

Jesus Christ Is Coming Again

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Date: 04 January 2026

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[0 : 00] As you said, Alan, could be this year, could be today.

I had a book called Perhaps Today that just stirred up that hope and expectation.! Throughout the winter months, we've been looking at what kind of king Jesus is.

! And last week, we looked at what his kingdom will be like. And so this morning, before we return to Mark's Gospel, I thought it would be good to look at the Lord's return. And so I'm going to be in 2 Peter chapter 3, if you want to turn your Bibles there. 2 Peter 3, and I'm going to be reading the first ten verses.

Peter writes in 2 Peter 3, this 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 that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles. Knowing this, first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They 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.

For 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, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But 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.

[2 : 27] 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 not slow to fulfill his promises. Some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

But 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 them will be exposed. This is God's Word, and we pray His blessing.

When was the last time that you had a dream? Have a think. When was the last time you had a dream?

What was it? You don't need to shout out, but can you remember the last dream that you had? How many details can you remember? Neuroscientist and sleep researcher Raphael Vallat says, Waking up is like going from air to water while holding sand in your hand. Holding the sand is like holding the memory of your dream. As you step into water, the sand dissolves. It's hard to hold on to that dream. As you wake up, the dream fades quickly. Most of the time you don't know that you're dreaming when you're asleep. You're not lucid. Anybody ever had a lucid dream? I've had a lucid dream before, but even the most bizarre things in a dream don't seem out of detail or out of place while you're dreaming.

It's bizarre. You know that when you wake up. Details become so obviously unreal. But while you're asleep, it doesn't seem out of place. Most of the time when you wake up, what felt real in a dream suddenly becomes very unreal. Even when a dream feels very real, it's not as real as it is when you wake up and you are conscious. And we can all, I'm sure, understand those distinctions. I'm sure we've all had a dream. There were details in it that were bizarre, but they seemed real at the time.

[5 : 08] But we know right now in this moment that the things around us are more real than what our dream was. Now, there's two reasons why I wanted to use this illustration about dreaming.

The first reason is that Peter says in chapter 1, As long as I am in this body, I intend to stir you up by way of reminder, since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon.

And he also says in this chapter, verse 1, This is the second letter I'm writing you. In both of them, I am stirring you up, your sincere mind by way of reminder.

And so, this term that Peter uses to stir up, *diagero* in Greek, means to awaken.

To awaken, or to arouse, or to stir up. It's used of the sea. When the disciples go on the boat and Jesus goes to pray, the sea awakens.

[6 : 12] It stirs up into a storm. It's also used when the disciples wake up Jesus, *diagero*. They wake him up. They stir him out of sleep.

And Peter uses this term about waking, wakening the people up. He's trying to wake them up. That's what he's trying to do with this letter.

He's trying to wake up these disciples by way of reminder. And the second reason for using this illustration is because something is coming that will make all of this seem like a dream in comparison.

And we'll speak more about that later. But the point is don't get caught up in the dream. Don't get caught up in the dream of this world and the things of this world.

We need to wake up. We need reminded of these truths to wake us up. In Pilgrim's Progress, a famous book, as Pilgrim gets nearer the celestial city, he enters a country whose air tended to make people drowsy.

[7 : 20] And they were warned not to sleep on the enchanted ground. Folks, we are near the celestial city. We are near. But beware of the enchanted ground.

Let us not be sleepy. Something is coming that will make all of this seem like a dream. Now, if you're familiar with Peter's story, you'll remember that Peter learned this important lesson himself from Jesus back in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus knew that he was about to die and he went to pray and he took three people with him, Peter, James, and John, and he told them to watch.

They had been there at the Transfiguration. They had seen this. And he told them to watch while he prayed. But after praying, he came back and he found them doing what?

Sleeping. And Peter was one of them. And in Mark chapter 14 verse 37, Jesus said, Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch just one hour?

[8 : 26] Watch and pray that you may not enter temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. And so Jesus, when he was about to die, says to his disciples, wake up, be watchful, be sober, sober.

Why? So that you do not enter temptation. And why is that important for Peter? Because he is about to enter a great temptation to deny the Lord three times.

Jesus said to Peter that Satan has wanted to sift him like wheat. And he says, but I have prayed for you. And so now he's saying to Peter in the garden, wake up.

Don't be sleepy. Wake up, because temptation is afoot. So, now we have this moment where Peter has learned this, and Peter knows that he's in the same position.

In chapter 1, verse 14, he knows that he's about to die. He knows that he's going to die soon, and he knows the dangers of not being awake and alert.

[9 : 36] And so Peter is saying what Jesus said. Peter is saying to these disciples, wake up, be alert, so that you might not enter temptation. And in this book, the temptation, which is still a temptation today, is the temptation to believe this false idea that Jesus is not coming back.

That's the temptation, that we get sleepy, and we're no longer watchful, and we're no longer expecting the Lord to come back. and then, boom, he'll come like a thief in the night.

So Peter is warning them to wake up to this false idea that Jesus isn't coming back and there's no judgment. This false view gives people a license for their immorality, a license to sin.

If there's no judgment, just live however you like. YOLO! You only live once, so do what you want. But that's not true. That's not true. And Peter is warning them, and he's wanting to stir them up and wake them up out of sleepiness in their sincere minds so that they don't fall for this false teaching.

If you think that Jesus isn't coming back, you're dreaming. Wake up. Verse 2, he tells them to remember the holy prophets and the apostles.

[10 : 58] In chapter 1 of 2 Peter, he said, the apostles saw the Lord's glory and heard his voice, the voice from heaven. And the prophets spoke as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

But in chapter 2, he says these false prophets follow their sensuality, and they exploit people out of greed. And in chapter 3, verse 3, he says that they are following their own sinful desires.

So Peter is saying, who are you going to listen to? Are you going to listen to the prophets who were carried along by the Holy Spirit? Are you going to listen to the apostles who saw Christ being transfigured?

They saw a preview of his second coming, and they heard the voice from heaven? Or are you going to listen to these false prophets who their qualification, their only qualification, is that they follow their own sinful desires?

That's their only qualification. They weren't there. They didn't see Jesus. They didn't see the transfiguration. They weren't carried along by the Holy Spirit. They're just following their own sinful desires. Are you going to listen to them?

[12 : 07] Or are you going to listen to those who saw the Lord, who heard the voice from heaven, who spoke by the Holy Spirit? Are you going to listen to people who are going to exploit you out of greed?

Now, let me say something about sinful desires, because the room is full of people who have sinful desires. desires. We all have sinful desires that we could easily follow, and we all know what it's like to follow them.

But let me just say, in relation to this, you will never regret passing up an opportunity to sin. You'll never regret that. You'll never regret, you'll never look back and regret not following your sinful desires.

You'll never say, I wish I followed my sinful desires. You'll never regret saying no to sin. You'll never regret resisting temptation. You'll never regret it. Never. You need to know that when temptation comes, that you'll never regret saying no.

You'll never regret staying faithful. You'll never regret fighting hard for sin, and it's a fight. Every day it's a fight, and you will never regret that fight. Never.

[13:22] Remember, last week I mentioned in 1 John 2, 17, the darkness is already passing away, and the true light is already shining. The world is passing away along with its desires.

These sinful desires, they're going to be gone. They're passing away. And so you'll never regret saying no to these sinful desires. The other thing to remember is you'll never regret standing for Jesus when it was hard.

You'll never regret that. No matter the cost, no matter the price that you pay, when you are standing with Jesus in glory, you will never regret it. Never.

It's not going to be something you look back and regret. When Jesus appears, nobody's going to say that they are glad they didn't believe. Nobody's going to say that they wished they hadn't given up so much for him.

Nobody's going to feel justified in their scoffing. You'll never regret following Jesus. Never. He is coming back and He is the glorious King of all.

[14:25] So, in verse 4, we see what the scoffers are saying. Where is the promise of His coming? Where's the promise? Where is He?

Where is Jesus? Where's the promise of His coming? Ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things have continued ever since the beginning of creation. Everything's always been the same. Does that sound familiar?

I mean, we're living about 2,000 years after Peter and these scoffers, and it's the same stuff we hear. The same stuff. Ah, He's not coming back. Everything's always been the same.

The earth is X amount a billion years old and nothing's changed. Really? Is that true? The earth has been going on the same for millions of years.

It's been the same long before humans and it'll be the same long after humans. Is that really the case? If you've been a Christian for any length of time, you have heard this kind of scoffing.

[15:27] And if you have been a human, depending on your journey, maybe you've done some of that scoffing yourself. I have. I've scoffed like that before, and today I'm eating my own words.

praise God. Peter says in verse 5 and 6, well, the history is not quite how they say it is. To say that things have been unchanged and will remain unchanged is to deliberately overlook two things in history.

First, the formation of the earth was a major change. Something happened to the earth that was an incredibly major change. And then secondly, there was a great flood as a judgment on mankind.

Now, folks might talk about climate change and war and asteroids and all manner of things that can destroy the earth, but all of these things still ignore the possibility of a day of judgment by overlooking the day of judgment that happened in history.

A day of judgment already happened in history. And the next time it won't be with water, Peter says the heavens and the earth are stored up for fire, kept until the day of judgment.

[16:47] Just as the prophets said the Lord would come with fire and the heavens would dissolve. And so they're ignoring these facts of history.

There are signs, evidence, all over the world, archaeological, geological, historical, so much evidence. in history and in every culture of these things.

Creation, the formation of the earth, and the flood. The flood. What Peter is addressing is the false idea about the return of Jesus, verse 4, and the day of judgment, verse 7.

A false idea that neither of these things are going to happen. It's a false idea that says they're not going to happen. if they're not going to happen, then live as you like.

Follow your own sinful desires. Have a complete disregard for the offense of sin, and a disregard for the sovereignty and sacrifice of Jesus, which happened.

[17:55] You see how that kind of scoffing about his return and about the judgment not only has a disregard for the offense of sin against the holy God, but it also has a disregard of the sovereignty of the risen Christ and the sacrifice of the Savior of the world.

Where is the promise of his coming? That's the scoffing in Peter's day, and if there were scoffers in his lifetime, we can expect scoffers to be in our lifetime 2,000 years later.

But Peter has already physically seen a foretaste of Jesus' return, the transfiguration return, and that's what he mentions in chapter 2.

He's certain about Christ's return because he is an eyewitness. He has had a preview. The false teachers think they have the right interpretation on things that are happening, but they weren't even there to see it.

Peter was there. He has seen it. He heard the voice from heaven confirming who Jesus is. This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him. Peter saw Jesus even with Moses and Elijah, the holy prophets.

[19:09] Here in chapter 3, instead of going back to that stuff, Peter is going to show the folly of their own argument. When they say things have remained, Peter uses the folly of their own argument and history to show that things have not always remained the same.

Pretty big flood that happened, a pretty big formation of the earth, evidence all over the world. In Acts 17, Paul says that God has overlooked these times of ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.

Why does he command all people everywhere to repent? Because God has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, the one he raised from the dead, Jesus.

The coming of Jesus isn't just that a person is coming back. The coming of Jesus is a judge coming to judge the world, the righteous one, the one who's going to put all things right.

Judgment is a good thing, except if you're a sinner. But praise God, he's a saviour as well as a judge. But the coming of Jesus isn't just a person coming back.

[20:34] It is the day of judgment. It's the day of reckoning. It's when all things will be brought to account, when the righteous one will judge the earth according to true justice and righteousness.

The scoffers, are they right? Are the scoffers right about his return? Peter has shown that they're wrong about history, but what about his return?

Why is Jesus taking so long? I think I might be off here. Am I all right? Yeah, okay, sorry.

You ever wonder why he's taking so long? You ever wish he would hurry up? Yeah, I do too. I do too. Is it really, is it really going to happen?

Is he really coming back? Why is it taking so long? Peter has said that the scoffers overlooked something, and now he says to us, don't overlook something.

[21:42] Verse 8, 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's not slow to fulfill his promises, as some count slowness.

Do you see the same idea? Verse 5, verse 8, they deliberately overlook something, but you, beloved, do not overlook this. You see, God doesn't experience time like we do.

He's not subject to time. So we cannot accuse God of being tardy or late. Think about God experiencing time, a thousand years in one day, one day, a thousand years.

He can easily be in every single detail of our lives, in every single moment. Do you ever feel like there's not enough hours in the day? If a day were like a thousand years, how much could you get done?

that would be 8,766,000 hours in one day. 8.7 million hours in one day.

[22:53] How much could you get done in 8.7 million hours? You see, a thousand years in one day isn't you moving a thousand times faster, it's you moving 365,000 times faster.

Wouldn't that be good? To move at that speed? But God is light. Do you have to know the speed of light? Things are instantaneous with light.

Equally, God experiences a thousand years like a day, like that. So He has a perspective that we haven't even touched. He has a perspective on history and the future that we couldn't fathom.

So He can easily be patient when we cannot. We can't even be patient for a full day. And He can be patient for a thousand years.

Imagine in just one day you could see the span of a thousand years. What kind of knowledge and wisdom and perspective would you have if you could see a thousand years into the future in one day?

[24:05] wouldn't that change how you do things? Imagine in just one day you knew what would happen for the next thousand years.

Think about the fact that Jesus didn't return in Peter's day when these people were scoffing. Yet God already saw you because that's His perspective.

when these people were scoffing about Him not returning God already saw you and imagine if He returned in Peter's day you would not exist.

So God says no I'm going to be patient because I want Scott and Darren and Jeanette May Wiley but I'll give them a few more years.

I want Bill I want John I want Jan and my kingdom I want you I'll wait a couple of thousand years.

[25:14] In fact to God it's just a weekend ago that all these things happened two days ago isn't that crazy? I do sometimes feel like I want it to be over.

I want to be there. I want to be rid of this pain and suffering and scoffing. I want to be rid of my own sin. My own weakness.

I want to see Him. You just not want to see Him. I want to see Him. but He decided to be patient so that we could repent.

So that you could repent. So that your neighbor could repent. So that your brother or sister or mother or father or son or daughter could repent. Because God doesn't want any to perish but wants all to reach repentance and belong in His kingdom.

Why should He let any one of us remain in darkness? That's why Jesus came as the light of the world. Oh, it may be 2,000 years ago to us when Jesus walked the earth but to God it was only two days ago.

[26:21] We just don't understand how short our lives on earth are. But we also don't understand just how little these things compare to eternity. How little these fleeting pleasures compare to eternal things and how little our suffering compares to the glory that is to come.

Paul says it's not even worth comparing. It's not worth it. God's not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness. The only description in the entire Bible of God being slow is that God is slow to anger.

Why 2,000 years has he not returned? Because he's slow to anger. He's slow to anger. He's got this incredible capacity to store up anger without losing the rag.

He's so patient. Peter is effectively saying that the scoffers in his day are actually experiencing God being slow to anger.

They're experiencing God's patience. God could take them out in the click of his thumb. He could take them out with a word, with a blink.

[27 : 32] He could do that to any one of us. None of us deserve to be saved or be in his kingdom. But he is slow to anger and he is so patient. Peter says he isn't slow to fulfill his promise.

He's patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should reach repentance. This is what it says in Romans 2 verse 4. Do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing God's patience and kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

That's what it's meant to do. God's patience is supposed to lead us to repentance. He's given people so much more than any of us deserve.

His patience and kindness is supposed to lead us to repentance. We will not be able to use his patience as an excuse for our unbelief. Scoffers will not stand on the day and be justified for their unbelief.

They will have to give an answer as to why they took his kind gift of more time and used it as an argument for not believing.

[28 : 47] As time passes, we're supposed to learn that God is patient, not that he's slow to fulfill promises. God will never fail to fulfill a single promise that he made.

Don't be tempted by any false ideas that Jesus isn't coming back. he will come as suddenly as he left. Verse 10 says, the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

And so let us use this time that God graciously gives us. Let us use it to repent. Let us use it to draw closer. Let us use this to point one another to God's patience and kindness.

Let us use this gift of time to show that his grace appeared once before and he will appear again.

Jesus is coming back and let me leave you with this promise from the lips of Jesus that he will not fail to fulfill. In my Father's house are many rooms.

[29 : 53] If it were not so, would I have told you that I go and prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back. I will come again and I will take you to myself that where I am you may be also.

Praise God. Let me pray. Gracious God, you are so patient and although we struggle, we toil, we wrestle, we fail, we try to follow you, sometimes we have scoffed.

Lord, we thank you for your patience and grace, your kindness that leads us to repentance. We thank you that we can look at this 2,000 year period as an incredible act of kindness and gracious patience that you would wish not anyone to perish but all to come to repentance.

Lord, please help us to trust in you. Please help us to point one another toward repentance. Please help us to understand your patience and please stir up, awaken a hope within us at your glorious return.

We pray for these things knowing that you are faithful to every promise you make. And so we give you thanks in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.