Our Blessed Hope (Part 2)

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[0:00] The Last time we met, we began with the great truth that the Lord Jesus is coming back.

! We call that the second coming of Christ.! Our text is found in the book of Jesus. The second coming of 2 Peter, we've been hanging out in those two books.
I'd never taught those in all my 45 years of teaching. Tonight we'll be in 2 Peter chapter 3. We began our study of chapter 3 by looking at the arguments that people try to make against the second coming.
There's a lot of people that do that, misguided as they are. We see three arguments that are made against the second coming in verses 3 and 4.
Let me read those. This is what we're kind of reviewing. Knowing this, first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts and saying, Where's the promise of His coming?
[1:27] For since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.
Now the argument that Peter is offering commentary on is made essentially by false teachers and false preachers in the church.

And it's a three-pronged attack. The first is that mockers will come. And they will actually ridicule the truth that Jesus is coming back.
So ridicule or mocking is the first assault by the false teachers of the return of Christ. And the second argument against the second coming is the immorality of the mockers, which happens to be the false teachers that are prevalent in the church in Peter's day and more prevalent in our day.
In fact, the inspired scriptures tell us this about these guys. They follow after their own lusts. It's quite a bruise to your being there.
The third argument made by the false teachers is under the banner, and we talked about this last time, Uniformitarianism, the belief that the universe was created billions of years ago by physics, not by Christ.
[2:54] I read an article once called, In the Beginning Hydrogen. And the guy was saying out how, you know, hydrogen is responsible and not Christ.

And they say everything's operated just like it was on day one, billions, hundreds of billions of years ago. The false teachers go so far as to say, where is the promise of his coming?
He said he was coming back. He hadn't come back. For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.
So tonight we're going to back up to verses 1 and 2 and then conclude by looking at verses 5 through 9. And here is our passage, which supports the arguments in favor of the second coming of Christ.
And I'm beginning in verse 1 of chapter 3. This is now, beloved, the second letter I'm writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles.
[4:20] For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God, the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, through which the world at that time was destroyed, being deluged with water.

But by His word, the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.
But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day.

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The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some consider slowness, but is patient toward you, not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance.
So Peter begins chapter 3 by making reference to the prophets. These are the true prophets of God. So Peter put holy in front of their names, the holy prophets.
[5:44] And many of these men who authored the Old Testament made reference to God's eschatological judgment. Eschatology is the study of last times or last days.

Here's a mere sampling beginning with the prophet Isaiah. In chapter 66, verses 15 to 16, For behold, Yahweh, and that's of course the sacred name of God, for behold, Yahweh, will come in fire and His chariots like the whirlwind to render His anger with wrath and His rebuke with flames of fire. For Yahweh will execute judgment by fire and by His sword on all flesh, and those slain by Yahweh will be many.
Now here Isaiah tells us that the final judgment is coming to this earth with fire.
First universal judgment was water. Remember the promise God made, put a rainbow in the sky.
[7:02] I'm not going to destroy the earth with water anymore. Do it by fire. This is what the prophet Malachi said on this topic, using words inspired by the Holy Spirit.

I'm in Malachi chapter 4. That's the last book of the New Testament. Verses 1 to 3. For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace, and all the arrogant and every worker of wickedness will be chaff, and the day that is coming will set them aflame, says Yahweh of hosts.
So that it will leave them neither root nor branch, for you who fear My name, the Son of Righteousness, will rise with healing in its wings, and you will go forth and skip like calves from the stall, and you will tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on that day, which I am preparing, says Yahweh of hosts.
I want to make reference to a special verse of Scripture. Obviously, Peter wrote this by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
It is verse 2 of 2 Peter chapter 3. The Spirit of God says, You should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets, and then he adds this, and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles.
[8:49] So we go from Old Testament, holy prophets, New Testament, your apostles. And that passage really should grip our hearts, the heart of every true church.

Peter says, the commandment of the Lord Jesus, our Savior, has been spoken by our apostles. clearly the Holy Spirit, the ultimate author of the New Testament, is stressing the very special relationship the apostles have with the church.
And it is to our shame, perhaps we could say to our peril, that many copies of the Bible are sitting on shelves around the world and around our country of church members and they're gathering dust. There are 27 books in the New Testament. 23 of those books refer directly to the return of Christ. I said last week that the return of Christ is mentioned more often in the New Testament than His first coming.
[10:08] And the Lord is coming back. He's coming back in splendid glory. Living out where I live out in the country, day or night, I often find myself looking up. I told Robert, I walked out last night and looked up right over my house and the International Space Station was going over.

I see that often up there. It amazes me that there are men in the pulpits, not in our church, that deny and even refused to preach on the second coming of Christ.
The reality is that the 260 chapters of the New Testament have about 300 plus references to the second coming of Jesus.
And the Lord Jesus Himself said this in the Gospel of Matthew. I'm in chapter 16, verse 27, For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of the Father and His angels and will then repay each one according to His deeds.
So the second coming of Christ was an important theme also of the Apostle Paul who wrote the majority of the books of the New Testament in the epistles.
[11:29] But for beauty, nothing can compare in my view to John's words inspired by the Spirit of God in the book of Revelation on this theme.

And here's what it says. And just for reference sake, I'm in Revelation chapter 19, verses 11 to 16. Verse 29, Having a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself.
And being clothed with a garment dipped in blood, His name is also called the Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white

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horses.
and from His mouth comes a sharp sword that with it He may strike down the nations. And He will rule them with a rod of iron and He treads the winepress of the wrath of the rage of God the Almighty.
And He has on His garment and on His thigh a name written King of Kings and Lord of Lords. I heard Dr. MacArthur preach on this.
[13:23] Let me skip back a little bit. He said, His eyes are a flame of fire and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself.

And Dr. MacArthur said, I've never preached that passage that someone didn't walk with me. what is that name? And John says, I don't know.
No one knows but the Lord. History teaches us about the day of judgment. 2 Peter 3 verses 5-7 For when they maintained this it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water through which the world at that time was destroyed being deluged with water but by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.
When God created the heavens it was formed out of water and by water science doesn't teach that but the Bible does. God shaped the earth between two massive areas of water and I thought about that and I'm thinking Atlantic and Pacific no more massive than that.
There was massive amounts of water first of all the upper waters they were a vapor canopy around the earth itself massive water they protected humans from the radiation of the sun that was their purpose this resulted in underground reservoirs rivers lakes and seas because eventually that water came down in the form of rain there hadn't been any rain didn't need to be there was a canopy of water there was mist that came up out of the ground that watered the plants animals got water through the mist I was in Oman and I asked an Omani with us we were looking for oil I was protecting them but engineers were looking for oil and one of the Omani brothers with us
[16:01] I asked him myself how much does it rain here every year he said it never rains here never there's never been rain here and I said well I see these droppings of what appears to be antelope he said yeah we call it an antelope and they're all over here I said well they've got to drink something and he said every morning a mist covers the leaves of the few plants out here in the desert and you could see him licking the leaves and that's enough and I think he probably said that's enough that Allah gives them plenty to drink it was probably what he said but the Lord when God created the heavens it was formed out of water he shaped that area between two areas of water on the second day of creation God collected the upper waters in the vapor canopy and that's what resulted in all this reservoir I mean you look at the great lakes

I'm fascinated by the great lakes I'm fascinated by them there's just something about them and I got to go up there and fish Lake Ontario for lake trout I was having a great time until my wife caught the biggest trout and put us all to shame but I mean you throw in you're going to catch something and found out that if you could drain the great lakes it would cover the whole United States by about two feet of water there was a lot of water in the great lakes superior along course that's deep it's amazing to study that and on the third day of creation the Lord allowed the dry land to appear now Adam and Eve existed below the vapor canopy because they were under the protection of the harmful radiation from the sun this resulted in men and women living very long lives the fact that they were shielded one was recorded to have lived almost a thousand years
I think that was Methuselah I think it was 969 years long time long time not sure I'd want to live that long if I was in heaven that'd be okay the earth enjoyed a near perfect environment but it did not last very long well what happened the wickedness of man entered in how often does that happen in the bible the wickedness of man entered in and God decided to destroy what he had made it grieved God that he had made man and so he did so by flood waters but he spared eight people he spared Noah he spared his wife Mrs.
Noah he spared Noah's three sons and his three sons wives Noah's daughters in law eight people lived millions died the pre-flood world of Adam and Eve and their relatives such as Noah and Mrs. Noah were destroyed by water our world will be destroyed by fire we won't be here okay the present world will be destroyed by fire even in the Old Testament fire was mentioned in terms of final judgment this is what the prophet Isaiah said for behold Yahweh will come in fire and his chariots like the whirlwind to return his anger with wrath his rebuke with flames of fire execute judgment by the sword on all flesh and those slain by Yahweh will be many now these were written twenty five

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hundred years ago that's a long time and the following passage was written a bit closer to our time than twenty five hundred years this is by the apostle
[20:30] Paul second Thessalonian chapter one verses six to eight since it is right for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you and to give rest to you who are afflicted and to us as well at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire executing vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ now bear in mind that the material to destroy not only the earth but the universe that material is already there put there by God in the beginning that the whole universe is a bomb it's a bomb all it's waiting for is a command of

God to act the earth's core is made up of molten rock in some places 12,000 degrees fahrenheit and there are some places where we are separated from that molten rock by a mere 10 miles of crust that's pretty short distance but it's been pointed out that the entire creation is a nuclear bomb it really is the universe is made up of atomic particles everything has atoms in it the energy in each atomic particle once released is unimaginable and you could go there and ask the people of hiroshima and nagasaki about that and those two bombs were child's play compared to what we have today so god placed in creation the material in the form of atoms that will one day destroy the universe fear not god will then create a new heaven and a new earth a new universe will come and i sometimes wonder will there be the same constellations or will we learn new ones i don't know the answer to that i like to watch them right now orion's belt comes right over our house you can watch it unless it's real cold and i watch it go back in and report to my wife amazingly god revealed these things to a simple fisherman guys peter was a fisherman he's a fisherman and yet he's writing about this there's inspiration he couldn't have written this without the holy spirit whispering in his ear and as we've already read from above but by his word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire being kept for the day of judgment and the destruction of ungodly men guys i gotta tell you this and i hope i do it with no emotion i'm getting like mike dersom not having any emotion i got family members that are not ready i have granddaughters that are not saved i take them to this it's like falling on deaf ears but we haven't given up they have a grandmother that prays for them constantly and for me but believers will be delivered from this destructive power of god peter wrote this about eternity but do not let this one fact escape your notice beloved that with the lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day listen to these words of psalm 94 this was written by moses see if this sounds familiar to you for a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it passes by or as a watch in the night i think peter might have borrowed a little bit from the psalms when he wrote that inspired verse but one thing we ascertain for certain is that time is no consequence to the triune god there's no consequence what might seem like a long time to us is not even a blink to god but we're going to close tonight with some comments about the character of god as it
relates to the second coming and this following should resonate with our soul the lord is not slow about his promise as some consider slowness but is patient toward you we've already seen guys say where's the promise of his coming i had a preacher tell me that a reformed preacher who now lives in oregon he said well if he's coming back why didn't he come back well because he's not on my time schedule or yours he's on his lord is not slow but his promise as some consider slowness but is patient toward you not willing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance peter here gives the perfect answer to anyone claiming that the return of the lord is too slow or should have already happened what we perceive as slowness is actually an exercise in grace of patience and long suffering of our god but we can be sure that the lord is not distracted he said oh my gosh i was supposed to come back last tuesday and here it is monday of the next week no it doesn't work like that additionally he is not powerless to act or indifferent to our conditions on earth god is merciful and is giving people time to genuinely repent and let me say this guys whether you're a new believer or you've been around for a long time repentance is an essential repent you have to repent there were many scoffers in peter's day that were mocking what they saw as a failure of jesus to return the lord made certain promises concerning his second coming they've not yet been fulfilled but we have to be mindful that the lord is working out a perfect plan and we should be quick to point out that as it pertains to his return the lord is precisely on schedule he's not late he's not early he's on schedule peter uses a very interesting phrase in this passage he says the lord is patient toward you who are the people peter is referring to is you i'm going to make a suggestion here i'm going to suggest it was everybody every believer that was alive when that passage was written and it is also

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a reference to the people that would live down through the centuries that would be believers and it refers to those people alive in the 21st century right now it encompasses all of those i really believe that consider this passage from the apostle paul romans chapter 9 verses 16 to 18 so then it does not depend on the one who wills or the one who runs but on
god who has mercy we're all products of mercy in here if you're a saved man we're products of mercy i have i had a guy tell me one time he said when i stand before god i'm going to demand justice i said let me assure you that's the last thing you want the justice of god so i said don't ever say that again you want mercy for the scripture says to pharaoh for this very purpose i raised you up in order to demonstrate my power in you in order that my name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth so then he has mercy on whom he desires and he hardens whom he desires wills if you have experienced mercy and brother i think you have pretty recently but if you've experienced you're in a special class all of us he has mercy he extends mercy to whom he will that's a great passage the salvation does not now and has never depended on the person who wills even our faith which is an essential to salvation is not our faith a gift of god ephesians 2 8 and 9 by grace are you saved through faith not that of yourselves it is a gift of god not of works lest any of us would boast even our faith by which we're saved is a grace gift it belongs to god and ephesians tells us it's a gift of god nor is salvation given to he who runs it's not based on self-effort working oh i gotta get you know i gotta do more i gotta do more i gotta do more one day all the elect of god will have come into the family of god every single one that's going to be saved and it'll be over we will leave this world we'll join our lord in heaven and what a day that's going to be what a day that is going to be so thus far we've looked at two themes in second peter chapter three we looked at the arguments against the second coming which are pretty weak then we looked at the arguments for the second coming which are strong next week we're going to begin with a portion of scripture titled the assurance of divine judgment the one three!
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