

Why is Christ's Return Taking So Long? (2 Peter 3:8-9) (May 17, 2020)

- Peter focuses all his attention on refuting the denial of the great hope of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.
 - He provides a safeguard for our faith by reminding us of God's former word about the Second Coming by the Old Testament "*holy prophets*" and New Testament "*apostles*". God has already spoken, so can't be caught off guard by the slick denials of the false teachers (v. 1-2)
 - He also provides a safeguard for our faith by refuting the false teachers notion that the Lord isn't coming because history continues as it always has without any great interruptions (v. 3-6: they willfully shut their eyes to the historic creation by God and the great flood)
 - In verse 7, he affirms that Christ is coming again and it will be a brutal and harsh judgment that destroys both "*the ungodly*" (like false teacher) and "*the present heavens and earth*" (representing the entire universe and explains later in v. 10-13)
- One of Peter's central themes is how all this happened in the past and will happen again in the future because of God's authoritative word (v. 2, 5, 7).
- In verses 8-9, Peter now injects a brief word about why the return of our Lord is being intentionally delayed. He shares two insightful and encouraging reasons.

1. **God is operating by a different timetable** (3:8)

- God's perspective on time is radically different than ours and Peter's shepherding heart ("*beloved*") wants them to see and understand this timeless truth ("*But do not let this one fact escape your notice*")
- Peter uses **Psalm 90:4** to help us look beyond our world of time to see things from God's perspective ("*one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day*")
 - While God created time, He is a timeless Being ("eternal") and He's not limited to our time schedules to fulfill His purposes.

- God is always right on schedule, so we can and need to learn to wait with joyful anticipation (James 5:7-11).

2. **God is occupied with a greater transformation** (3:9)

- God's long delay from our perspective is all about a patient desire to see people repent from His perspective.
 - a. **Notice God's perspective** ("*the Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness*"): To the false teachers, His promise to return was invalidated because He hadn't come, yet even Jesus intimated this would happen when He told two parables about His second coming (Matt. 25:5, 19: The Ten Virgins; The Talents)
 - b. **Notice God's promise** ("*His promise*"): God is a promisekeeper (Heb. 10:23; Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18) and He promised to return "*with great power and glory*".
 - **He is coming to rapture His church** (1 Thess. 4:13-18, 1 Cor. 15:51-58)
 - **He is coming to resurrect and reconstruct our bodies** (1 Thess. 4:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:52-53; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Jn 3:2a)
 - **He is coming to reward His people** (Rev. 22:12; Romans 14:10-12, 2 Cor. 5:10, 1 Cor. 3:10-15, 1 Cor. 3:13)
 - **He is coming to release His wrath upon the ungodly and the universe** (Rev. 6-19; 2 Pet. 2:1, 3, 9; 3:7-12). It is like none other tribulation ever experienced (Jer. 30:7, Dan. 12:1, Matt. 24:21, Rev. 16:18, Joel 2:2) over a 7-year period (Dan. 9:27, Rev. 11:2b-3, 12:6, 14, Dan. 7:25, 12:7); unfolding in three series of judgments (seals-Rev. 6:1-8:1; trumpets-Rev. 8:6-9:21, 11:15-19; bowls (Rev. 16:2-21) & thrown into the lake of fire with the devil & his angels, antichrist & false prophet
 - **He is coming to remove the curse** on the new earth (Rom 8:19-23, 2 Pet. 3:13). Geography will change (Isa. 2:2-4, 32:15, 35:1-2, 6-7, 40:4, 51:3, 65:17, Ezek. 47:6-12), fruit is abundant (Isa. 4:2, 30:23, 43:19, 55:12-13, 65:21), animals will lose their venom/ferocity (Isa. 11:6-9, 35:9, 43:20, 65:25), The Sun and Moon's light will change (Isa. 30:26, 60:19-20, Zech. 2:5), physical health is changed (Isa. 35:5-6, 49:10, 33:24, Jer. 30:17), emotional health changes (Isa. 35:10, 51:11, 65:19), peace will reign (Isa. 2:4, 9:4-7), holiness is manifested (Isa. 24:23, 4:2, 35:2, 40:5), perfect

justice is administered (Isa. 9:7, 11:5, 32:16), there is full knowledge (Isa. 11:1-2, 9), life is protected (Isa. 41:8-14, Zech. 14:10-11), freedom from oppression (Isa. 14:3-6, 42:6-7, 49:8-9), no immaturity (Isa. 65:20), human reproduction will be plentiful (Jer. 30:20, Ezek. 47:22, Zech. 10:8), work in a perfect economic system (Isa. 62:8-9, 65:21-23, Jer. 31:5), economic prosperity (Isa. 4:1, 30:23-25), obedience is pandemic (Jer. 31:33, Ps. 22:27-28, Mal. 1:11), righteousness will reign (Isa. 60:21, Mal. 4:2, Ps 72:7, Isa. 33:5)

- **He is coming to rule the world** first for a thousand years, binding Satan and reigning with His people as “*KINGS OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS*” and then forever in His eternal kingdom (Rev. 11:15, 19:11-21, 20:1-6)
 - **He is coming to reconcile all things to Himself** (Col. 1:20, 1 Cor. 15:23-28)
- c. **Notice God’s patience** (“*but is patient toward you...*”): God isn’t delaying because He’s unable or unwilling or indifferent, but because He desires people to repent. He is very patient (1 Pet. 3:20; 2:5; 3:15; Rom. 2:4; Ex. 34:6)
- d. **Notice God’s passion** (“*not wishing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance*”):
- We know **God isn’t a universalist** (all go to heaven), otherwise all the judgment passages would be false (like v. 7).
 - We know **God isn’t heartsick** over stubborn sinners who won’t exercise their free will to come to Christ (the will of sinner’s isn’t free, but unrighteous, unwilling, unable to please God, blinded by Satan, darkened in understanding, excluded from the life of God)
 - We know **God isn’t uncaring** towards the lost simply because He only wishes for the “*elect*” to repent.
 - It’s helpful to understand the nuances of God’s will or desire (there’s the will of demand; decree; desire). God’s will of decree is sovereign and cannot be altered, so He elects some sinners to repent (Jn 6:44, 65; 1 Cor. 1:26-31). God’s will of desire expresses His compassion for all the ungodly (Ezek 18:32; 33:11; Luke 19:41-44; Rom 9:1-3; 10:1; 1 Tim. 2:3b-4). God sovereignly decrees some things He doesn’t desire (The death of Christ was predestined, yet it required evil sinners to accomplish it; Acts 2:23). God’s will of demand calls us to proclaim the gospel to everyone so that sinners can be forgiven.