

Isaiah 40:1-11
 Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
 2 Peter 3:8-15a
 Mark 1:1-8

Really?

- It's been nearly 2,000 years
- "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation" [2Peter 3:4](#)
- Let's turn to the Bible

WHERE IS THE PROMISE OF HIS COMING?

The third chapter of 2 Peter concerns the second advent of Jesus Christ. We will discuss the chapter from its beginning rather than just the verses in the lesson, because the entire chapter is relevant.

2 Pet 3:1-10 *This is now the second letter I have written to you, beloved, and in both of them I have aroused your sincere mind by way of reminder; ²that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles. ³First of all you must understand this, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own passions ⁴and saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of creation." ⁵They deliberately ignore this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago, and an earth formed out of water and by means of water, ⁶through which the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. ⁷But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist have been stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.*

⁸But do not ignore 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 about his promise as some count slowness, but is forbearing 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 loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up.¹

• ... you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord ... (v.2). In the past weeks we have been discussing passages on the second coming of Christ, including (1) OT prophecies of *the day of the Lord*, and (2) promises Jesus made concerning his return. Last week we read, "...they will see the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory." (Mark 13:26). Christians have always accepted these things by faith. The prophets said the Christ would be born, and he was. Jesus said he would be killed and then raised on the third day, and he was. Jesus said he would come again in power and glory, and he will. In spite of these things, there are those who ask ...

• "Where is the promise of his coming? ..." (v.4). Ever since Christ ascended, scoffers have said things like this, implying Jesus will never come. Their reasons today are (1) Nearly two millennia have passed since he departed, (2) "All things have continued as they were from the beginning of creation" (v.4), and (3) if God cared anything about the world, he would not allow evil and suffering to go on so long. "Where is the God of justice," they asked in the days of Malachi (Mal 2:17). We say things like this today, as if we were indignant toward God for not doing anything about all the sin and evil in the world. We fail to notice that if God were to remove sin from the world in any way except the one he has chosen, there would be no one left.

• *They deliberately ignore this fact ...* (v.5). Peter's first reply to those who say, "Things have not changed since the beginning of creation" is essentially that the argument is not valid. A paleontologist might put it this way today: "If you think life on earth has not changed catastrophically in the past, or will not change suddenly in the future, you don't have the facts. The geologic records do not support such a conclusion."

• *The Lord is not slow about his promise as some count slowness ...* (v.9). Men understand time as a measure of the interval between two events, whereas God sees time in a way no one really comprehends. Read Ps 90:1-12, "... For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday ... Thou turnest man back to the

¹ Bible quotations are from the RSV unless otherwise noted.

dust.” Psalm 90 makes God seem remote, terrifying – forever beyond knowing. Yet, two thousand years ago, a Rabbi spoke quietly to one of his disciples, “*Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father.*” (John 14:9). How do you respond to these things?

- ... *not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance* (v.9). In 1 Cor 13:7 the Bible says, “*Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*” Jesus loves you. He has *borne* your sins on the cross. He *believes* in you. If you have not yet repented and believed in him, he believes you will. He *hopes all things*, not wishing that any should perish. And he has patiently *endured* all the times you and I have turned from him to follow our own ways, failed to repent, and not asked him to forgive. In fact, God is even more patient with you and me than people sometimes think he should be.
- *The day of the Lord will come like a thief ...* (v.10). In the past weeks we have read OT and NT passages referring to this “day of the Lord.” The scripture here points out that, even though people scoff and say the day will never come, it will come nevertheless, and will come suddenly and unexpectedly. It is not a good idea to put off preparing for the return of Jesus Christ.

2 Pet 3:11-13 *Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons 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 kindled and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire! ¹³But according to his promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

- *What sort of persons ought you to be ...* (v.11). (“*What holy, godly lives you should be living!* – NLT) How different our lives are when each day is lived in anticipation of the coming of Christ! When you live this way and spread the gospel abroad to others, you are not just waiting – you are actually *hastening the coming of the day of God* (v.12), when Christ comes and brings an end to evil and suffering and death.

2 Pet 3:14-18 *Therefore, beloved, since you wait for these, be zealous to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. ¹⁵And count the forbearance of our Lord as salvation. So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, ¹⁶speaking of this as he does in all his letters. There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other scriptures. ¹⁷You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, beware lest you be carried away with the error of lawless men and lose your own stability. ¹⁸But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*

- *Be zealous to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace* (v.14). The emphasis throughout this letter (as well as the letters of Paul, as Peter said in v.15-16) is on *faith*. If a person believes what the Bible says about *the day of the Lord* and the second coming of Christ, then what he sees ahead is a new earth in which righteousness and peace abide and sin does not exist. Holding this vision of the future, we strive to live each day with Jesus, as we will soon be living every day with Jesus. And, as we wait for him to come, we *grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ* (v.18).

When we try to live this way in anticipation of our Lord’s return, we begin to notice a separation from the world, that is, from those whose hearts are not set on his coming and say, “I have only this life to live – I might as well make the best of it,” and proceed to live for their own benefit. Christians are urged (1) not to love the world this way (see 1 John 2:15-17, for example), and (2) to do all in our power to urge friends and loved ones to repent and open their hearts and believe the gospel.

From the lessons in past weeks, we know what God expects of us. We must rely on his love and patience and not be like the servant in Matt 25 who said, “*Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not winnow; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground!*” If you have the wrong idea about God, you won’t want to invest your talent in him.

As we look down the road ahead, we must quit thinking in terms of long-term goals, because there is no long term. We must think in terms of serving Jesus day by day, in small ways as well as great. “*I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me*” (Matt 25:35-36). May we strive each day to do the “small things” that mean so much in the kingdom of God!