

Living With Assurance
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2 Peter 3:1-18

Opening Question: Think about how we all felt about security in our country eleven years ago in fall of 2001 (after 9/11) vs. today? How have things changed since then and why do you think they have?

People may scoff about whether the second coming of Christ is REAL. You and I have ASSURANCE of His coming. Furthermore, we need to be VIGILANT, living like it might be TODAY!

2 Peter 3:1–18 (ESV)

The Day of the Lord Will Come

3 This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, 2 that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, 3 knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. 4 They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.” 5 For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, 6 and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. 7 But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

- **Verse 1: What does Peter say he was trying to do with his two letters? What term does your translation have?**
- διεγείρω diēgēirō, dee-eg-í-ro; from 1223 and 1453; to wake fully, i.e. arouse (lit. or fig.):—arise, awake, raise, stir up.
- **Question: What do we mean by the term “heads up?” What does “heads up” mean in sports? Also, what does it mean to “give someone a heads up?”**

Showing an alert, competent style: play heads-up basketball.

n. Informal

Information or notification, especially in advance: gave me the heads-up on the new security measures.

Peter is both “giving a heads up” and telling us to BE “heads up”...alert; awake; expectant; vigilant about the SECOND COMING of Christ and HOW WE ARE TO LIVE in light of His return.

This reminds us of what Peter said in the beginning of this second letter:

2 Peter 1:12 (ESV)

¹² Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have.

- In that verse he basically said: *“You already know these things, I’m just going to keep REMINDING YOU.”* In 3:1 he calls that “stirring up your sincere mind.”
- **Question: Even if we are SINCERE about the Christian life, what can happen to even the most SINCERE Christian? Distraction; SPIRITUAL DROWSINESS.**
- Verse 2: What are we to REMEMBER? “the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles” -- which is what? Scripture.
- Then in verse 3 WHOM does he warn us about? Scoffers. **What is a scoffer?**
- Warren Wiersbe says: *“A scoffer is someone who treats lightly that which ought to be taken seriously.”*
- Also in verse 3: Why does Peter say these scoffers are scoffing?
- *“Don’t try to depress me with your END TIMES stuff...I’m enjoying myself!”*
- *“If I sat around all day thinking that time is running out and Jesus is coming back I might have to change my ways and DO something about it!”*
- Peter quotes the scoffers: 4 They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.” **What did they mean? SOMEONE put that thought into your own words.**
- Basically, the scoffers were saying: *“People have been saying Jesus is coming back for years and nothing has ever been different from the beginning of time.”*
- Verse 5: What historical facts does Peter say they’ve left out?
- God created the world with water and he destroyed that creation with water. He can do anything he wants with ONE WORD.
- The first time He destroyed creation by water, verse 7 says the next time it will be FIRE.
- *“Okay,”* said the scoffers, *“WHAT’S THE HOLD UP? Why hasn’t He come back?”*
- Let’s read further beginning in verse 8:

8 But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

You should **HIGHLIGHT** or UNDERLINE verses 8 & 9. Significant about God’s timing.

Warren Wiersbe:

The scoffers did not understand God’s eternity nor did they understand His mercy. Why was God delaying the return of Christ and the coming of the Day of the Lord? It was not because He was unable to act or unwilling to act. He was not tardy or off schedule! Nobody on earth has the right to decide when God must act. God is sovereign in all things and does not need prodding or even counsel from sinful man (Rom. 11:33–36).

- Looking back to verses 8 & 9:
- **Question: What do those verses tell us about the nature of our God?**
- **Question: Verse 9 - Why IS God delaying the return of Christ?**
- **Question: Let's not skip an important word in verse 9. What is the difference between REGRET; CONFESSION; and REPENTANCE?**

Wiersbe again:

It is worth noting that God revealed this same long-suffering in the years before the Flood (1 Peter 3:20). He saw the violence and wickedness of man and could have judged the world immediately; yet He held back His wrath and, instead, sent Noah as a "preacher of righteousness." In the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, God patiently waited while Abraham interceded for the cities and He would have spared them had He found ten righteous people in Sodom.

Verse 10 tells us the FACTS:

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

So, what do we do considering this? Verse 11...

11 Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, 12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! 13 But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

This world is GOING up in flames and God will provide His people with NEW heavens and a NEW earth "in which righteousness dwells."

Wiersbe again:

The purpose of prophetic truth is not speculation but motivation; thus Peter concluded his letter with the kind of practical admonitions that all of us must heed. It is unfortunate when people run from one prophetic conference to another, filling their notebooks, marking their Bibles, drawing their charts, and yet not living their lives to the glory of God. In fact, some of the saints battle each other more over prophetic interpretation than perhaps any other subject.

Question: How should we live knowing that Jesus could come back at any moment? How can we "hasten" His coming? Thy Kingdom come; completion of His church.

Peter gave us final words in answer to the question: "How should we live?"

14 Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. 15 And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, 16 as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. 17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. 18 But 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.

Question: How do we “grow in grace?” If you wanted to GROW at anything how much time would you spend on it?

So, What’s the Takeaway?

- It’s a fact: Jesus is coming back at any time.
- There are gonna be “scoffers” who say “Don’t worry about all that END TIMES stuff...nothing like that has ever happened...just ‘eat, drink, and be merry!’”
- Peter says: Don’t be fooled. BE ALERT! LIVE like Jesus is coming back tomorrow.
- What does that look like?

Chuck Swindoll has three ideas on how we should LIVE in light of Christ’s return: He calls them: CLEAN UP; LOOK UP; and SPEAK UP:

1. Clean Up - Clean up the sins in our lives. Don’t deceive ourselves about our sins (1 John 1:8); instead we should spend time in Galatians 5:19-23 measuring our actions against God’s standard.
2. Look Up - How can we live in CONSTANT expectation of His return? Are you and I investing in things ETERNAL or spending all our time on things that will BURN UP?
3. Speak Up -

Swindoll writes:

Finally, with whom can you share Christ before it’s too late? Imagine if Christ returned tomorrow and the judgement began. Whom would you miss in heaven? Whom would you leave behind? Whom would you feel grieved to see at the great white throne judgment because you failed to share with him or her the simple gospel that could have spared them from eternal condemnation? Pray for this person. Swallow your pride and lovingly share the truth with him or her. Communicate your concern. They may not listen. They may mock you. On the other hand, your words may be just the thing that nudges them one step closer to God’s eternal kingdom.”