

Stir Up Memory

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 24 August 2025

Preacher: John Howard

[0 : 00] Okay, you hear me? You need to turn to 2 Peter 3.!

Today we're supposed to do verses 1-10. We get a commentary and it usually breaks it up in sections.

And for some strange reason, which is beyond my wildest imagination, I cannot figure out why they divided it the way they did for 2 Peter.

It stops in the middle of a sentence sometimes. You just go, yeah, now what? So, you know, you get what you get. Well, yeah, that's true anyway, because look what you got.

Would you repeat the reference? Yes, 2 Peter 3. We're going to start in verse 1. We're supposed to go through 10. We're going to go through 11, I think, more or less. And someone asked me if I would make slides, and the answer, yes, I did.

[1 : 16] I did. They're right here. Whoever that was, if they want to see them, they can... I even put pictures in them. I thought, I'll be like, man, I'll put pictures in them.

How hard can this be? It'll be the last time to waste your time. That's right. All right. Well, Peter is writing again. He's picked up his purpose. He sort of...

He said back in chapter 1, I think about verse 12 or something, he says, my purpose in writing is to stir up your memory, stir up your minds.

He starts out this section with the same thing. So he's going back. He's talked about something. Remember what it was? It was all about... False doctrines. False doctrines and false teachers.

And now he's come back and he says, okay, now I'm going to... I'm writing because I want to stir up your minds. He uses the exact same words. And he starts out, but he's going to talk about a slightly different topic.

[2 : 12] They're really not so far apart as you might imagine, and I'll mention that as I go along. And I think if I... You know how I do. I get off track and you never know where I'm going. Anyway, so let's read our passage.

And remembering that this is Peter's testimony. He's writing this down because he knows he hasn't longed to live. He's probably in Rome. He's expecting to be executed.

So this is his effort to write down what he wants the churches to know. All right. And it's fairly long, but it's doable. All right.

Start with verse 1. Dear friends, this is already the second letter I have written you in which I am trying to stir up your pure minds by way of reminder. I want you to recall both the predictions foretold by the holy prophets and the commandments of the Lord and Savior through your apostles.

Above all, understand this. In the last days, blatant scoffers will come. Being propelled by their own evil urges and saying, Where is his promise return?

[3 : 18] For ever since our ancestors died, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of creation. For they deliberately suppress this fact that the word, by the word of God, the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by means of water.

Through these things, the world existing at that time was destroyed when it was deluged by water. But by the same word, the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

Now, dear friends, do not let this one thing escape your notice, that a single day is like a thousand years with the Lord, and a thousand years are like a single day.

The Lord is not slow concerning his promise, as some regard slowness, but he is being patient toward you, because he does not wish for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance.

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief when it comes, the heavens will disappear in horrific noise, and the celestial bodies will melt away in a blaze, and the earth and every deed done on it will be laid bare.

[4 : 28] Since all these things are to melt away in this manner, what sort of people must you be, conducting your lives in holiness and godliness, while waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God?

Is your microphone? Yeah. Is it? No. I turned it on. It must have been on. You all heard me singing. Anyway, here we go.

Hopefully you're following in the scripture you want me. Because of this day, the heavens will be burned up and dissolved, and the celestial bodies will melt away in a blaze. But according to his promise, we are waiting for the new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness truly resides.

I don't know about you, but that last one really resounds with me. I'm waiting anxiously for that day when I see Roger. He's got a haircut. We're all on the new earth.

See, the ideas in our passage continue on, and there's a couple more that Phil's going to talk about. It doesn't stop there.

[5 : 43] It keeps on talking about the return of the Lord. Phil will talk about that next week. Our task today is to examine the context of sorts that Phil will fill in on for us later.

He starts out by saying, like I said, I'm trying to stir up your pure mind by way of reminder. Now, those are the same words he did in chapter 1, verse 12. He's coming back to his purpose in writing to remind his readers of some important things of the faith.

You know, and I was reading a book the other day, and it said, you know, there are, and Matt's mentioned this in his sermon, there are core beliefs that we must remember. Too often, we Christians hide behind the optional parts of our faith so that we can distinguish ourselves and somehow claim righteousness from those who don't agree with us or that we don't agree with them.

And somehow, we miss the fellowship of the saints. Now, that's one of the things I like about what we're doing in this community where we get the men together from all the different churches and we do the fifth Sunday things because what happens?

You get together and you celebrate what you have in common. You can't celebrate what you don't have in common. You celebrate what you have in common. And ultimately, the thing we have in common is what?

[7 : 05] Jesus. Now, he's saying we have to also remember there are other things in common. One of them is an expectation of judgment. This world will come to an end, and there will be a new world for those who are his to live on that God is going to fulfill His promises that we'll live on the new earth, which is in essence a return to Eden.

And that we'll have new bodies. Boy, am I looking forward to that. And then we'll have fellowship with all the saints in His presence.

And we'll celebrate our God and our love and His love for us. His chesed. We were talking about that Sunday school. His loyal love. So he says, there are some things that you need to remember.

Important things. And I want to stir up your mind, Peter says. Things that he sees being endangered by false teachers. And he's already talked about those false teachers. They're out there spreading lies.

Distorting the truth. Misleading the believers. He wants us to be reminded of what the prophets earlier had said and what the apostles have taught of Christ's teachings about the end things.

[8 : 24] The things that are going to come at the end. The things that we're anticipating that we're not experiencing yet. And that was that there were those who said that Christ had already returned.

That's why Paul wrote the letters to the Thessalonians. They thought they missed it. Now what? Then they got worried about the ones that had already died weren't going to go because they were dead.

And Paul says, no, no, you're listening to the wrong people. We've got to get this straight. And he straightens them out. There were those who said that Christ would never come back.

That He was just a prophet. He didn't know what He was talking about. He didn't come back. We have people who say that today, by the way. There are those who taught that Christ didn't come in the flesh.

That He wasn't truly fully human. He only appeared to be human. He only appeared to be real. He was God, so how could He be human? That's impossible.

[9 : 23] There are still people who say that today. There are those who taught that He didn't really die on the cross. His body died, but since He was God, He couldn't die.

So as the body was dying, the divine part of Him left. There were others that taught that God died on the cross.

So God was dead, so now there's no God, so don't worry about it. There are people teaching that today too, by the way. Well, we need to be reminded as well.

Well, I want you to notice that much of what Peter teaches in his letters can be traced directly back to the teachings of Christ. Did you know that?

If you read this and he's talking about something, he's actually going back and talking about something that Christ said or talked about. In some cases, he takes the same phrases.

[10 : 30] He does the same thing that James did. If you remember our James, I was impressed that James basically took the sayings of our Lord and brought them into context and said, here's what I want you to know.

Just remind you of what Christ said. He also knew that he was, he had a high view of Scripture. Now, that means that he held them in high esteem as being truthful.

That everything in Scripture was true. And he understood the Old Testament was Scripture. All the Jews did. It was God's Word. But he also knew that Paul was writing Scripture.

He says that at one point. He says, Paul writes them and then he says, and I am writing. He knew he was writing Scripture as well. He said earlier in chapter 1, moreover, we possess the prophetic word as an altogether reliable thing.

He knew that what he was writing was inspired in the sense that he was reliable. God was giving him the words to share with the people. So we need to pay attention to what Peter wrote.

- [11 : 34] Earlier he talked about false teachers. Then he talks about those in here, in this section, he talks about those who scoff the truth. Scoffers. He says that they both have similar motivations.

They're motivated to scoff and or to teach falsehood so that they can fulfill their evil desires, their urges, ungodly urges. They can do the things they want to do and not feel like they've done anything wrong.

They wanted to misrepresent the truth to warp it to fit their own desires. Think about that. Who did that in Christ's life? Satan did when he tempted Jesus.

He quoted Scripture but he wasn't quoting it the way it was supposed to be understood. He was using it to try to deceive and to get Christ to do something that was wrong, to sin, to compromise.

And that's really what he did to Adam and Eve. He took the words of God and sort of insinuated that they weren't trustworthy. It was Eve that twisted them slightly, made them bigger than they were and fell into error.

- [12 : 55] These people were misusing Scripture to lure God's people into error, believing, into believing lies to prevent the truth from being taught and obeyed. all right, to do this, Peter goes back in our section all the way back to creation, to the very beginning.

He's where God spoke things that are into existence by his word. By his word, the earth was formed and because of man's sinful rebellion, God destroyed what he created with a flood.

Then God also spoke through Jesus that the earth and the heavens would be destroyed by fire. And on the day of judgment, all things will be destroyed, burned up, and the ungodly will be judged, destroyed.

You know, God has a purpose in what he's declared to us in his word.

And I think that we as Christians often miss this. We think of the Bible, especially the Old Testament, we think of it as a collection of what? Stories. There's a story of Abraham, there's a story of this, there's a story of that, there's a story of creation.

- [14 : 14] And we don't ever link them together and look for a common purpose. What was God's purpose from the beginning to the end? You know that God is not a God of disjointed stories.

He didn't write a collection of short stories and then say, enjoy, learn what you can from them. He said, I have a purpose from the very get-go when I created and I'm going to fulfill it at the very end of time.

And that purpose has not changed. Now you can look, when you read the Bible, and I tell my class this, they probably hate me for it, but anyway, you need to look for some things. Look for people, place, and purpose.

What is God's people, what are they doing? Where are they doing it? And what is God's purpose in doing that? Look for prophet, priest, and king. Those three functions exist from the beginning when Adam was made.

Prophet, priest, and king. And we'll go all the way through and they're fulfilled in whom? Jesus Christ. And one day he will be with us as king of king and lord of lords. So look for those purposes all through scripture.

- [15 : 22] When you're reading a story, how does it link to the other stories? Where does it lead in the next story? One of the things we're doing in our class, we're doing Genesis. Seed.

Often your Bible translates it descendants. Well that sort of hides the whole importance of this thing. Seed. Remember when Adam and Eve fell? What did God tell them?

Your seed will crush his head. And then Eve right away after she had Seth said, maybe this is the one. She was hoping he would be the seed that would crush Satan.

Because if Satan was crushed then things could be put back in place. See how Seth wasn't. But he was the next step in the seed. And we've been tracing that seed all the way through.

We're up to Isaac right now. Where does that seed go? Where does it end up? Christ. Who fulfills it and crushes Satan.

[16 : 24] Look for those themes. That's sort of an aside. one thing we can be sure of and this is something that a lot of people even Christians are not sure of.

That God's word is reliable, true, and unchangeable. Teresa and I were listening to something the other day as we were walking. Tim Keller and he said a lot of people today, Christians say the Bible's true but there are just some parts that don't apply anymore because they're just inconvenient.

Well the answer to that is I'm sorry it's inconvenient but it's still true. It still applies. God's word hasn't changed. We're the ones that want to change it. God hasn't said anything different.

He hasn't changed his mind. God is not a man that he should change his mind or the son of man that he should repent. I think that's in numbers. And we people ignore that truth at our own peril.

Just like those in Noah's day ignored his warning. Jesus said this and you notice that Peter talked about Noah.

[17 : 48] Here's what Jesus said that he's referring to. For just like the days of Noah were so the coming of the son of man will be. For in those days before the flood people were eating and drinking marrying and giving in marriage until the day Noah entered the ark.

And they knew nothing until the flood came and took them away. It will be the same at the coming of the son of man. And a couple of verses later he said therefore stay alert because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.

it's not that we're just waiting for him because I don't think most of us think about it day to day. When was the last time you thought about the Lord coming back?

This morning. Yeah, me too. Some of us are getting old. And we're doing more than waiting. We're what? Anticipating. And we need to anticipate the fulfillment of the promise.

and that will come with the burning up of this earth and the heavens will melt away and there will come a new earth and a new heaven where we will live with God for all eternity. But we too have to be patient.

[19 : 05] We too have to be patient. He hasn't returned yet. Now, it wouldn't hurt my feelings, although there are a couple people that are a little hesitant on this, but it wouldn't hurt my feelings if he showed up right now.

All right? But he will return as he promised. You remember Jesus, when he was asked when he was coming back, what did he say?

No one knows. No one knows. Not the son. No one. Only the father knows. But we know that it's true. It's going to happen.

And Peter assures us that it will happen. And here's the other problem. And I know that sometimes we can even misunderstand what Peter said. He says, God's being patient with you.

A day is like 10,000 years. 10,000 years is like a day. Well, what he's really saying is God isn't bound in time like we are. We go to bed and we wake up and we go through the day and we go back to bed and we get up and we do the same over and over and over again.

[20 : 08] To us, we can measure our reality in days. You can say, two days ago I did this and tomorrow I hope to do this. Today the plan is this. We have hours and minutes and seconds.

I don't know who did that. But you know the ancients used to do it by morning, sunrise, noon, sunset, in the middle of the night. Now we, someone invented a watch or a clock and now we can break it down into seconds.

I know when I'm doing planks, one minute 15 seconds is a long time. 76 years seems like it's gone by really, really fast.

Time really becomes the way we measure our reality. But for God, his reality is beyond time. He is not surprised by anything that's coming.

He is not dismayed by anything that happened in the past. His purpose is being fulfilled. He sees it all. He knows it all. And so it does seem like it's taking forever.

[21 : 16] I mean, you do the math, it's somewhere around 2,000 some years that we've been waiting. Well, how long did they wait for Christ to come in the first place?

Thousands of years before he actually showed up. And it had to happen. We were learning very quickly in Genesis. Everything happens for a reason. You know why I'm convinced of this now. It just dawned was, you know why Abraham had Isaac so late in life?

He had to have him so late in life so that he could marry Rebecca. Because Rebecca really was in the same generation. A generation ahead of him but it was the same age.

It wouldn't have worked if it hadn't been. He had to be born late in Abraham's life so that he could have Rebecca who was the one God had picked to be his wife to continue that line.

But in the fullness of time at the time God appoints the exact time it will come just like it was the exact time for Christ to come.

[22 : 27] You know if you ever read some of the Christian writers they'll tell you that when Christ came there was already the Roman Empire what did the Roman Empire do? It brought a sense of peace to the world the known world and it built roads for rapid communications it had set up a system where there was all the gospel could be spread quickly and safely except for the persecution of Christians it was just the perfect time.

If it had come earlier there was all these fragmented empires and things wouldn't have worked this way if it had come later all that fell and the barbarians were running amok it was the perfect time.

When things get bad enough the perfect time will come and he'll return. God's timing is always right on time. The day is coming Christ will return and Peter repeats Christ's words he says it'll be like a thief in the night.

Now I don't know about you but what do you do every night when you go to bed to prepare for the possibility of a thief? Lock your doors.

I leave lights out on the outside too. I have lights that turn on motion sensor lights that come on as well. And when I walk at 4 o'clock in the morning I look around I see garage doors open and I'm going those people aren't prepared.

[23 : 55] Peter's saying the same thing. If Christ is coming back what are you doing to be prepared for the thief in the night who's coming to snatch you away?

John wrote this of Christ's coming. Then I said the heavens opened and here came a white horse the one riding it was called faithful and true and with justice he judges and goes to war.

His eyes are like a fiery flame and there are many dyed dim crowns on his head. He has a name written that no one knows except himself. He is dressed in clothing dipped in blood and he is called the word of God.

The armies that are in heaven dressed in white clean fine linen were following him on white horses. From his mouth extends a sharp sword so with it he can strike the nations.

He will rule them with an iron rod and he stomps the winepress or the fury and wrath of God the all powerful. He has a name written on his clothing and on his thigh king of kings and lord of lords.

[25 : 05] Which side of the battle do you want to be on when that happens? You want to look up and go oh no that would probably be the least you say or you are going to go yes my king has come.

well that brings us to the very end of what Peter's been writing he's if we really believe what Peter says and we should that Christ is coming back and when he comes back it's going to be a complete change of regime there's going to be judgment and a new earth and a new heaven the old will pass away how should we respond?

Think about that if you thought it was going to happen tomorrow what would you do between now and then? Tell others that's for sure I can imagine when Noah was building the ark and people said why are you doing it?

God's going to send a flood what's a flood? I don't know but this is going to become important Jesus tells us to be prepared to be alert not to be caught up in the world but living for the kingdom able to go when he comes I was thinking when I wrote that you remember the parable he told about the end he says there will be two men in a field one will be taken and the other won't there will be two men on roof one will be taken did you ever catch why the one didn't go?

one went back to get his coat and that reminded me of Lot and his wife Lot's wife was saved out of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah just like Lot was but she didn't make it why?

[26 : 55] She turned around she looked back when the Lord comes please don't go try to get your coat or something else you think is important oh oh oh I need my telephone Lord you can't leave without my apple be prepared and Peter gives an answer in verse 11 this is yours verse 11 he says conducting your lives in holiness and godliness while waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of the Lord now I'm not going to tell you how you do that holiness and godliness holiness means that you're going to be set apart doing your life for God that means you're going to listen to what he said you're going to try to obey his commandments remember what Jesus said if you love me you'll do what obey me we can have holiness by setting ourselves apart from the world and saying

I'm going to live for him and his purpose now I know the next question in your mind the prayer will be Lord what is your purpose for me well it's to live your life in a way that your character reveals him and his love that's part then the other one says godliness what is that well you're going to have to figure that one out but I bet you if you've got a favorite sin in your life the spirit has been convicting you to let it go and he'll do that progressively until all of those sins have been dealt with are we going to get it done in this lifetime probably not he's going to work on it making us more and more like his son Paul says that we should become like he is here's the part I think that we do this while we're waiting for him of course we do that what else do we have to do but here's the other thing hastening the coming of the day how can we hasten the day well

I don't know the answer to that particularly I do know one thing if you remember the great commission what did it say to do go and do what make disciples intend when until I return you want to hasten the day get out there and start making disciples because God is patiently waiting for all to repent not all of them will but all of them will respond one word or the other to the gospel if they hear it remember what Paul says how can they hear if no one goes blessed are the feet of those who go bring good news so we are to live in holiness living our lives for God and his purpose and God in us living by the work of the spirit in us to make us mold us in the image of our savior holding tightly and I mean holding tightly to the promise the promise of the new heavens and the new earth living with our

God as his righteous people in his presence in eternal fellowship and in peace let's pray Lord we thank you that you given us this scripture Lord there's a lot in there Peter doesn't always make sense sometimes to us Lord we really have to struggle with it I just pray that we would be like Jacob and wrestle with you over your word and come to understand how you want it to deal with us change us mold us make us into the image of Christ Lord we look forward to the day you come we cry Maranatha come Lord Jesus come we need you to come as the song says come Jesus come we need your healing we need your justice we need your peace we need your life in us fully that we may walk with you as your people in the land that you prepared for us help us to understand and to respond in Jesus name amen