

## More Things to Remember

2 Peter 3:1-2 (08/10/14)

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Jesus is coming back. Would you agree? How about, Jesus already came back in AD 70? Or Jesus won't be back until the world becomes Christian? Or maybe you're one of those, "I don't really care about future events, or eschatology. I'm a Pan-Millennialist, it'll all pan out." I have news for you. The Biblical authors cared a lot about the second coming and wrote a lot about it. Peter is going to take chapter 3 to stir us up about the coming of the Lord. Just check out verse 4 where mockers are mocking, "Where is the promise of His coming?"

I remember soon after being saved hearing Dallas Seminary's at that time president John Walvoord at a prophecy conference in Souderton, Pa., preaching on the rapture of the church, and it just blew me away. I had no idea the Bible taught this stuff. Jesus is coming for His bride and we'll all get snatched up or raptured and meet the Lord in the earth's atmosphere, like a groom coming to receive His bride, and He would take us back to His Father's house to live with Him forever! I really thought He well may come back that night!

One of the wonderful things about reading and preaching through books of the Bible is that it brings you to these doctrines and teachings. 2 Peter 3 is about the second coming. The second coming is a theme in most if not all the epistles. Even James says, "He's right at the door!" John says, "Whoever has this hope in Him purifies himself even as He is pure." 1 John 3:3. We are to look eagerly for His return. Not just a casual sleepy, "Yeah, okay, whatever," but going out the door, looking for Him, walking out the lane, looking down the street to see if He's coming. That's the idea in Hebrews 9:28, "So Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are **eagerly waiting** for him." Like our kids when they were young looked for the coming of grandparents. They weren't happy just sitting at home waiting. Oh no, out came the bikes, down the lane, up the road, around the corner, to the next corner, eyes peering into the distance! "Here they come!" How excited they were as they high-tailed it home! Of course, they were especially excited when Grammy pulled out her bag full of goodies. But how excited we should be for Christ's return! You have the same word in Philippians 3:20, "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we **eagerly wait** for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."

So when is Jesus coming? He didn't tell us, did He? But listen to this: "The darkness grows thicker around us, and godly servants of the Most High become rarer and rarer. Impiety and licentiousness are rampant throughout the world, and we live like pigs, like wild beasts, devoid of all reason. But a voice will soon be heard thundering forth: 'Behold, the bridegroom cometh!' God will not be able to bear this wicked world much longer, but will come, with the dreadful day, and chastise the scorers of his Word." That was Martin Luther in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. How much closer we are as our world turns more and more away from the truth of God.

We're not weird about this, like reading tea leaves of the second coming. Is the Islamic Caliphate, Ebola, earthquakes all over the world evidence Christ is almost here? Maybe, maybe not. Never forget, nearly one half of Europe was wiped out in the 1300s by the Black Plague. But He is right at the door and might come today! Are you ready? What about digital implants in your forehead and right hand with all your credit card info on it? Sounds like Revelation 13, doesn't it?

2 Peter 3:1-2 is Peter's launching pad for teaching us about the second coming. These two verses are full of shepherdly counsel for God's people. This counsel is tucked between his warnings of the false teachers in chapter 2 and mockers in chapter 3. Let's look at five words of encouragement.

**Believers are the loved ones of God – v. 1**

*This is now, beloved...*

“Beloved.” Like any good shepherd, Peter loves these people. He refers to them three more times as beloved in this chapter. He loves them because they are God’s people. They are loved by God and chosen in God’s love through Christ. In love God predestined us to be His children. Therefore they are the most precious people on earth to Peter. Paul expresses this same tenderness and care for God’s people in 1 Thessalonians 2 and 3. Paul goes on and on about how grateful he was for the grace of God in the lives of those Thessalonians. And how grateful we all are to see God’s grace in the lives of the believers God has placed around us. In 1 Thessalonians 3:9 Paul says, “For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God.”

Peter feels the same way about his brothers in Christ, and I feel the same way toward you. I rejoice in all your love you have for Christ, for God the Father, for His Word, for His people. We are beloved by God and therefore are committed to one another. Peter loved them and wanted the best for them. He wanted them to be strong in the faith; so do we. He wanted them to honor Christ through their faith and growing and changing, and so do we. He wanted them to be ready for Christ’s return, and so do we. All biblical preaching is a ministry of love designed to prepare God’s people to give a good account at the judgment seat of Christ.

Ladies and gentlemen, if you are in Christ, you are in a family of eternal loving relationship! Nothing will separate us from the love of God in Christ. Peter loved these people, and I love you and thank you for your love for me! We don’t always get it all right and sometimes we offend one another or disagree over non-essentials, but if we know Christ, we are beloved!

**You need to hear God’s Word – v. 1**

*the second letter I am writing to you...*

Peter writes to them because he knows they need to hear God’s Word. This flows out of his love for God’s people, but he knows our faith is based on truth, on revealed truth, on Scripture, and we need to hear it. We need to feed on the Word. How do we do that?

First, by hearing preaching. Peter would have loved to preach to them what he wrote here. This is one of the things that so encourages me about this congregation. You love the Word of God. Many of you read it every day. And you love to hear God’s Word preached. I love to hear good preaching from other men who love and honor our Lord. And I love preaching God’s truth. I know this is how God builds His people. Listening to preaching is important. I read a booklet this week about how to listen to sermons, good ones, boring ones, lousy ones, (and how not to listen to heretical ones.) Being in the local church and praying and supporting and giving good attention is so important. You need to hear the Word.

Second, you need to read the Word, including this second epistle from Peter. Joshua 1:8 “This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you do according to all that is written in it, for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”

**You need a good up-stirring – v. 1**

*in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder...*

Notice what Peter’s aim is in this letter. He is stirring up their sincere minds. I have a commentary by Alexander Nisbet published in 1658. He translates this word, “up-stirring.” “The Apostle has proposed their up-stirring as his scope.” Later he says we need to hear the Word over and over with much “up-stirring to the right use-making of them.” Love it! Here’s a can of paint. It needs “up-stirring.” When you go to Home Depot, they put the can in their “up-stirring” machine and man, it up-stirs it vigorously. The whole counter shakes. All that pigment is up-stirred so it’s ready to go when you get home. And at home after the paint settles down again, you take out a stirring

stick and you get it all “up-stirred” again. That’s the difference between preaching and reading God’s Word. With good preaching you have vigorous up-stirring, and you get convicted and strengthened and fortified and all stirred up! You should go out of here up-stirred to serve your God. And at home, you take out that stir stick every day and “up-stir” your heart by reading God’s Word so all the great truths that are already in there get swooshed around and become useful for your life.

You need to be up-stirred about Christ’s return, but also about all kinds of truths you’ve already heard, like the sovereignty of God, the gospel, justification by faith alone, Christ’s righteousness imputed to your account, about your fight against sin and need of God’s forgiveness, that God’s grace is sufficient for you and no temptation has taken you but God will give you a way to handle it, you can’t excuse or blame others for our sins, and how to pursue reconciliation, biblical confession, granting forgiveness, not returning evil for evil but blessing instead, and on and on. Husbands, honor your wives. Wives, do your husbands good and not evil all the days of your life. Calvin says our minds “become dim and contract rust when admonitions cease.” Pride and arrogance push their way back into our hearts, like bullies insisting on having their own way. How often do we need a good up-stirring about humility, esteeming others as more important than ourselves, denying ourselves for the good of others? Constantly.

We daily need up-stirring in our hearts. We need that “Wake up, people!” That’s one Super-bowl commercial I remember. You’ll find the biblical text in Romans 13:14, “It’s time to wake up from your sleep!”

#### **You need to develop a biblical way of thinking – v. 1**

*in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder...*

And this takes me to my fourth point. Peter wants God’s people to develop a biblical way of thinking, a sincere mind. He mentioned this in 1 Peter 1:13, gird up the loins of our minds. God’s word sharpens your thinking. So Peter says, “I want to re-mind your minds.” The word sincere is the opposite of hypocritical. Literally it means to judge something in the full light of the sun. A prudent and frugal wife goes down to the pottery store to pick up some new dishware, but before she actually buys anything, she takes the piece of pottery out and holds it up in the light of the sun to see if this seller is trying to sell her defective pottery. Hucksters of that day would fill cracks with wax and then paint over the wax to hide those cracks, but nothing gets past this wise Proverbs 31 woman. So a vase that was sincere was without cracks. It was no “crack-pot.”

Peter is reminding us here how important it is to develop a genuine, un hypocritical way of thinking, a sincere mind. Romans 12:2 says we must refuse to let the world dictate how our minds think, but rather we need God’s Word to renew and transform our minds so we think biblically. And again, let me say how encouraged I am by the level of sincerity among us. We all struggle with hypocrisy, but we need to pray diligently that God would keep us real, that we would constantly be learners and teachable and growing and changing and casting out idols of the heart, stuff we live for more than Christ. Sincere, un hypocritical minds! Not fakes. No one fakes out God anyway. His eye is always reading our hearts.

#### **You need to pay attention to your whole Bible, Old and New Testaments – v. 2**

*that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles.*

Remember what? Just the New Testament? Some people think the Old Testament has no relevance any more. Why read the Old Testament, it was just for Israel! No, the Old Testament is still our Bible. The Bible is one united voice, one story unfolding progressively from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22. People can mock its promises and warnings about the future, but they are banging their heads against the infallible anvil of God’s Word.

We're going to find out many, really most, of those promises and warnings of the Old Testament have never yet been fulfilled. People will come along and say, "No, all those prophecies of our Lord returning and ruling on earth have been fulfilled in the church. There's no future for Israel." Let me take you on a quick ride back to just a few Old Testament promises about the future, ones I particularly love.

Check out Ezekiel 37:24-28, <sup>24</sup> "My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances and keep My statutes and observe them. <sup>25</sup> They will live on the land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons and their sons' sons, forever; and David My servant will be their prince forever. <sup>26</sup> I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever. <sup>27</sup> My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. <sup>28</sup> And the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever."

Then jump up two chapters, Ezekiel 39:25-27, "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, 'Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name. They will forget their disgrace and all their treachery which they perpetrated against Me, when they live securely on their own land with no one to make them afraid.'" Boy, that certainly hasn't happened yet.

We could go to Daniel 2 or 7 to show how Christ will return, the Ancient of Day, to rule over the earth along with His people, and Zechariah 14:1-9 and how the nations will hate Israel, but Christ will return to the Mount of Olives and will rule over the entire world. This is exciting stuff! He's coming, people!

Then Peter tells us to remember our New Testament, written by the apostles. In Matthew 24 Jesus assured the world He is going to return to sit on His glorious throne. In 1 Thessalonians 4 Paul said Jesus is coming into the atmosphere to rapture His people, dead and alive, to be with Himself, so be ready. And of course in Revelation 19 you have that awesome and majestic return of Christ to this world to destroy His enemies and set up His 1000 year reign on earth, followed by the Great White Throne Judgment for all unbelievers, and then we go into an eternity of infinite, holy, glorious love with Christ's name on our forehead, to serve Him forever, and ever, and ever.

Peter's point? From Genesis to Revelation, 66 books, Old and New Testament, we've got one grand story and we haven't gotten to the end yet! Are you ready? Are you one of God's beloved because of your faith in Christ? Do you love God's people? Are you eagerly letting God up-stir your mind, keeping you on the alert? Are you developing a biblical, godly mind-set, evaluating everything through the lens of Scripture, including the daily news? And finally, can you find your way through those 66 books God has given us to feed our souls and warn and assure us of His second coming? Are you eagerly waiting, looking up, ready to go today, because your redemption is drawing near?