

## **Protection in Sanctification, part 1**

2 Peter 3:1-10

(preached Pine Grove 7/5/20 Sun PM)

### **Introduction**

Many of you have heard stories about my Mimi, who was was my grandmother on my father's side.

Mimi never had a driver's license.

Her home was her ministry, but she also used to home to help generate some income.

At one time in her tiny mill home, she kept upwards of a dozen children while their parents worked.

Cooking meals for each of them.

Keeping them from fighting.

Making sure they learned good manners and generally being a second mother to them.

By the time I arrived in the world, most of the large crowd of kids had gotten older, so I stayed with Mimi but the number of kids were only a few.

One of the kids that I stayed with and he shall remain nameless was a trouble maker.

Now to be clear, I was a trouble maker too, but this kid almost enjoyed being mean.

In the summers, Mimi would almost always add a new kid since school was out.

And I will never forget this one kid who came to stay with us.

He was clearly a little upset at coming into a new place to stay.

On that first morning as his mom dropped him off, he began to cry.

Well, Mimi was telling him everything would be alright, but it was still hard on him.

When Mimi left the room on that first morning, the particularly mean kid called the new boy over.

I actually thought he felt sorry for the new kid.

He put his arm around him and said, "Hey it will be okay, but you need to know this now. Your mama is never coming back to get you. You are going to live here forever."

Well, the tears began to flow again, and Mimi came in the room and began to console him again.

Between sobs, he was telling her about what the other kid told him.

And what did Mimi say, “She is coming back to get you. She will be here at 5.”

He calmed down and she left again, and what happened?

You guessed it.

“Look, she told us all that, but we haven’t seen our moms in months.”

I can look back now and laugh, but it was torture for the new kid, absolute torture.

Listen to me church, there are false teachers out there who have taught and continue to teach that Jesus isn’t coming back.

They have taught that since he left this world to ascend back to heaven in 30 AD

And they have taught it throughout church history, and they teach it in various forms today.

So as Peter ends his second letter to the church warning of the dangers of false teachers, he ends addressing their false teaching about the return of Christ.

Now this may seem like an odd subject to address about false teachers.

Why not give more details about the false teacher?

Why not give a whole list of errors that they will teach?

Why focus on what they will get wrong about Jesus return?

Well, wrong teaching about the end times decoys the hope of the believer and brings into question the truthfulness of what Jesus said about his return.

You see, Jesus taught his return?

The Olivet Discourse, where Jesus took the disciples to the Mount of Olives and laid out the plan of the end, is contained in Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

It is the last extended teaching session that Jesus had with the disciples.

And if false teachers can cast doubt on what Jesus said in it, they can cast doubt on all that he said.

So they attack it.

They also attack it in hopes of avoiding the return and the judgment it will bring on their own life.

And they attack it to simply upset believers and shake their confidence in what is coming.

Look, one of the most common questions of the believer is what to expect in the end of time.

I remember being newly saved and having a fear that I would miss the return Christ or be unprepared for it in other ways.

It was unsettling, so I made it a point to understand the end.

To study eschatology.

To have a complete biblical perspective about what was coming.

And personally that has provided so much comfort for me as the world continues to crumble.

It will also provide the same for you or for any believer who will take the time to get a proper biblical view of the end.

But false teachers have done much to distort that teaching.

And when they do, they upset believers and shake their confidence.

So as Peter prepares to end his second letter to the church, he addresses the false teaching about the end of times.

And in doing so, he helps us understand what to listen for from the false teacher.

But he also gives us few more details about the end of time that are helpful if giving us a full view of what is coming.

So I am excited to get this last chapter started.

Now if you look at the overall outline of this book, we could call chapter 3.

#### ***IV. Seeing the Future Guards You from False Teachers (3)***

Remember the purpose of the book is to equip the believer to deal with the prevalence of false teachers.

So we have learned that understanding our salvation guards us from false teaching.

In other words, if you what biblical salvation is and how it works, you will be be armed for the assaults of the false teacher.

Then we saw that a confidence in Scripture is necessary to withstand the false teacher.

False teachers know the Bible and they know how to twist the Bible just enough to lead others astray.

And then we spent all of chapter 2 looking at a profile of the false teachers.

We saw details of how they live, how they think, and how they operate.

So we have seen how false teachers attack the past reality of salvation in your life.

How they attack the present truth of Scripture in your life.

And now in chapter 3, we will see how they even attack the future.

So church, know what is coming, so that you will fall victim to what false teachers say about the future, and thereby shake your confidence in Christ and his promises.

Now, this final chapter is really divided into 2 sections

The first 10 verses, describe the need to be sanctified in your thinking about the end times.

Then from verses 11-18, there is a call to be sanctified in your living in light of the end times.

Essentially, Peter is going to close this letter by telling believers their best defense from the false teacher is to know the truth and know it well.

And to live the truth and to live it well.

This is the sanctified life.

We are constantly growing in our knowledge of the Lord and His Word and are constantly growing in our obedience to the Lord and His Word.

So let's begin in first 10 verses of 2 Peter 3 looking at the need to be sanctified in our knowledge as we seek to avoid the schemes of the false teacher.

And verses 1-2 teach us to remember the truth.



## **1. Remember the Truth (1-2)**

***1 This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, 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.***

Peter's life was coming to a close, but as we have seen before, his love and passion for Christ and the church was just as strong as ever.

How else can explain such a letter as 2 Peter?

Peter is not going out without a fight.

As his life on earth closes, he is battling error to the very end.

I can help but think of so many faithful pastors who follow his example.

Their lives know nothing of retirement.

Their bodies are worn out but their love of Christ is fresh and new, so they preach to the end.

And here Peter preaches about false teachers.

His first letter comforted believers in suffering but his second and last letter pushed back into the fight for truth.

This is always the battle.

This is the battle even today.

Truth versus lies.

Truth takes one form but lies take many forms, so believers must always be on guard.

Though the year has been difficult in many ways and will probably get more difficult before its over, I am thankful for it.

And the reason for my thankfulness is that trouble and suffering and trials always reveal the great divide over truth.

When times are good and things are peaceful, truth and lies end up missing and confusion reigns.

And truth gets lost in the deceptions and lies of the world.

When that happens, chaos and confusion are the result.

For the church in Peter's day, truth was being lost as well in the cloud of false teachers and their lies.

So Peter writes a second letter to the church to stir them up.

The Greek word is *diegeiro*, which was used to describe the process of waking someone up.

Peter's purpose in this 2nd letter is to wake people up from their spiritual sleep to alert them to false teachers and their schemes.

J Vernon McGee describes a conversation that he once had with an elderly man.

The conversation turned to the man's health and his growing forgetfulness.

He told McGee.

"Look, my mind has a good memory. The only problem is that my have a bigger forgetfulness."

The same is true of us as believers.

We have exposed to truth.

It has been stored in our mind.

WE simply let the lies of the world grow our forgetfulness.

All of you that the Bible clearly speaks of the Lord's financial provision for His people.

God owns all the money and he always provides enough for his people.

But all of us have forgotten that promise at various times in our life.

The lies of the world that we will be broke and in the poorhouse crowd out the truth of God's faithfulness.

It is in those times that we need the truth stirred up in us.

And it is best stirred up by a return to the truth of Scripture.

So Peter simply tells his readers in verse 2 to remember the words spoken by the prophets and the apostles.

The prophets were the mouthpiece of God in the OT.

They warned Israel of their sin.

They called Israel back to God.

But one of the most important roles of a prophet was to give hope.

And nearly every OT prophet spoke of a future day when Israel would be living securely and blessed in their land.

And all of those promises were the result of their Messiah returning to crush Israel's enemies and rule as their King.

And though Israel rejected that King when he first came, the apostles of the NT repeated those promises of return of a Jewish King.

They recognized Israel's sin.

They noted Israel's rejection of Jesus' first coming.

But not one of the apostles of the NT ever rewrote any prophecy of the OT.

The consistent teaching of the men who spoke for God in the OT and in the NT was that Christ would return and establish His rule upon the earth one day.

That day was not his first coming.

WE know that for sure.

If Jesus is ruling this current world, we are in real trouble.

But the reality is that Jesus is returning to rule.

Now why is Peter opening chapter 3 by reminding the church of the truths that OT prophets and NT apostles taught?

Well, that bring us to verse 3..

Why did the church needed to be stirred up to remember the words of the prophets and apostles?

Well, there were a lot of people in the 1st century and even more through the years who have mocked the idea of a return of Christ.

Let's call this..

## **2. Recognize the Mocker (3-4)**

***3 Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, 4 and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.”***

The Greek word for mocker suggesting a child who is playing.

And the idea is that those who deny the teaching of the return of Christ often make fun of those who believe in it.

Just like a child makes fun of other children, mockers and scoffers attempt to ridicule others.

And what is the ridicule about?

It is ridicule directed at people who are looking with anticipation at the return of Christ.

Now, let me make an important distinction here.

When the Bible speaks of Christ's return, it could be speaking of the rapture where Christ returns in the air to reduce the church to heaven before the tribulation.

Or it could be speaking of a return of Christ to the earth in the Second Coming where he defeats the enemies of God at Armageddon and then sets up his kingdom upon the earth.

To be clear, the concepts of the rapture and the Second Coming are mocked by others in the world.

But to be also be clear, you may not believe in a rapture but that make you a false teacher.

There are good men who disagree about the rapture of the church.

Now I think the rapture is an important issue.

It think the reality of it and the timing of it are very important but I would not call someone who rejected the rapture a false teacher.

And I certainly wouldn't say that of someone who had a different view of the timing of the rapture.

And the reason for my refusal to do that is that Scripture is not as clear about the rapture as it is about the Second Coming.

The return of Christ to rule and reign is crystal clear in Scripture.



He is the King and He is coming to exercise His rule over the earth.

There is not doubt in Scripture about that.

But false teachers deny that.

They deny it to shake your confidence in the words of the prophets and the apostles and ultimately your confidence in the words of Christ.

But as I mentioned earlier, they deny it because they are following their own lusts.

Man's greatest problem with God is His authority.

Sinful men and women resist anyone of anything who tells them what to do.

The recent riots have very little to do with injustice.

The riots are a response to man's view of authority.

Unbelievers hate being told what to do.

They hate government.

They hate police.

They hate authority in any form.

This hatred of authority is only intensified when children grow in homes where there is a lack of authority.

When kids are no restraints to behavior in their home, they resist anyone who ever tries to restrain them.

This is first seen in classrooms where students disrespect the authority of teachers and it progresses up the ladder of authority in the world.

The police are now next on the list and eventually all forms of government.

And the issue is that sinful man wants no restraint.

He desires to satisfy his lusts every day in every way possible.

False teachers oppose a return of Christ because His return signals the ultimate arrival of the ultimate Authority.

And his returns signals the end of living in unrestrained lust.

If you study the end times, people are often amazed at how rebellious the world will be against God in the tribulation period .

Meteors will be falling out of sky.

Mountains will be falling on people.

Disease and famine will be running rampant, but the book of Revelation clearly states that man will still be shaking his fist at God.

At the end of the Tribulation, Christ will set up a kingdom and rule for a 1000 years.

Yet after a 100 years of seeing God on earth, there will be another rebellion against God.

And the question of people is how on earth can people be so rebellious toward God even though he will be clearly demonstrating his existence?

The answer?

Man hates the authority of God because of God seeks to restrain man's lust.

And sinful man hates that so much that he will shake his fist at God and deny his Second Coming up until 5 minutes before it actually happens.

So Peter makes it clear that the motivating factor of false teachers mocking the return of Christ is the desire to satisfy their lust in hopes of avoiding God's judgment.

And then he moves to their argument against the return of Christ.

End of verse 4..

The argument of continuity is the argument of the false teacher.

And what I mean by continuity is the fact that most days are just like the day before.

In other words, things just pretty much stay the same.

The false teacher simply tells you that Jesus can't return because he hasn't returned since he left.

Now there are problems with that argument, and that takes us to verses 5-6, where we are told to recall the past..

### **3. Recall the Past (5-6)**

***5 For [a]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, 6 through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.***

I only have time to introduce this and we will talk about it more next week, but when a false teacher says..

“Look, Jesus ain’t coming back. How many times have you see something like the sky rolling back and someone coming out of heaven on horse?”

Well, the short answer to that is found in verse 5 and 6.

First, creation was a major act of God in bringing all we see around us out of thin air.

In fact, he brought the air out of thin air.

And the second response to the idea that nothing major ever happens is the flood, where the heavens opened and the ground opened to flood the entire globe.

So if you think that God can't act upon the world, remember he brought world into existence and he flooded the whole world as well.

Therefore, if you think Jesus coming out of heaven is a horse is too tough to pull off, just recall Who you are mocking.

Now, let's stop there for tonight, and we will revisit those events of creation and the flood next week.

## **Conclusion**

Here's a few thoughts to end our night.

### **#1 - Stir up the truth of the Word frequently.**

I love my job.

I don't have to come up with anything new ever.

I simply open up what is old and remind you of it.

That is it.

Open, Stir, Close, Repeat.

But guess what?

You need to stir the Word for yourself.

We tend to forget what we rarely see.

Stay in the Bible, and stayed stirred up and equipped.

### **#2 - See past the silliness of false teachers.**

I get so discouraged when I watch men and women who have such large following among supposed believers.

It is amazing to listen to them and wonder how anyone could follow them with all their superficial and shallow teaching.

It is true silliness to hear them speak.

The more you grow in real truth, the more you will spot the folly of the liars out there.

Let us pray.