The Scriptures and the Scoffers

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Date: 25 February 2026

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[0:00] If you would open your Bibles with me to 2 Peter. My mic broke when I was coming up to do announcements, so that's why it sounded like someone was! shooting a gun off in here, but got it swapped out because Sean was gracious, gave me his for the night, so should be good now. But open with me to 2 Peter. We'll be in chapter 3, verses 1 through 7.

As you're turning there, I would like to have you discuss a question with your neighbor or someone around you. What is the most hopeful or most encouraging thing that we believe as Christians? Okay? Most hopeful or most encouraging thing we believe as Christians. Go.
All right. Good discussion, good discussion. Let's hear some of your answers. Most hopeful or most encouraging thing we believe as Christians. William.
Jesus died for us, paid for our sins. We don't have to worry about working for our salvation. Jesus is coming back. Great answer. Great answer. Yep. Yeah, he's going to come back and make all things right and save us finally. Yep.
Heaven. Yep, that's good. Great promises to cling to. Yes. Last one. Do what? Yeah, that's excellent. All right. So, great discussion on what's most hopeful for us.
[2:13] I think, Carrick, was that you that said return of Christ? Nice answer. I think Peter might agree. So, obviously, the nature of our salvation is that Christ has died for us, paying for our sins. We don't have to work for our own salvation. We don't have to work for our own salvation. I think the thing that gets us through the most suffering and the most difficulty is that Christ is going to return. Christ is going to return. As a human being, what you think about defines who you are and determines how you live.

What your heart treasures, what your heart prizes determines the path that you take in life.
And as Christians, if we are going to be faithful, if we are going to be godly, we need to treasure Christ. We need to love and value Christ above everything else in this life.
And ultimately, the point in time when our desire for Christ will meet with actually seeing him is when he returns again. The return of Christ is something that 2 Peter focuses on, and we've talked about a lot as we've been studying through this letter. I think the return of Christ is the most hopeful expectation we have as believers. Titus chapter 2, we'll read it later, but Titus chapter 2 calls it our blessed hope. This is what we hope in as believers. It's when God will make all things right. It's when he will end all suffering for his people, and ultimately it is when we will see Christ.
And so when Satan and the false teachers he sends to the church attack this belief, attack this hope, they're messing with something that's at the core of our theological DNA, something that makes us tick as Christians. And we may not think like that, or we tend to forget the return of Christ more than we focus on it, I think. But if we think about the return of Christ, this is a central truth to what we believe as Christians. Every single New Testament letter mentions the return of Christ, except for two, 3 John and Philemon. Every other letter at least references the return of Christ. This was what the early church was longing for. This is what early Christians were expecting. And if you go among persecuted Christians, Christians who are killed for their faith, Christians who are put in prison for their faith, and you ask them, what's your favorite book of the Bible? Almost all of them will say the book of Revelation, because it focuses on the return of Christ. It focuses on the end of suffering. It focuses on
[5:24] God's plan in our suffering. And if we as Christians forget about the return of Christ, if we fail to focus on it, we won't just miss something theologically. We will also forget to live a godly life.

Because the return of Christ pushes us and drives us to live for him. And that's exactly what the false teachers were doing. They wanted to live however they wanted to live. They wanted to pursue their sin, and so they ignored the return of Christ. And so you all go to school by law. Some of you

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like it.
And you have tests in school. The tests drive you to pay attention in class, I hope. The tests drive you to focus, because you recognize you're going to be accountable for this information later. I remember one morning my mom was reading the Bible to us at the breakfast table, and it was one of the genealogy. So it's just name, name, name, name, name, name. And me and my sister kind of lost focus for a minute. We're kind of goofing off. And my dad said, I'm going to quiz you on this later. And we just froze. We're like, oh no, not a name test. Tests will help us focus in the present, because we recognize we're going to be accountable later. That's what the return of Christ does for us. We recognize that what we do, what we say, what we think will be publicly exposed, publicly revealed, and we will be accountable to Christ for how we've lived this life. This doctrine helps us focus our life. And maybe you're here and you're not a believer, and you're kind of skeptical of Christianity, and you're thinking, this is probably just a coping mechanism for like weak people, people that don't know how to deal with life. I would urge you, based on this reality, that Christ will come back to judge the living and the dead. I would beg you to reconsider. I would beg you to take a serious look at what we'll be studying this evening. Or maybe you're here on the other end, and you think you've got Christianity figured out. I can just kind of coast through life, because I already know all this stuff. I would also urge you to be careful how you live this life. If you start to coast, you're likely to start drifting away from the truth. We need constant reminders of what's true. We need to constantly refresh ourselves on what the Lord has taught us. And in our passage tonight, Peter tells us what his purpose of writing this letter is. He wants to stir them up to remind them of the truth that he has taught them, and to remind them to be obedient to that truth. So we'll have two points tonight. The first one is remember the scriptures.
Remember the scriptures, and we see that in verses 1 and 2. Peter says, this is now, chapter 3, verse 1, this is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them, I'm stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles. Peter says, this is now the second letter I'm writing to you. The first letter is 1 Peter. Brilliant, right? So 1 Peter is the first letter. This 2 Peter is the second letter he's writing to them, and he's saying that in both of them, his purpose is to remind them of what's true, remind them of what they already know, and here he calls them beloved at the end of the first sentence.
It's a term of deep, sincere affection. These people are loved by Christ. Christ has laid down his life for them, and so Peter loves them as well. In chapter 2, Peter was attacking the false teachers and exposing how they lived and exposing what they taught, but now here he turns his attention back to his friends.
[9:38] Peter's heart is for these people, and so when we approach the Bible, this isn't a dry textbook. This is a letter written out of deep friendship and deep concern, and this is my heart for you guys. You guys are very precious to me. I want to lead you into the truth. I feel this way about you, and it's right that I do, and so my hope is that if the day comes when you leave our church, whether through graduation or your family moving or you move up out of the student ministry and on to what's next for you, I don't necessarily care if you remember any particular sermons. What I do want you to remember is that you were loved. You were deeply cared for, and I feel this about you. Peter is saying, I'm writing to you, beloved. I love you guys as friends, and I want you to stay faithful to Christ, and I have so much joy, and I'm so thankful for you guys to watch you follow Christ. I don't cry a lot, but watching your baptisms, like I can barely make it through. So Samantha was just baptized on Sunday. Oh my goodness, loved it. So I love seeing you guys follow Christ and be faithful to him, and Peter's saying in both of these letters, what I'm trying to do is stir up your sincere mind by way of reminder, and that word stirring up, that's again, that's how the gospels describe the disciples waking Jesus up on the boat in the storm. They're shaking him awake, trying to get him to wake up so that he can help them. Peter's wanting to shake these Christians awake so they don't get tricked, so they don't get deceived, to wake them up out of their spiritual sleep, to wake them up out of their grogginess. Because if we lose our alertness, if we lose our energy as Christians, we can be tricked. We can be led astray. And we all do dumb stuff when we're sleepy. Lacey and I, while we've got kids at home, if we're waking up to change a baby's diaper or something, we have an agreement. It's not written, but it's an agreement. We don't have conversations with each other between 1 and 4 a.m. Because we just like get mad at each other for nothing and don't even remember what it is. So we do dumb stuff when we're sleepy, and the same

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is true of us spiritually.
Peter is writing this letter to make sure we are fully awake. He wants us to remember the gospel. He wants us to remember what Christ has done for us.
And he says in verse 2, that he wants us to remember the scriptures. He says that you should remember two things. One, the predictions of the holy prophets.
And secondly, the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles. And so he calls us to remember the predictions of the holy prophets.
[12:57] If you read through the Old Testament prophets, they're constantly pointing us to the Messiah, constantly pointing us to who this Messiah would be and what he would do. And do you know what they very often talk about?

Is that when the Messiah comes, he will bring judgment. He will judge the world, and he will also create a new world for us. And so he says, remember these predictions of the holy prophets.
And he calls them holy because the prophets are completely different than these false teachers that have risen in their church. These false teachers are marked by their sin. These false teachers are marked by what their flesh wants.
But the prophets' lives were marked by holiness and obedience to God. And he says to also remember the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles.
Now I don't think that Peter has any one commandment in mind here. I think he's using this term commandment to refer to everything that Jesus taught.
[14:01] The command from Jesus to repent, to believe in him, to be submissive to him, to live a life that pleases him. And so really I think Peter is just referring to the requirements that Jesus has of his followers.

And now it's interesting because this is exactly where the false teachers are going wrong. They're not believing the scriptures and they're not obeying Christ.
They're not believing what's been predicted and they're not being faithful in how they live their life.
And so Peter calls Jesus both Lord and Savior. Jesus is both of these things.
He's Lord. That means he's got absolute authority. He is the master. He is the sovereign God over us who can demand of us whatever he wants. And he's the Savior.
He has given his life for us. He died on the cross so that we could live. He paid for our sins so that we could be righteous.
[15:07] And he paid for our sins so that we could live a life that's pleasing to him. And so I want you to save your spot there in 2 Peter and go with me to a couple of different places. Number one is Ephesians.

So turn back with me to the book of Ephesians. I want you to see this with your own eyes.
Ephesians chapter 2. I'll start reading in verse 8.
It says, For by grace you have been saved through faith. So it's not through anything we do. It's through simple belief. And this, this salvation is not your own doing.
It's not something you've done. It's a gift of God. The gift of God. Not a result of works so that no one may boast. We are saved by grace through the death of Christ.
Look at verse 10. For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.
[16:21] He saved us and made us new so that we would do good works. So that we would be obedient to him.

Okay, go with me to one more place. The book of Titus. Titus after 1 and 2 Timothy.
If you get to Hebrews, you've gone too far. Titus 2. Verse 11.
Says, For the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation for all people. And so what Paul's doing here is he's using the phrase grace of God to refer to the appearance of Christ which saved us.
And what does this grace do? What does Christ do in saving us? Verse 12. Training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.
[17:33] Look at verse 13. Waiting for our blessed hope. And what is that hope? The appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The return of Jesus. Verse 14. Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

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You can go back with me to 2 Peter chapter 3. Christ died to save us, to liberate us from condemnation in hell for all eternity.
And what he expects of us is to live a life that's marked by obedience to him. And so Peter says, remember the predictions of the holy prophets. Remember the prophecies, but also remember the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles.
apostles. The apostles faithfully taught this message to the early church. The apostles faithfully taught this message to these Christians that Peter is now circling back to and writing this letter to.
[18:47] Peter wants them to remember the biblical teaching they've received. And I want you to notice that Peter doesn't care if they remember him in particular. He's about to die.

He's about to go to heaven and see the risen Lord. And he's not asking them to remember him. He's asking them to remember what he's taught them. He wants them to pay attention to what they know to be true from the scriptures.
As that leads us to our second point, we saw firstly, remember the scriptures. Secondly, remember the scoffers. Remember the scoffers.
In verse 3 he says, knowing this first of all. So this is what we need to keep in mind while we're paying attention to the scriptures, while we're obeying what Jesus has commanded us.
Knowing this first of all, verse 3, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.
[19:53] Peter is saying that scoffers will come. These people are mockers, people who make fun of what we believe, people who try to cast doubt on what the Bible teaches, people who are trying to intimidate these Christians out of believing what they believe.

I remember when I was in elementary school, I was a huge Texas Rangers fan, big baseball fan, loved watching the Texas Rangers, and they were terrible for a long time. Okay?
They won the World Series a few years ago. I was so excited, but they were terrible for a long time, but I was a faithful fan. And I was hanging out with some older people at church, and I was wearing a Texas Rangers hat, and he was like, are you a Rangers fan?
I was like, yes I am, taking a bold stand, and he goes, why? They're terrible. And I almost cried because I was a sixth grader. I was like, oh, maybe, yeah, I don't really like him that much though. So I was, he mocked me, and I took it super personally. Still not over it, but through his mocking, through his kind of scoffing, it caused me all kinds of doubt about my loyalties to the Texas Rangers.
[21:01] These scoffers will do the same thing to these Christians. They want them to stop following Christ. They want them to doubt their commitment to Christ. And Peter says they will come in the last days.

And when we read phrases that say like the last days, we tend to think of, you know, the apocalypse, the very end of time, like the final few days left here on earth.
How the New Testament uses this phrase though is to refer to the, all of the time after Christ has come. So Christ appears, he dies for our sins, he's buried in the grave, raised on the third day, ascends to the right hand of the Father, and now, after that point, we are in the last days.
If you want to write down Hebrews 1, 2, it says, in these last days, God has spoken to us by his son. We are living in the final era of human history.
And it says that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing. Scoffers are going to scoff. I would say that's the last cheesy pop culture reference I'll ever make, but it's not true.
[22:16] They will come with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. This is their primary motive. This is the thing that defines them.

They love their sin. They love their sin. They will make some arguments against Christianity. They will make some arguments against the return of Christ.
But ultimately, what they truly love is their sin. They do not want to give up their sin. And you'll encounter people like this all the time. People you try to share the gospel with.
People you try to invite to church. People you try to give a Bible to and offer to read it with them. They may have some arguments against what we believe. But their ultimate problem is that they are sinners and they love their sin.
That's their true problem and that's the true problem of these scoffers as well. they're following their own sinful desires. As we think about interacting with people like this, we need to keep in mind that we will give an answer to Christ ultimately and not someone in our third hour.

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[23:32] We will ultimately stand before Christ and have to give him an account of our lives, not our friend who makes us feel a little bit embarrassed about what we believe. You are accountable to Christ, not to someone who's trying to cause you to doubt your faith.

But what exactly will they scoff about? Well, Peter tells us what they'll say. It says they'll question Jesus' return in verse 4. They will say, where is the promise of his coming? Where is the promise of Christ's coming?
And they give an argument for this. For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.
And so they'll look at this and say, Christ promised to come back. Where is he? It's been so long since he promised that. Where is the fulfillment of that promise?
And you may hear arguments like this today because it's been 2,000 years since Christ said he would come back. Is he going to keep his promise? And remember, these are scoffers.
[24:37] This is not an innocent question seeking information. They're wanting to make fun of the Christian faith. They're wanting to mock what these Christians are believing about Christ coming back again.

And I just want you to notice that Satan himself is a scoffer. If you remember back into the garden in Genesis 3, he also asks a question. Did God really say?
That's not an innocent question either. He's not seeking information. He's trying to tempt in that situation Eve. And these scoffers are the same way. They're not seeking information.
They're just trying to tempt. They're trying to lure and entice. But what's the logic of their argument? They say that ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.
And so they're teaching kind of an early form of what's called uniformitarianism. Just spell uniform and then Arianism. You'll get close. Uniformitarianism, basically it teaches that the universe is a closed system.
[25:53] And so God maybe created at the beginning of time, but then he just kind of left it alone. Deism is also similar to this, that God created powerfully in the beginning and then just kind of stepped back and is letting the universe run its course.

And so they say ever since the Old Testament fathers, ever since Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have died, everything's just been going on as normal.
And so in other words, they think that divine intervention, God intervening with his creation is impossible. They say that's not something that happens. God doesn't work through his creation. God doesn't work in the world that he has created. And so in their minds, it's ridiculous to think that Christ is going to come back and judge the whole world.
They think that's foolish. They think it's ridiculous for people to think that. Now we would agree that the universe and our world has a high degree of consistency.
[27:05] We know when the sun is going to rise tomorrow. We can allegedly know the weather like ten days in advance, the ten day forecast. It's mostly right half the time. We can know there's a high degree of consistency in how our world works.

Is that a sign of God's lack of involvement? We would say that's because he sustains the world in an orderly way.
He keeps the world running by his word. He keeps the world going in a manner that's consistent and regular. But they say because of this regularity and because of the delay in the promise that Christ has made, it's ridiculous to think that Christ is coming back.
But Peter's going to poke a couple of holes in their argument. He's going to say that they overlook some historical facts. Verse 5, for they deliberately overlook this fact.
And this fact has a couple of different aspects, but they overlook the fact that the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God.
[28:18] And that by means of these, that's by means of the water and the word, the world that then existed was deluged or flooded with water and perished.

And so Peter's saying this is the argument they make, but they're turning a blind eye to two different things. They're turning a blind eye to creation and they're ignoring the flood.
And so they refuse to acknowledge the fact that creation is a huge act of God. God. It's a large act of divine intervention. The Lord is stepping into history and altering it forever.

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He says that the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God.
If you read Genesis 1, the phrase will continue to strike you, and God said, and God said. Everything was created by the word of God.
[29:22] And we see from the New Testament that the word of God isn't just God's speech, it's actually a person. In John 1 it says, in the beginning was the word, the word was with God and the word was God.

All things were created through him. The heavens and the earth were created by the word of God. Verse 6, and they overlook that by means of these, by means of God's word and the water, the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.
These are two cataclysmic events. The creation of everything and then the destruction of everything. And that flood, the destruction of everything was a direct result of God's judgment on sin.
And so it's not as though God has created this world and then stepped back. He created it and continues to be a part of it and does step in to judge his creatures. He judged the world at the flood and if you remember chapter 2, Peter's already documenting how many times God has judged the world.
He judged the angels in the beginning, he judged Solomon, Sodom and Gomorrah and he sent the flood on the whole world. The flood destroyed everything and everyone.
[30:50] But by believing this they also failed to recognize the importance of Christ's death. Christ's death was fundamentally an act of judgment by God.

It was an act of salvation to deliver his people but it was God pouring out his eternal wrath on his eternal son. And Peter's already referenced the flood as well back in chapter 2 saying that the flood put the world on notice that we are accountable to the God who has made us.
And then he lets us know in verse 7 that God is ready to do it again. verse 7 but by the same word the word that created and the word that brought the flood 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.
The exact same word that created the world the exact same word that brought the flood is now ready to rain fire down on this universe as an act of judgment.
The world itself was stored up with water for the flood and now Peter's saying the world is stored up for fire being ready to rain fire down on the ungodly.
[32:22] And when you think about what's at the earth's core it's magma or something like that. I don't know if it's called magma or not but it's hot stuff. And there's really only like a 10 mile distance between us and that stuff.

And when you think about it the universe itself is really just kind of a potential nuclear bomb. Like you start splitting atoms all over the place you superheat everything things go wrong really quickly. Peter is saying God is ready to pull the trigger. God is ready to do that again. God is ready to bring another worldwide judgment on the ungodly.
This judgment will also impact the entire world. And it will be a day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.
The ungodly at the end of time will recognize that the return of Christ wasn't just a myth. That Christ's delay in his promise wasn't because he made a bad promise.
[33:24] They will recognize that God does indeed intervene in his world. And on that day God will bring eternal salvation to his people and he will bring eternal judgment to his enemies.

And next week in verses 8 and following we'll see why has it been so long? Why has Christ delayed? Why did he make a promise of his return return and then 2,000 years later that hasn't happened yet?
And the reason is because he is patient with his people. He is patient with humanity desiring that everyone would reach repentance. But as we think about the return of Christ this is something the apostles repeatedly preached on.
This is something they repeatedly pointed their people to and it's something their people eagerly looked forward to. They were eagerly waiting for Christ to appear so that everything would be set right.

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And this event isn't just true. It's not just going to happen. It is the motivation we have to live a godly life. We will see Christ one day.
[34:38] And if you're a Christian that should be the highest hope you could possibly have that we will receive everything that's been promised to us when we see Christ. And if you're not a Christian Christian you will still see Christ and that should be the worst nightmare that you ever have.

You will see him and he already knows exactly what's in your heart. He knows exactly who you are and there will be no escaping from him.
And I want to finish by reading the words of a hymn called This is my father's world. The final verse says, This is my father's world.
Oh let me ne'er forget that though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet. This is my father's world.
The battle is not done. Jesus who died shall be satisfied and earth and heaven be one. These things will be true when we see the Lord coming on the clouds with glory.
[35:48] Let's pray. Father, we thank you so much for the truth we've seen from your word this evening. And as we sang earlier in this service that you are good and gracious.

You are patient with us and you sent your son to die for our sins on the cross. And so I pray for all the students here, for all the adults here that we would truly embrace that gift that you've given us, that you have paid for our sins through the death of your son.
I pray you believe that. I pray that truth would sustain us and keep us going and help us to be obedient to your son. And Father, help us think often about the return of Christ.
Help us to remember that reality. Help us to not drift from it. Help us to live a holy life that's pleasing to you. It's in Christ's name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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