

Will Jesus Come Again?

2 Peter 3:1-10

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The question of my title is answered in the text, “Will Jesus Come Again?” And, the answer is: yes, Jesus Christ will come again. According to 2 Peter 3, Jesus Christ will come again, and He will come to judge the ungodly and He will come to set up His Kingdom. I’ll break it down more in a bit, but He will reign on earth for one thousand years, and then there will be the destruction of the earth, and there’ll be a new heaven and a new earth. Peter kind of covers it from a unique angle tonight, the coming of the Lord. Christians, for two thousand years, have been waiting for and looking for the coming again of Jesus Christ.

Now, to review the chapters we’ve covered so far: in 2 Peter 1, Peter tells us to be standing in holiness; in 2 Peter 2, we’re to be standing against heresy; in 2 Peter 3, we’re standing in hope, he’s saying, “Don’t lose your hope.” Why does Peter want us to stand in hope? The answer is because of false teachers had come into the church and they were denying the Lord would come again or that God would intervene in history and come to judge the wicked. Let me give you just a little sneak peek beginning in verses 3-4. Look at it with me. Peter says, “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,”—these scoffers, in light of the chapter we just covered, were no doubt the false teachers. They were scoffing and mocking at the idea that Jesus Christ would come again or that the Lord would come and intervene in human history. Verse 4, “And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep,”—or died—“all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” Peter is wanting to protect them from this false teaching.

The same teaching is prevalent today. There are those that say, “The Lord is not coming back,” or that “Jesus will not return,” that “the world is just going to keep going on and on the way it always has been,” so we need to stand in not only holiness and stand against heresy, but we need to stand in hope. In Titus, we get the verse that we’re, “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ,” so we’re looking for Christ to come again.

In this chapter, let me break it down for you, Peter gives four solemn admonitions and they’re tied in with the word “beloved,” which appears four times. The first is “ . . . beloved . . . be mindful,” in verses 1-2. Secondly, we see “ . . . beloved, be not ignorant,” in verse 8. Thirdly, we see “ . . . beloved . . . be diligent,” in verse 14. Fourthly, we see, verse 17, “ . . . beloved . . . beware.” So, he says, “Beloved, be mindful. Beloved, be not ignorant. Beloved, be diligent, and beloved, beware.” Tonight, we look at just the first two: we need to be mindful, and we need to not be ignorant.

Peter starts in verses 1-7, there are only two main divisions in these ten verses. The first is verses 1-7, and we have here, “ . . . beloved . . . be mindful.” Go back to verse 1, and let’s read down to verse 7. He says, “This second epistle, beloved,”—there’s the first ‘beloved.’ “Beloved” reminds them that God loves them and that Peter loves them. It speaks of Peter being a pastor,

having a pastor's heart, and how he loved God's sheep. Remember, Jesus in John 21 commissioned him to feed the sheep, so Peter is doing just that. He uses that endearing term, ". . . beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up"—fan into flame—"your pure minds,"—using that phrase to describe his recipients of the letter indicates that they were believers, that they were Christians. So, I want to ". . . stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance." Remember, that word "remember" is one of the key words to 2 Peter. It's found throughout the whole letter. He's reminding us of what we already know.

Verse 2, "That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: 3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days"—and we'll talk about what that means—"scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. 5 For this they willingly are ignorant"—notice their ignorance is willing. There is none so blind as those that will not see—"of, that by the word of God"—they're ignorant of this fact—"the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: 6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: 7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word"—the whole emphasis on this first section of verses 1-7 is that we believe God's Word—"are kept"—or reserved—"in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition"—or punishment—"of ungodly men."

In verses 1-7 Peter says, "Be mindful, my beloved, of the Word of the Lord, that the Lord's coming, and He is going to indeed judge." Peter wanted them to remember, as I said, this is a key word in 2 Peter. It's found in 2 Peter 1:12, 13, 15. What did Peter want them and us to remember? Write this down. First, he wanted them to remember the truth of God's Word. He wanted them to remember that the Word of God prophesied and spoke of the fact that the Lord would come again. When all else fails, just stand on the Word of God. Go back with me to verse 2, "That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour." So, remember the truth of God's Word.

Notice the truth of God's Word was spoken by "holy prophets." That means this was Old Testament. When you have the New Testament referring to the Scriptures, it is actually referring us back to the Old Testament. The Old Testament and the New Testament is the Word of God. We're going to get there when we get to verses 15-17, but you might want to make a little footnote, look at first verses 15-17, there's a reference there that Peter makes to Paul's writings and that some false teachers twist it to their own gain and some things that Paul wrote were hard to understand, and it says they twist it ". . . as they do also the other scriptures." Catch that little phrase "other scriptures." He was saying, "Paul's writings were Scriptures just like the Old Testament Scriptures," but the fact that he breaks it down there in verse 2, ". . . spoken before by the holy prophets."

Now, in the Old Testament, and I have to be careful because I'm tempted to get into my rapture message right now, but in the Old Testament there's all kinds of references to the second

advent of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament anticipated the first advent or coming of Jesus Christ, and it anticipated the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, but it skipped over the Church Age. I am what Bible students call a dispensationalist, I'm not what's called a hyperdispensationalist, but I think there are different time periods how God dealt with man in Scripture. It was always done in love and grace, but there are different dispensations. In the Old Testament, when the prophets spoke of the coming of Messiah, they saw His first coming and they saw His Second Coming, but they didn't know there was going to be a two thousand-year gap between the two.

You know, the mountains behind, as I used to live up in San Bernardino we were right up against the foot of the mountains. When you're looking at the mountains from that perspective, you see kind of the face of all the hills, but you don't see the valleys between. You could start walking up thinking, I'm going to go up the mountain, and whoa, there's another one behind it. Oh, there's another one behind it. Oh, there's another, and you can't see the valleys between so there's what's called the mountain peaks of Scripture. The prophets saw His first coming, they saw His Second Coming, they saw the Millennium, they saw the Kingdom Age, but they didn't see the Church Age. This is why in the New Testament the Church is called a mystery. In the Bible, the term "mystery" means something that cannot be known unless God reveals it. It's something that was hidden in ages past, in this case Old Testament, but is now revealed to the sons of men.

Here's another doctrine that is in the New Testament, but it's not revealed in the Old Testament, and that is the doctrine of the rapture. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:51, in speaking of the rapture, "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye . . . 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 . . . then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." But the rapture is a New Testament mystery. It was revealed only in the New Testament. The first revelation of the rapture is John 14 where Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." He's going to take us to the Father's house. That's a rapture verse. Again, I said I don't want to get into my rapture message. I gotta save that for next week.

But the fact that it is " . . . spoken before by the holy prophets," so the Old Testament does prophesy and spoke of that Christ would come. If false teachers tell you Jesus isn't coming back, we believe the Old Testament, right? We believe the Word of God. We "stand alone on the Word of God, The B-I-B-L-E / Yes that's the book for me / I stand alone on the Word of God / The B-I-B-L-E." They spoke of it. But notice also it's spoken of by, " . . . the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour," verse 2. The Old Testament prophets spoke about it, and the Lord spoke about it, and He also spoke about it through the apostles. So, we have the Lord's teachings in the New Testament given to us by the apostles.

In Acts 2, when the early church was born, "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine," so they were reading and studying the writings of the apostles, the oral teachings.

Jesus predicted that He would come again.

Now, in Matthew 24 and 25, make a note of that, it's what's called the Olivet Discourse. It's one of the most famous teachings that Jesus ever gave on the subject of His Second Coming. Jesus said that all these things of the Jerusalem temple would be destroyed, not one stone left upon another. They asked Him, “. . . when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming.” That is a key to understanding Matthew 24 and 25. The destruction of Jerusalem and “. . . the sign of thy coming.” When they said, “the sign of thy coming,” they knew nothing about the rapture. It's a New Testament mystery not revealed yet. They weren't asking about the rapture. So, the rapture is not in Matthew 24 or 25. That's why people get messed up, they put verses on the rapture, which are verses on the Second Coming, and they get them all out of order and out of place in the New Testament. So, the Lord spoke in the New Testament about His coming. He said, “For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be,” and Jesus spoke about His glorious coming in so many places of the New Testament.

And, verse 2, we have “. . . the commandment of us the apostles.” So, “. . . spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles,” and why do we believe Jesus will come again? Because the Bible says He will. So, what do we do? Secondly, verses 3-4, we remember people who come will scoff. The New Living Translation of verses 3-4 reads, “Most importantly, I want to remind you that in the last days scoffers will come, mocking the truth and following their own desires.” Now, they mock the truth and follow their own desires, it's because they follow their own desires that they are mocking the truth. They don't want the idea that Jesus would come or that God would judge them.

Look at verse 3. They will come when? “. . . in the last days,” and they will be scoffing and mocking. Again, they were most likely saying, based on what Peter says here, that God is not going to intervene. God's not going to judge. God's not going to bring judgment upon the world and interrupt natural laws and destroy this earth. These false teachers, as I said in context, were described for us last week in 2 Peter 2. If you missed that, you can go back and study 2 Peter 2. What are they mocking? The idea that Jesus is coming back to judge sin.

Years ago, Billy Graham, when he was still in his active ministry, whenever he would do a crusade he would have kind of a news thing where the media would come and ask questions before the crusade. I'll never forget watching that. One of the reporters said, “Dr. Graham, Christians have been saying for years and years and years, ‘Jesus is coming back,’ my father, my grandfather, and my great grandfather, all these people thought that Jesus is coming back and He hasn't come back. Do you really believe Jesus is going to come back?” and started to kind of mock the idea of the coming of the Lord. Billy Graham said, “Most certainly I believe Jesus is coming back. It's prophesied in the Bible, the Word of God,” and then he said, “You, my friend, have just fulfilled prophecy. In Peter,” and he quoted this verse in 2 Peter, “. . . that in the last days scoffers will come,” saying the very thing this reporter said, “Where's the promise of His coming for since our fathers have fallen asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of time.” We need to know that's going to come because God predicted it in His

Word.

Why did they scoff? As I said, verse 3, they're walking after their own lusts. When a person's walking in their own sin, they're certainly not going to be anticipating or wanting the Lord to return. Their arguments are given in verse 4. Look at it with me, it's key. They said, "Where is the promise of his coming?" I believe this "coming" is Second Coming, not rapture. The rapture happens, I believe, seven years before the Second Coming. The rapture happens before the tribulation; the Second Coming happens at the end of the tribulation and before the Millennial reign of Christ. So, "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep,"—which is a reference to dying, so Abraham's died, Isaac died, Jacob's died, all the Old Testament prophets have died. They've fallen asleep. Here's their point, "all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

Now, this is what's called uniformitarianism. That's the view or the idea that creation is eternal and that there's no outside force of God, there's nothing outside of creation or matter, and that creation will uniformly continue through all time—nothing is going to change; God has never, God will never, intervene. Someone described it as, "The view that the cosmic processes of the present and future can be understood solely on the basis of how the cosmos has operated in the past." They say, "God is not going to break into history and interrupt natural law in the progress of time." So, God is not existing. There are many times atheists or what's called deists, "God started it all and He let it go. God's not going to come, God's not going to intervene, God's not going to come to judge." They believe that things will keep going as they always have been.

I want you to note in verses 5-7 Peter points out three things they're willingly ignorant of. They're willingly ignorant of these facts, three things. First, that God created the world by His word, that God actually started it all out, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." These are some heavy verses where Peter, drawing from Genesis 1, but they forget that God created the world. This is what's happening today. We have bought the lie of evolution, and we've kind of just eliminated the idea of God, which is convenient, there's no moral law, there's no moral standards, and God's not going to come, God's not going to judge. How convenient for your sinful lifestyle—there's no God, and God's not going to come, and God's not going to judge.

Verse 5, in the New Living Translation, "They deliberately forget that God made the heavens by the word of his command, and he brought the earth out from the water and surrounded it with water," drawn from Genesis 1. So, God made the universe. God is eternal, and we're going to see a classic verse on the eternality and the timelessness of God in our text, but everything began with God. You say, "Well, how did God get started? How did God get created? Where did God come from?" He is not a created being. He is a self-existent, eternal being, the God who created all things, and everything came from God. You either believe, and you don't have to be very intelligent to comprehend this, that either there was an eternal God that started everything out or created all things—matter, time, and space—or that there was matter, time, space, energy, that came into existence or that it's eternal, and either way, you have to accept

that by faith.

It makes more sense to believe in an eternal self-existent, all-wise, powerful, omnipotent God, then it is to believe that in the beginning was matter. Where did the matter come from? You have to start somewhere. God was not created, God was not made, but God is eternal, and God is outside of time and space. He transcends the creation, so He is the Creator of all things. Read Colossians 1 about Jesus being the One who created all things and holds it by the Word of His power. It's a marvelous text to tie in this passage here in 2 Peter.

So, first, they forget that God created the world, and that's seen very clearly in verse 5, "For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water," God is going to have to separate the water above the earth from the water below the earth and on the earth, the seas. You can read about this process in the book of Genesis.

Just another little footnote, when God created, do you know how He did it? By the word of His power. The theological term for that is what's called "fiat"—God can speak things into existence that did not previously exist. Men, people, we do not have that power. We'd like to. We could go into the garage and say, "Ferrari, be," but Ferrari is not. We can't speak our own reality. But God has what's called "fiat." This is why God spake and there was light, "Let there be light: and there was light." God can just speak it into existence, and that's what's alluded to in that fifth verse, " . . . that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water."

Secondly, they were ignorant of the fact that God has intervened in the universe in the past. It's called the Genesis Flood. Look at verse 6, "Whereby the world,"—he's talking about the water above the earth and the water on the earth and in the earth, and isn't it interesting that God created planet earth with water. Personally, I think it's...I can understand we want to go to Mars and to the moon and into space, but to me it's insane that we think we can go out into space and inhabit space. God created the heavens and the earth perfect for man's existence. It's interesting that He built into the earth the water needed for life on the earth. It's the only planet we discovered where there's water, and it sustains life. It's also enough water to destroy life.

We've seen recently in Texas the massive floods of destruction that has been taking place and the loss of life. So, in the creation, we have water under the earth or the fountains of the deep which would be broken up, we have the oceans and a third of the earth's surface is ocean, and we have in the Old Testament in the antediluvian world that the world was shrouded by a canopy of water, which actually collapsed when the Flood took place. As you see these pictures of the flooding in Texas and in New Mexico and other parts of the country, and you see the power and the force and the destruction, can you imagine God just lets loose all this water on the earth and above the earth and completely floods the entire world. There's a lot of archaeological and geological evidence, if you are willing to do the research, unless you want to be intentionally, willingly ignorant of a worldwide deluge or flood. There's a lot of evidence

geologically for that.

In verse 6 it says, “Whereby the world that then was,”—that’s the world of Genesis 6, 7, 8, and 9, the world of Noah and his big floating boat—“being overflowed”—he uses that term—“with water, perished.” Now, only eight people survived, Noah, Mrs. Noah, his three sons, and their three wives. Can you imagine that? Can you imagine God saving you, your spouse, your children, your daughters-in-law and wiping out every human being on planet earth and starting off fresh with you and the animals, two of every kind, that go on the Ark.

Now, I’ve never been to the Ark back east, Ken Ham’s Ark, but I hear it’s amazing to see that Ark, the size of that thing, and it’s built to proportion, and that God saved life on the earth, but He did come, He did flood the world, and it was man’s wickedness and man’s sin and judgment which brought that flood upon the earth.

As I said, it’s interesting we decorate children’s nurseries with Noah and the Ark. That is a story of God’s judgement on sinners. Can you imagine tucking your little one in, “Good night, little Johnny. Pleasant dreams.” You’ve got Noah’s Ark on the wall. But God gave the rainbow, right? to make a promise that He would not destroy the earth by flood. But, as we’re going to see here in our text, He will destroy the earth by fire.

What Peter is basically saying is, “Look, the prophets and the apostles and our own Lord said this judgment would come when the Lord returns.” And, now he’s saying, “It has happened in the past.” When I see the gay pride month and I see them marching in the streets of America and think, Have you forgotten the story of Sodom and Gomorrah? Have you forgotten the wrath that God rained down upon those people because of their sin and their wickedness? Have you forgotten Noah and the Flood? “But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be . . . they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage,” and they didn’t know until the flood swept them away, that God would come in judgment. They must’ve mocked Noah. They must’ve laughed at Noah. For 120 years he preached to them, “God’s going to judge. God’s going to judge. God’s going to judge.” And, they mocked that, but they were all destroyed. Again, he’s reminding them of what God did in the old world, how He destroyed the world by water and it perished.

Notice in verse 7, the third point I want to make is that God will destroy the world by fire. So, they’re willingly ignorant that God created the world by His Word, secondly that God has intervened in His universe, and thirdly, God will destroy the world by fire. Look at verse 7, “But the heavens and the earth, which are now”—so we had the antediluvian world, verse 6, before the Flood, now we have the world we live in now—“by the same word,”—the same word that spoke them into existence, the same word that brought the Flood and the destruction—“are kept in store,”—again, Colossians 1:17 says that Jesus holds all things by the word of His power —“reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition”—which is punishment—“of ungodly men.”

We don’t like these truths in the Bible—God’s going to judge ungodly men. Not the Church, not

His body, not the Bride. I believe, again, in a pretribulational rapture before God's judgment in the tribulation period, but He will destroy ungodly men. One of the primary purposes for the tribulation period is for God to pour out His wrath on a Christ-rejecting world to bring people to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. Even though at the time of God's wrath and judgment, there will be lots of people come to faith in Christ who will turn back to God at this time. God will destroy the world by fire. All He has to do is release His hold on all the atoms, all matter. We know that when you split an atom the power that takes place and the explosion. Can you imagine God just releasing all the atoms and all of matter and just a massive explosion, the world being destroyed by fire.

Let me give you a couple of other references to this. If you peek at verse 10, and I'm getting a bit ahead of myself, but just a quick peek. It says, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night;"—and that is, 'the day of the Lord' is the tribulation period—"in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise." You talk about the big bang theory, there's going to be a huge bang, "great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." God is going to judge the world. That's a pretty sobering thought. If you believe the Bible, and I believe the story of Noah and the Flood, I believe it is historical truth, God has done it before, God will do it again. Now, He did it by flood, next time He's going to do it by fire, " . . . and the elements shall melt with fervent heat."

Peek at 2 Peter 3:12. It says, "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire,"—so even the heavens will be on fire—"shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." That's pretty radical. Here we see again the destruction that will take place before the Lord sets up His Kingdom of one thousand years on earth, so the end of the world.

Did you know the world as we know it will come to an end. Jesus said it like this, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." You don't want to be a materialist. You don't want to live for this world. It's going to pass away. In Revelation 21:1, John says, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth," that's the eternal state after the earth is renovated by fire. In 2 Peter 3:13, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." So, you don't want to be earthbound, you want to have your eyes on the eternal. " . . . we . . . look for new heavens and a new earth," there's going to be a new world coming.

The second section, verses 8-10, and we won't tarry on this section, is "Beloved, be not ignorant." So, verse 1, " . . . beloved . . . be mindful," but now we have, verse 8, "But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack"—or slothful, or lax—"concerning his promise,"—we are, He's not—"as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance,"—God's patience and longsuffering. He waited 120 years for the antediluvians, Noah's day, to repent before He wiped them out. He's waited now for two thousand years before He judges the world of which we live now.

Notice verse 10, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night,"—how does a thief in the night come? Unexpectedly. He doesn't tell you he's coming, right? No thief calls you up and says, "Hey, I'm going to rip you off Saturday night. Leave the back door open." Have you ever been ripped off? And you say, "Oh, man! I never thought..."

I remember I told the story about my hubcaps. Does anybody have hubcaps anymore? I've got a '78 VW bus. It's got hubcaps. I remember lying in bed, summer night, window wide open, and I heard ERRR POP! ERRR POP! ERRR POP! Four times because there's four hubcaps. I'm lying in bed and I go, "Man, that's the weirdest sound." I'm just a couple feet away from getting out the front door, getting to the driveway, and catching the dude. You would've read it in the newspaper, "Pastor Chokes Hubcap Thief." I didn't have a clue, That's really weird, and just go to bed. I get up in the morning, my car's parked in the driveway out of the garage, and all four hubcaps are missing. Immediately I knew what ERRR POP! was. I thought, If I had only gotten up and gone out there I would've caught him in the act. It still bothers me. So, you never know when the thief's going to come, so you have to be watching and waiting, right? That's the concept.

Let's go over these verses, verses 8-10, quickly. Peter answers the question, "Now, why hasn't Jesus come yet?" In the first section, verses 1-7, He will come and judge. He's done it before, He prophesied it in the Word. Now, in verses 8-10, Peter tells us why He hasn't come back yet, and there are three things he says. First, God is not bound by time. God is eternal, verse 8, "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

I've seen all kinds of crazy interpretations of this statement. One that's definitely wrong, and people come to all kinds of different conclusions, is to try to figure out a timeline based on this statement for the Lord to come back, "... that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." They estimate that it's been six thousand years, maybe around seven thousand years since Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, so that's seven days, and He's going to come and now we're about the seven thousandth year, and that would be the millennial reign of Christ. They come up with all these ideas and concoctions of trying to create a date setting by this concept. This is not what Peter's intending to say by this statement. Anybody, in any prophetic passage, that uses it to predict a timeline is wrong. Unless you're reading the seventy weeks of Daniel, and he gives the time it starts and when it stops, and does some time frame, but as far as the coming again of Jesus Christ, no one knows the day or the hour. Anybody that's going to predict the time is going to be wrong. This is not what this verse means.

What does this verse mean? It actually is a verse telling us that God is eternal, that God's not bound by time. It's a figure of speech for God is eternal. There's no time with God. You know, we say, "It's been two thousand years," and God says, "No, it's just been two days." We're freaking out, "Lord, where are You? Where are You? What's going on? Why haven't You returned?" I remember when I got saved in early '70s, 1971 to be exact, and Hal Lindsey wrote his book, The Late Great Planet Earth, and we were all sure we were going to be raptured

within the year. How many of you got saved after 1971? Aren't you glad that Jesus didn't come in 1971? You would've been left behind. That's why he goes on to say, ". . . not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." He's longsuffering. He's waiting. But God's not bound by time. That's all that's saying is that God is eternal, that God is not bound by time or that God is timeless.

Here's the second thing that Peter says they are ignorant of and why Jesus hasn't come, ". . . but is longsuffering," I've already mentioned it, verse 9, or merciful. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise,"—He's not being slack about His promise, Jesus promised He would come—"as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Now, I don't want to get sidetracked and bogged down in the doctrine of election and free will and whether or not people are predestined to go to hell and all that stuff. But I will say that this text, I personally believe, means that God is not willing that anyone should perish. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world." I happen to believe that the "world" there is referring to the whole world of humanity, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

This is not teaching universalism. God's not going to save everyone, but if you're not saved, it's because you haven't repented. Notice even in the text, it says there in verse 9, "but that they should come to repentance." So, they haven't believed in Christ, they haven't trusted Christ, they haven't put their faith in Christ, they haven't repented and turned to Christ in belief and been born again and saved, but God is longsuffering. God is merciful. God wants more people to come to salvation. It's the longsuffering of God that has made it wait this long for those who aren't believers to get saved—your family, your friends, your loved ones, people that still need to come to Christ. We pray, "Lord, come now." I mean we're always meeting Christians, "Wouldn't it be cool to get raptured right now?" "But my neighbors aren't saved, yet. Not yet," or "My family's not saved yet. Not yet." And God is ". . . not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." God wants you to repent and be saved.

Lastly, Peter gives us the assurance that the Lord will come in verse 10, "But the day of the Lord will come." Now, that phrase, "the day of the Lord" is all through the Old Testament, and it's not a 24-hour day, it's an epoch or a period of time, and for sure it involves the tribulation period and especially that time when God pours out His wrath upon the earth. All through the Old Testament that phrase, if you take a Concordance and run it down, "the day of the Lord" refers to the time of the wrath, judgment, darkness, thick darkness, gloominess. It does indeed involve the whole period of tribulation. Some feel that it involves the second advent of Christ and the judgment that takes place at the Battle of Armageddon. Some feel that it goes on even into the Millennium, and that's possible, but I think it's simplest to say that it's the tribulation period. Now, you can compare that with 1 Thessalonians 5:2. It says, ". . . the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child." So, they're asleep. They're drunk. But, we're awake. We're children of the day. We're children of the light, so we're not going to be here for "the day of the Lord."

First Thessalonians 5 is very, very clear that “God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.” So, this judgment—this wrath, this “day of the Lord,” this destruction—I believe will take place after the rapture of the Church, 1 Thessalonians 5, and that whole section there is very clearly teaching, I believe, a pretribulational rapture of the Church. But he gives us that assurance, “. . . the Lord will come as a thief in the night,”—but we’re—“. . . children of the day,” Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 5.

And when He comes, “. . . in the which the heavens shall pass away”—which Jesus said would take place—“with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” So, we need to believe God’s Word—believe God’s Word, not listen to the scoffers. God has guaranteed He would come again.

Now, three things to remember: God’s Word is true no matter what the scoffers say; God’s work is consistent, what God has done before, God will do again. If God is holy and righteous and judged sin in the past, what makes you think God will not do it in the future? God will judge sin. Thirdly, we need to remember God’s will is merciful. God is merciful.

Now, a little peek, and then I’ll close, at verse 11, “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy”—manner of living—“and godliness.” We’ll get into that next time we’re together in this passage of Peter two weeks from tonight. But, “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be?” You ought to be living godly lives, looking for the coming of the Lord, and for the new heaven and the new earth. Amen?