

Remember the Day of the Lord

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[0 : 00] and then Peter writing in 2 Peter. Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you.

I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.

First of all, you must understand that in the last days, scoffers will come scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, where is this coming he promised?

Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation. But they deliberately forget that long ago, by God's word, the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water.

By these waters also, the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word, the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

[1 : 20] But do not forget this one thing, dear friends. With the Lord, a day is like a thousand years. A thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness.

He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar.

The elements will be destroyed by fire. And the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be?

You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire.

And the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise, we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

[2 : 27] So then, dear friends, since you're looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with him.

Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him.

He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other scriptures, to their own destruction.

Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard, so that you may not be carried away by the era of lawless men and fall from your secure position, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To him be the glory, both now and forever. Amen. We've been looking at a series here.

[3 : 45] Excuse me. We've been looking at a series of four messages through this second letter of Peter to a number of churches that might resemble small home churches far, far away from Jerusalem.

Churches that are composed to a great extent of young or new believers. And Peter, throughout this letter, has something that he wants to remind them of.

He says quite often that he wants to be a reminder for them to remember. Tonight, we're going to look at what he wants them to remember in the third chapter.

We've seen so far that he's wanted them to remember the gospel. Then he wanted them to remember the truth, the source of all truth, the scriptures.

Then he wanted them to remember that there are false teachers who teach another way. And then tonight, we're going to see that he wants them as well as us to remember the day of the Lord's

coming, the judgment day of the Lord, Christ himself and his return.

[5 : 06] Now, this is a big subject in the Bible. It's called the doctrine of eschatology or the doctrine of last days or last things or end times.

If you ever want to make a lot of money, then write the latest book about how the world will end. But if you're not interested in fooling people or making a lot of money and just capturing the curious, then you can read 2 Peter.

Here in 2 Peter 3, he tells us. He tells us how the world is going to end and that it's no surprise. It shouldn't be a surprise. It actually is connected to even how the world began.

The world began as God's creation. But then after the fall, the world was broken. And there was a plan to redeem man, to come and to rescue man and to redeem him.

But there was also a plan all along to not throw this world away and start again, but to redeem this earth. Next to the subject of faith, the last day, the day of judgment, is spoken about in the scriptures more than any other subject.

[6 : 33] It's mentioned 1,845 times. If you were to look at all the verses in the Bible, one of every 30 verses mentions something pertaining to the day of the Lord or the day of judgment or the return of Jesus Christ.

The subject of atonement, Christ's death as our substitute on the cross, will be mentioned once for every two times that his return is mentioned.

21 times Jesus will speak about his return, and 50 times he will talk about how we, his disciples, are to prepare.

Think about the parables, such as the virgins and their lamps, and they waited and waited and waited, and some because they forgot.

Because he was long in coming, then their lamps needed oil, and they left before he returned. That was Jesus Christ telling us about his promised return, and that we should be as a people faithful to recall his promise, to be reminding ourselves of it on a regular basis, so that it impacts us to not only remember this great truth and promise that is ours, for him to return and be joined with us forever, but also it impacts our life.

[8 : 08] The Apostles' Creed, capturing all the principal truths of the scripture, says that Jesus Christ, positionally right now, is at the right hand of God the Father, where he awaits the Father's chosen time for him to return, to judge the living and the dead.

So when Christ returns, he's coming triumphant as a king, but there is a judgment. There's a judgment, and it's in that day that the wicked, and the rebellious, and those who refuse to follow his lordship, then they will face their judgment and their just rewards.

But the righteous, those who have come under the liege, and those who have experienced the salvation through Jesus Christ, then we also will face a judgment, and he will gather us to himself as we have finally met him in our common home of heaven and earth, called the new heaven and the new earth.

That's a big subject. Why does Peter want to talk about that? He's concluding his letter. He's told them to remember a number of things, but why is it so important that we remember the day of the Lord?

A couple of weeks ago, as I was listening to the morning news, they announced that Dame Vera Lynn had passed away at the good old age of 103.

[9 : 53] Now, I'm an American, and while I did not know who Dame Vera Lynn was, I did know the song that she made famous, We Will Meet Again.

And so I did some homework, and I came to see that that song was almost shut down, because during World War II, Vera Lynn began to sing this song.

Now, this was a song that had been around, but with this emphasis on We Will Meet Again, there was something that she did, her style, her voice, her emotion in singing it that really touched the heartstring of the United Kingdom soldiers far from home.

It made them reflect on home. And because of this, because it was so touching, she began to receive over a thousand letters from soldiers a week.

The BBC was approached because she had a show, a program, and she would always sing this song on the program, and she would say, this goes out to our boys.

[11 : 15] The BBC was approached, and they said, we don't like that song. We fear for the impact that it will have on the morale of our men.

We, quote, think that they need to be listening to something more virile, something that is more stimulating, something that will arouse them to fight.

And so they called her song Slush, and they started an anti-slush campaign. Sadly, BBC took her program off, but she did not stop singing.

She said, I will sing as long as I have a voice till we meet again, because I believe with all my heart it gives the boys who are fighting for our freedom something worth dying for, something worth living for, something worth fighting for.

Peter can express a similar thought here in this passage that we read earlier. The main thought here is this.

[12 : 32] Your view about how the world will end will affect how you live today. It will affect how you live, how you fight, what you fight for, what you stand for, and it will affect you how you die.

Your view of the world will affect and have an impact on how you live today. That's the main idea that Peter is trying to get across here to us.

He tells us that he wants us to consider doing three things. He wants us to, in order to remember, he wants us to look back at the scriptures.

But he also wants us to be mindful that not everyone around us, far from it, is going to share our view of how the world will end.

So he tells us to look around and see that there will be scoffers. And then last, he says, look always ahead at the Savior's coming.

[13 : 46] So look back at the scriptures, look around and note that there's scoffers, but always look ahead to the Savior's second coming. Verse 1.

He says that he has written this as a reminder to stimulate. And then in verse 2, he says, recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets.

And then he says, the Lord Jesus, and then through the apostles. So he's saying, the Old Testament prophets, the Old Testament, not only the Old Testament, but the letters and the teaching that was going around by the apostles, as well as the words of Jesus, the teaching of Jesus.

And he said, this composes the scripture. Look back at the scriptures. He says, these are reminders to stimulate you.

In my Bible, my version of the Bible is an English Standard version. And the word there is literally to stir up. And I think about a can of paint. If you let a can of paint sink, if you've opened once a can of paint, and you've put it back away till its next use, then when you open it up, you'll find that the elements have separated.

[15 : 13] And it needs a good stir. Peter is saying, we need to stir our mind. And we need to have a mind that is wholesome.

It's full and it's intact. It's not, as it were, partially educated. It needs to be, it needs to have a portion of our mind dedicated to thoughts, frequent thoughts, that one day, my Lord will return.

One day, my King will come back. One day, God will cry enough. And heaven will come down.

And earth will go up. And we will meet him never to be separated. Peter's saying, there needs to be a part of your mind and your thinking that is constantly stirred to hold that thought.

Now, if it's not stirred, if we don't exercise ourself of all of these passages in the scripture to recall, then it can separate.

[16 : 21] We can separate earth from heaven. And like Francis Schaeffer saying, describing enlightened man establishing a two-story house where the first floor is reality.

Everything we can see in this life. But then we've put spiritual matters and faith into the top story where we never go. And it becomes unrealistic.

It becomes even non-existent. Peter's saying, don't let that happen. This world is not all there is.

Keep yourself stirred. How do we do that? Well, let me offer you five quick, simple ways. And there are other ways that you might take Peter's admonition for yourself to look back at the scriptures and to recall words.

Number one, memorize scripture. Consider taking a passage of scripture such as Christ saying, I will never leave you or forsake you and commit it to memory.

[17 : 34] Number two, write it down. Put it on a sticky note. Put it on your dashboard. Put it on your refrigerator. Put it on your bathroom mirror.

Read the scripture. Write it out. Number three, pray the scriptures. Recall the words of the scripture to pray.

In just a short while here for the prayer of intercession, I'm going to base my prayer on Psalm 138. Scots are famous for praying the Psalms so we can pray the scriptures to really help us recall them. Feast on it. Now, feasting is another word for ruminating or chewing on or meditation. But unlike far eastern meditation that encourages you to empty your mind, this is filling your mind.

This is taking God's word and the scripture and Peter's admonition to recall and to feast on a passage of scripture. And it's amazing how the Holy Spirit can activate that recall and then finally sing it.

[18 : 52] This is particularly good for children to be able to take a passage of scripture and put it to a song to be able to sing it over and over again, working itself in to my mind and into my heart.

Peter says not only does he want to encourage us to recall the words spoken in scripture, but he says also be mindful of scoffers.

He says look around and you're going to see scoffers, particularly in the last days. Verse 3, you must understand that scoffers will come.

And if you remove the comma, I like it when it says scoffers will come scoffing. Now, a scoffer is someone who takes lightly what you take seriously.

Let me repeat that. A scoffer are those people who take quite lightly what you take very seriously.

[20 : 01] the word itself, even as it rolls off your lips, you can imagine a sneer that goes along with it, a scoffer that's taking very light and taking you and making you an object of derision or ridicule.

A scoffer is someone in this case that is saying where is the coming that he is promised. And they're saying in this aspect, they're saying we look around in this world, we don't see the next world.

We look around in this world, things we can touch, things we can see, things we can hear, things we can experience. And it's always been like this.

Where is this promised coming? throughout Peter's letter, he's written with both a Jewish audience in mind, but also a Gentile audience in mind.

A Gentile audience that would have been very influenced by the Greek environment and philosophers that surrounded them. It was in Greek philosophy, particularly the Epicureans, who, another way to describe them were hedonists, to eat, drink, and tomorrow we might die.

[21 : 34] Those are Epicureans. And their philosophy was based on this world being all there is. When I was young, I can remember the Schlitz beer commercials.

and the Schlitz beer can had on it an airplane. And on the commercials they would show this airplane going around the world. And the slogan for the beer was, drink Schlitz, for you only go around this world once.

That's an Epicurean. And they were influencing Peter's young disciples, particularly the gullible. And they were saying, they were scoffing, they were laughing at them.

And they were saying basically, you don't take this book literally, do you? You don't really believe that there's another world, a heaven up there, do you?

Do you really believe that there is a day coming where God is going to return and he's going to set up this great judgment seat and one by one he's going to file everybody by and he's going to judge them.

[23 : 01] That was what the scoffers were scoffing. Now, not only was that the what, but it's important because Peter will pull back the veil and he will show you why.

he says in verse three that at the root of their scoffing is their own evil desires and like a path that they're going down in order to be able to practice their own evil desires.

They do not want a judgment day. They do not want a time that they would appear before God.

They do not want the promise of another world.

This world is just fine. And if this world is all there is, and if there is no judge over all of the world to render justice, then you can only imagine the lifestyle, the behavior that would proceed.

And again, Peter's emphasis is your view of how the world will end or not is going to be reflected in how you live.

[24 : 20] It will affect how you live today. Finally, Peter said, not only do you need to look back at the scriptures, not only do you need to look around at the scoffers, but you always need to keep an eye ahead at the Savior's coming.

Look at verse 14. So then, now that's a summary statement. So then, he is hearkening back to everything written previously.

So then, since the Lord is going to return, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with him.

In verse 11, he says, since everything is going to be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and you speed its coming.

There was both an early prayer in the church, as well as a greeting. One of the greetings between two Christians when they would meet was Maranatha, the Lord return.

[25 : 53] Come, Lord Jesus, come. That was a greeting for believers. You could be sure that those scoffers would only deride them and laugh at that, and they would never greet one another with that because, you see, it's only believers who would pray and who would greet one another, come, Lord Jesus, come, because it's only believers that look forward to the return of their loving Lord toward their true king.

home. This land is not our home. This creation is not our home. It awaits for the new creation, the new heaven and the new earth.

Even as we wait following our death for the redemption of our bodies, the earth groans and waits for its redemption, but that day will come.

Peter is saying we need to remember at all times that this world is not our home. There is another world that awaits us that is.

He says that in verse 13. He says this is the promise. This is the promise that God and God alone knows the time.

[27 : 22] Not even Jesus knows the time. Jesus said that he, not even the son, of God knows the time. Only God himself knows the time.

And we believe that that time may very well be flexible, that his patience is for a reason. Peter says that he is not slow in keeping his promises.

Some understand slow. Listen, verse 9. He's patient, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. Aren't we glad that the Lord has not returned?

At this point, we find ourselves conflicted. We want the Lord to return now. Come, Lord Jesus. But I'm also glad for one more day's opportunity to pray or perhaps encourage dear family members who have yet to walk with the Lord, who have yet to come under his extended promise to be his, to experience the forgiveness of all debt with a promise that they can take up as home.

But he says here in verse 13, that we are those that are looking forward to a new heaven, a new earth, which is the home of righteousness.

[28 : 52] It's the home of a righteous Lord, but it's a home of a people who are now made righteous in him. And that home, the new heaven, the new earth, is something that Peter emphasizes that we are to look ahead with great joy.

Let me end by encouraging you to consider verse 14, to be found with him in three ways.

Peter concludes toward the conclusion of this letter, he will say, he will give a benediction. And it's a benediction that I've been using through this series.

And this benediction is rather unusual. There's not another one quite like it in the scripture because it only, it solely mentions Jesus Christ.

Remember, Peter was a disciple of this carpenter rabbi who was the son of man, the son of God, God incarnate.

[30 : 03] And here, at the end of his letter, he encourages us yet one final time to grow, to grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord, Jesus, and Savior, Jesus Christ.

To him be the glory both now and forever. He wants us to keep looking, keep looking for the day of his appearing.

The day that he says in verse 14 that we're going to be found in him. We're going to be found with him in three ways. Spotless.

That was a term that was used for those sacrificial animals, particularly lambs. They needed to be without spot, without blemish.

Consider how you can, as you look forward to the day, how you look forward to the day of the Lord in return, how will that affect your physical life?

[31 : 06] How will that affect you to consider how you might live spotlessly? How might you freshly surrender in service to him, to be used for him, even sacrificially?

Blameless. Are you looking forward to the day of the Lord as also being a day not simply of his return along with God the Father, but also a day of judgment?

A day that we as Christians need never fear. are you living such a life that you're living for those words, well done, good and faithful servant?

Are you living a life that you seek to be free of blame? You seek to live an imitation of him? And then finally, are you living at peace with him?

Will you be found now and will you be found when he does return to be at peace with him? Here's the best definition for this type of peace that I know.

[32 : 18] Paul Tripp says, Personal peace never comes by figuring out the future, but by resting in and submitting to the one who holds our future in his wise hands.

Friends, we don't know the future. But we know who holds the future in his hands. And we know that the future holds his second return.

And we know on his return, he will take us in to his home. And that forever. Let's never forget that. Amen.