

Don't Overlook This

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[0 : 00] Corey is going to read for us today, and he is going to read from 2 Peter chapter 3, and he is going to start at verse 8 and go down through verse number 10.

But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is a thousand years, and a thousand years is one day. 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.

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 works that are done will be exposed.

How involved is God in the world? How involved is God in the world?

Imagine you go to your backyard tomorrow morning, and there in your backyard is an amazing treehouse.

[1 : 21] Now, I'm not suggesting that we all have trees in our backyard, because some of us don't have any trees in our backyard. So just picture an amazing treehouse that sits right on the ground.

Maybe you would call it a man cave, or a she shed, or a kid cabin. This is a special place to be. It's a special place to play in, to sit and read, just to be present and to think.

Think of the world like that treehouse. And again, consider the question, how involved is God in the world?

Some people believe that the treehouse that you are in has no builder. That the treehouse just came together naturally over time, without any design, without any real purpose.

This worldview is often associated with atheism or naturalism. Try to explain the world as we know it, but without reference to God.

[2 : 25] Others say, well, I don't know who built the treehouse, and I think it's somewhat presumptuous for you to assume that you can know who built the treehouse.

Maybe someone did, maybe someone didn't, we just can't be sure. And that type of uncertainty reflects a worldview called agnosticism.

Some people feel something special when they're in the treehouse. Peace, beauty, meaning, purpose.

And yet they are not interested at all in knowing the builder or following any of his rules. You might call this spiritual but not religious.

They seek some sort of connection with the treehouse, some sort of purpose, and yet they are unwilling to commit to any particular belief system.

[3 : 23] Spiritual but not religious. Others believe that God really did build the treehouse, but then he walked away. Like a Ron Popeil rotisserie oven.

God chose to set it and forget it. And now the world is just kind of running and doing its own thing. And God doesn't show up. Even when things go bad in the world.

Even when something breaks. This is a view called deism. God created, but he is no longer involved in his world. Some people think that God's main priority, his main concern, his main goal is that humans will always be happy in the treehouse.

And something like a genie, you can just ask God for whatever you want. And he will give it to you if it will make you truly happy. This is called moralistic, therapeutic deism.

This is a popular worldview, even though most people wouldn't call it that. It emphasizes human happiness and being nice. Finally, some, I suspect like many of us, believe that God built the treehouse.

[4 : 49] That he cares deeply about it. That he remains with us and he loves those who are in the treehouse. He gives people freedom to think, to choose, to act, to love.

And yet he remains sovereign over everything that happens in the treehouse. This is the heart of classical theism.

That God exists outside of the created world. And yet he is personally involved in this world. There are different answers, as you can see, to the question, how involved is God in the world?

Some ask, if there really is a God, where is he? Don't you see all of the suffering, all of the pain, all of the hurt, all of the mistreatment, all of the abuse?

How can you say that there is a God who is involved in this world? And how can you possibly believe that that God is good? In Peter's day, False teachers pulled people away from hopeful holiness and into a destructive disobedience by saying something similar.

[6 : 11] Jesus has not returned yet. It's been years. He's probably not coming back at all.

The apostles, they're just telling stories. But Peter pushes back on that. The delay does not mean that Jesus isn't coming.

God's patience has a purpose. If you followed with us through chapter 2, Then you probably noticed that Peter writes mostly about the false teachers.

And if you are taking notes in your Bible and you trace back through chapter 2, You will find lots of uses of the word they. Lots of references to false teachers.

But now, in chapter 3, Peter turns directly to God's people, Calling them and us beloved. Four times in this text.

[7 : 19] Four times in chapter 3. Look at the first two verses of chapter 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 that you should remember.

Notice those two words. Reminder. Remember. Probably worth underlining. That you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles.

Now, the reason why I say those two words are worth underlining in your Bible is that Peter has mentioned them before. Back up in chapter 1 and verse 12, you'll recall that he stated his primary intention.

He wants to awaken God's people to action. Remember? Like an alarm clock going off. He wants to see them moving. By reminding them what is true.

[8 : 31] And here, in chapter 3, he returns to that primary intention. Notice, he says, You have the Old Testament scriptures. And as I have already said, back in chapter 1, They are reliable.

Backed by eyewitness testimony. Sourced in God himself. Not any man. But not only that.

You have the apostles' teaching. You have the life-changing gospel of Jesus. Remember what you have received.

Recall it to mind regularly. And let that motivate your pursuit of being more like Jesus. Reminder and remember and recall.

Important words for us. Why? Because sometimes we forget. And false teachers will exploit our forgetfulness.

[9 : 36] Jesus. Peter calls them scoffers. Look at verse 3. Knowing this, first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing.

Following their own sinful desires. They will say, Where? Where? 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. Hear the voice of the scoffer in this text.

The world is so broken. Do you really believe that God cares about what is happening? If Jesus is really coming back, wouldn't that have happened by now?

Ever since the patriarchs, ever since the very first God followers, ever since they died, the world has continued on the same as it has always been.

[10 : 49] It is what it is, what it is, what it is, what it is. false teachers reject the reliability of God's word.

They reject Jesus' teaching received through the apostles, and instead they claim that the continuity of the world means that God has built the treehouse, set the clock, and walked away.

So if God has forgotten his promise, and Jesus is not returning, then you just go ahead.

Do and get and be whatever makes you happy, whatever fulfills your desires. notice how Peter responds to this conflict of worldviews.

verse 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, and that by means of these, the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.

[12 : 16] Notice how the scoffers deliberately overlook God's involvement in the world, first at creation. Genesis 1, verse 1.

The very first verse. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was without form and void, and darkness was where?

Over the face of the deep, and the spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And from this formless void, through the word of the sun, God created from water and through water.

But scoffers deliberately overlook this fact, that God did intervene at the creation. They also overlook God's involvement during the flood of Noah's time.

That's in verse 6, when by means of water and his word judged the world. If your car starts making an unfamiliar noise, let me just make this personal.

[13 : 35] If my car, if a car in our garage starts making an unfamiliar noise, the very first thing that I'm going to do is turn the music up louder.

That's my initial response to a car making a clunking noise. You can put a little picture of your spouse in front of the check engine light on the dashboard.

You could do that, and you would be deliberately overlooking what is wrong with your car. You are willfully ignoring what you should be paying attention to.

False teachers are irrational. They say the world is what it is, and they overlook this fact. God has intervened.

He intervened at the creation, He intervened at the flood, and He will intervene again. Verse number 7. Verse 7. But, by the same word, the word of creation, the word of judgment at the flood, by the same word, the heavens and earth now exist, and are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment, and destruction of the ungodly.

[15:07] By the same word, the word of creation, the word of judgment, one day God will judge the ungodly, including these scoffers.

But this time it will not be with water. This time it will be with fire. Why do they deliberately overlook these facts?

They deliberately overlook these facts because it doesn't align. These facts don't align with their worldview. They believe that God is absent.

They believe that Jesus will not return. The scoffers want people to rationalize that the world is as it is, as it always will be.

But Peter wants God's people to remember. Notice how the text turns.

[16:10] Verse number 8. Scoffers overlook. But you 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. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise, as some count slowness.

But is patient towards you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

some have used verse number 8 to argue for a thousand year reign of Jesus, a literal thousand year reign of Jesus before the end of the world.

But I want you to notice Peter's words carefully. He does not say one day is a thousand years. He says one day is as a thousand years.

[17:25] And this matters. He's making a metaphor here. And this metaphor helps us understand that the Lord does not track time like we do.

Our God is eternal. He exists outside of time. This means he does not need a calendar or a clock.

Scoffers say Jesus is, the delay in Jesus' return means that he's not coming back at all. But what if, verse number 9, God's delay is intentional?

Since he doesn't track time like we do, God is never running late. He is never tardy. What seems like a delay is purposeful, proof of God's patience.

Some also use verse 9 as kind of a gotcha verse. Maybe you've heard this. They say, since God is not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance, how can you believe that God chooses who to save?

[18:50] As we have noted over the last two weeks, the whole argument that Peter is making here is that God will certainly judge the ungodly.

For example, verse number 7, the end of the verse, being kept until the day of judgment and the destruction of the ungodly.

And chapter 2, and verse 9, the Lord knows how to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment.

And chapter 2, verse 3, their condemnation from long ago is not idle and their destruction is not asleep. And from Jude, chapter verse 4, that we'll look at in a few weeks, certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation.

Why? They are ungodly people. If you reject election by sovereign grace because of 2 Peter, chapter 3, verse 9, that God is not wishing that any should perish, but we know from the context that the ungodly will certainly perish, then I think we need a more faithful interpretation of this verse.

- [20 : 27] Notice with me that 2 Peter, chapter 3, verse 9, describes God's love, His compassion, His willingness to send His Son, Jesus, to the cross.
- This is a description of God's heart for sinners. But it is not in conflict with His sovereign choice to graciously save some sinners.
- I think there's a second counter-argument to that interpretation that I mentioned a moment ago. Remember who Peter is writing to. Who is he writing to here?
- It is to the beloved. It is to the people of God. Those who are loved by God. Look at the verse again, verse 9.
- The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient towards you. The beloved ones.
- [21 : 37] Those who He has set His love on. He is patient towards you. Not willing that any of you will perish.
- God is patient towards His beloved. And He will delay Jesus' return until every sinner who He loved before time began repents.
- He will delay Jesus' return waiting patiently day after day after day until every one of the sheep for whom Jesus died believes and receives eternal life through the Holy Spirit.
- God does not track time like we do and this is a very good thing. His delay is intentional. It is not absence. It is not indifference.
- It is purposeful patience. But don't overlook this. A day is coming. Jesus will return.
- [22 : 49] Verse number 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.
- Now this verse is complicated and apparently more complicated if you look at the original manuscripts and try to make perfect sense about what all of these words mean when they are put together in this way.
- So let me invite us to humility to learn wisdom to discern and grace to disagree in particular about this verse.
- But I believe we can state this much the day of the Lord will come. In other words Jesus will return.
- And secondly his return will be like a thief. When are you going to get robbed? Well I don't know. If I knew I wouldn't let myself get robbed.
- [24 : 13] Jesus' return is like that. It is unpredictable. It's unexpected. And third we can tell that the world as we know it will be burned up and dissolved.
- And I think there's a fourth thing based on the parallel with verse number seven where there is a burning followed by a judgment. I wonder if that same pattern happens here where this burning happens and then the works that are done on earth are made manifest.
- In other words they are exposed to God's righteous judgment. Theologically the church refers to Jesus' return as imminent.
- I think that's a word worth holding on to. Imminent. What does that mean? It means that Jesus' return may seem delayed.
- Verse number eight. And because the timing is unpredictable that leads to this sense of delay.
- [25 : 34] Verse number ten. Like a thief in the night. And yet 1 Peter chapter four and verse seven reminds us Jesus' return is near.

we are living in the last days but not necessarily at the end of days. Imminent. His return may seem delayed because the timing of the return is unpredictable and yet we can say with all God's people ever since this time that Jesus' return is near.

since God's promise is certain since Jesus' return is imminent since God's patience is purposeful how should we respond?

let's look at Psalm 90. Why Psalm 90? Because Peter refers to this verse alludes to this verse in verse 8 of our text.

Here's Psalm number 90 and verse number 4. See if you notice it from 2 Peter verse 4. For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past or as a watch in the night.

[27 : 04] Does that sound familiar to what Peter said? Look at verse number 8. You have set our iniquities before you our secret sins in the light of your presence.

Does that sound like what Peter is describing in verse 10? That our works will be exposed that God knows everything that's going on even our iniquities the sins that are down in our hearts that no one else knows about?

You have set our iniquities before you. And finally verse number 12. So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.

What does wisdom look like in light of 2 Peter chapter 3 verses 1 through 10? God's patience has a purpose, your repentance.

So may our lives be marked by quick and real repentance. secondly, since we are reminded that God will judge the ungodly, may we be those who generously and boldly share the gospel with those who do not yet believe.

[28 : 39] And finally, since Jesus' return is imminent, in other words, unpredictably near, let's be diligent in our efforts towards hopeful holiness.

The cross proves God's love. And the resurrection proves His power.

And this delay in Jesus' return proves His patience. God is still waiting for sinners to repent and believe in Jesus.

This is good news. I wonder, is He waiting right now for you? Dear child, is He waiting right now for you?

Would you like to be saved today? Come to Jesus. Believe in Jesus. receive God's grace and the forgiveness for your sins.

[29 : 51] Let God's patience lead you to repentance. Let the certainty of Jesus' return motivate you to share the gospel and to grow in hopeful holiness.

Praise God, we are not living in an abandoned treehouse. the builder has not walked away. He is near. Dear brother, sister, he is near.

He is with you, present, faithful, patient, kind. And one day, don't overlook this.

Jesus will return. So number your days, learn wisdom, and grow in grace.

Let's pray. Father, we are grateful to receive your word, humbled by your kindness to preserve it for us, and even for those tricky, difficult portions that maybe there's some debate about what word, this word, or that word, Peter exactly wrote when he penned this letter the first time.

[31 : 14] We are so grateful for your kindness to give us scholars, and students, and writers, and commentators, and linguists, and researchers who understand and care about such things, and are so kind to give us what we need to help us make sense of your word.

Holy Spirit, we are above all grateful for you, that you open our hearts as we sing sometimes, that you illumine our minds to understand your word.

I'm grateful for your kindness to do that for us today, to illumine our minds, to open our hearts, to help us to believe, and to give us the power to obey.

Father, thank you for loving us before time began, and for choosing to save us through the bloody death of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thank you for calling us to faith, alerting us to our need of a Savior, showing us the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[32 : 29] Christ, thank you Holy Spirit for granting us life, giving us repentance, and enabling us to respond by repenting and believing this gospel that we now love.

Would you help us to demonstrate our love for this gospel, not only in the way that we go about our hopeful holiness, but also in the way that we share it with those around us, even those who have a different worldview from ours.

Give us courage, and grace, and boldness, and patience to share this good news, so that more and more sinners can respond to the call of the gospel, because we are so looking forward to the day when Jesus returns, and we understand that that this delay is purposeful for the sake of the gospel.

Help us as we continue in our time of worship. Help us as we break bread and take the cup together. Help us as we examine our hearts, confess our sins, repent, and again, believe this good news.

It is in Jesus' name that we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.