

II Peter 3

Today we want to begin our program by going to II Peter Chapter 3. Now, we're not going to read all of these verses, but later on if you get an opportunity read chapter 3 of II Peter verses 1-9. I call your attention especially today to II Peter Chapter 3 and verse 9. It says there: *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* Well, what promise is the Bible speaking of here? What is the promise? Verse 4 talks about that and it says it's the promise of His coming.

In Habakkuk 2:2-4, the Bible says: *²And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. ³For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. ⁴Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.*

Now, the fulfillment of God's promises or warnings may seem to take too much time by our timing, but God has an appointed time for the accomplishment of His promises, and we can be sure that they will happen on time, God's time, for He does not lie. In the New Testament, this truth, which Habakkuk applied to the coming of the Chaldean invasion, is quoted in reference to the promised return of Christ. Read later on, if you would, Hebrews Chapter 10. Now, to us who long for His return, for Christ's return, it may seem that He's taking too long, that He's just tarrying, but we need to be patient, to occupy, to work until He comes for us, and to be ready.

In verse 2 of Habakkuk 2, the verse says "that he may run that readeth it." I want to commend those today who witness for the Lord, those who are taking the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to those people who need to be saved today, to those people who need to know about Jesus Christ. We need to run and tell people that Jesus is coming. You might say, "But people will make fun of me." Well, that's exactly what will happen, not all the time now, but you know, the Bible says you can expect to have people make fun of you.

In II Peter 3:3, it says, *Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts.* Jude 17 and 19 speak of mockers in the last time, walking after their ungodly lusts. Jesus was ridiculed. Jesus was made fun of. Are we better than Jesus? And, of course, the answer is no. If they made fun of our Lord and Savior, we can certainly expect that there are going to be those who will make fun of us. That should not stop us. We need to look for the promise. We need to remember the promise of His coming.

Well, there is an appointed time when Jesus will come back. In Acts 17:30-31, it says: *³⁰And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: ³¹Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

Well, who's going to be the judge? These verses that I just read tell us that it is the Lord. The One who was raised from the dead is going to be the judge. In Matthew 24:36-37, it says: *³⁶But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father*

only. ³⁷*But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*

These verses, Matthew 24:36-37, are speaking of the Second Coming of the Lord, not the Rapture, not the time when Christians will be caught up to be with the Lord in the air, and we'll look at that in just a moment.

Well, it is an appointed time when Jesus is coming back and setting foot upon this Earth. And what are we to do because of His coming? Are we just to sit around and twiddle our thumbs and just sit back? Well, I believe there are four things that we need to be doing today.

First of all, we need to be diligent. In II Peter 3:14, it says, *Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.* Now, the word "diligent" means to be prompt, to endeavor, to labor, to be fast, so we are to be laboring for the Lord. We are to be in a hurry to get out the Word of God to let people know that Jesus is coming again. Be diligent. Put our hands to the plow and go forth and do the work of God.

Not only are we to be diligent, but we are to account that the Lord is salvation. Second Peter 3:15 says, *And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;*

I believe that one of the reasons that Jesus has not come back yet... and, of course, we know that He's not coming back until the right time, but I believe that one of the reasons that He hasn't come back is because of the long-suffering of our Lord. He's longsuffering, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to salvation, that all should be saved.

The word "account" here means to command with authority. Now, you and I have the authority to go out and represent Jesus Christ. I've had people ask me, "Well, what authority do you have to tell me about the Lord?" Well, in II Corinthians 5:20, it says, *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*

We are here in Christ's stead. We are here as Christians representing the Lord and telling people, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." We're not only to be diligent until He comes. We are to account that the Lord is salvation.

And then I see something else. We are not to fall from steadfastness. In II Peter 3:17 it says, *Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.*

Let me make a side note here. That note would be that "steadfastness" is used in this verse and not "salvation." That person who has trusted in the Lord today is saved. That person needs to be steadfast in proclaiming Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world. That person needs to stand upon the Word of God. Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, and that's exactly what I Corinthians 15:58 says: *Be ye stedfast.* It says, *Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

We sometimes get weary in well-doing as Christians. We sometimes say, "Well, you know, I've worked so long and hard and things are getting so tough for me to make it in the

Lord. Well, we need to quit bellyaching and we need to get back to where we once were, to our love for the Lord Jesus Christ for we know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord. Now, "steadfastness" means stability. We need to be stable today. We need to be steadfast in the Lord.

In Psalm 1, it says, *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly nor standeth in the way of sinners nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful, but his delight is in the law of the Lord... That's the Word of God... and in his law... in His Word... doth he meditate day and night... Notice this... And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not wither and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.* That person in Psalm Chapter 1 is a person who is steadfast. They are stable. They are planted like a tree, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

And then I see the fourth thing that we are to do because of His coming. We are to grow in grace and knowledge of the Savior. Second Peter 3:18 says, *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.* "To grow" means to enlarge, to increase, to grow up. Notice the words here "grow in grace." "Grace" means service. Grace equals service. In Matthew 6:24, it says, *No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

We need to be in service for our Lord today and quit serving the world. We need to get serious with God and serve Jesus.

Something else, notice the word "knowledge" in that verse, in II Peter 3:18. "Knowledge," Christian growth is what comes from

knowledge. First Peter 2:2 says, *As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby.*

Hebrews 5:12-13 says: ¹²*For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.* ¹³*For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.* Get serious with God. Get in the Word of God and grow.

And finally, Christian growth equals giving of oneself to Jesus. Romans 12:1 says, *I beseech ye therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable until God which is your reasonable service.*

Remember, there are no signs pointing to the Rapture of the Church. There are signs pointing to the Second Coming of Christ and that's what I'm speaking of today, the Second Coming. But notice, as Christians, we are to look for His coming at the Rapture. Second Timothy 4:8 says, *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

Do you love His appearing today? Do you know Him as your Savior? Right where you're at, why not bow your head and ask Jesus to come into your heart. "Lord Jesus, forgive me of my sin and come into my heart. I receive you as Savior today." And as a Christian today, you need to bow your head and ask God to lead you and help you to be strong and give forth the Word of God to this lost and dying world.

Thank you for being with me today, and I look forward to speaking with you each time. Until

this same time next week, may the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.

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