling place of God’s people.⁵ The glory and joy of this prophesy comes directly from the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 65:17-18 | For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. ¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness.

The same fire that strikes terror into the heart of the mockers brings hope to the believer since it means the end of the sin cursed earth has finally come. **There in the new heaven and earth we will enjoy the new creation** and worship God without distraction. Sin, which has marred God’s world, will not be permitted to have the final word. In a renewed universe the ravages of the fall will be repaired by the glory of the restoration. Paradise Lost will become Paradise Regained, and God’s will shall eventually be done alike in earth and heaven.⁶ There’s coming a day when we shall walk through the pearly gates and walk on the streets of gold. We will have a resurrection body that has no capability for sin. All evil will have been destroyed. The nations of the saved will have no desire but to do their heavenly Father’s will. The wicked will be destroyed, and the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Mt 13:41–43).⁷ There will be no more misery or pain. You will never feel anxiety or anger ever again. The former things will forever pass away.

⁴ Swindoll, *Insights on James and 1 & 2 Peter*, 323.

⁵ Black, *1 & 2 Peter*, 2 Pe 3:13.

⁶ Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 165.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 166.

Conclusion

I've dreamed about the second coming of Jesus, and it seems so real, but one day Jesus will actually come. In the meantime, we are called to be conformed to his image.

FUNNEL CLOUDS

Sometimes in tornado season in the Midwest we will have a warning that says, "**This is a test of the Emergency Broadcast System.**" It warns us of tornadoes and other dangerous weather. Once as a child on the southside of Chicago where **we lived at 147th and Central**, I looked up from our back porch and to my shock **there were funnel clouds**. We had heard warning all day, but I was so curious about the green sky and the beautiful funnels coming down. My dad was at work, and mom was shouting for us to get down to the basement. I had never seen those funnel clouds before, but I'll never forget the day when the test became real.

We see the signs of the times. They are telling us that something and truly someone is coming, and we need to be ready. We've waited and waited, but one day the moment will be real. Jesus will return. And all will be well!

BENEDICTION

1 Timothy 6:15-16 - He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.