

The Day of the Lord Will Come

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[0 : 00] As we turn back to God's Word, let us again just bow in a word of prayer. Let us pray. O Lord our God, we are conscious of our sin.

We must come day by day to the throne of grace, confessing our sin. And we just pray, O Lord, that on this new Sabbath morning, that you would teach us, that you would equip us, that you would grant us the strength for the days to come.

For we rejoice when we spend our time on the mountaintop. But the experience of the Christian is very often trudging in the valley.

But we have the greatest comfort and comforter of all. That whether we are up or down, ascending or descending, that you are always there and you are with us.

And you have promised to never leave us or forsake us. And we pray, O Lord, for each one of us here this morning. Wherever we find ourselves on this journey that we find ourselves on.

[1 : 39] That in the midst of the darkness, the light of Christ would be shining through. That we would be reminded this morning that you are with us. That you are holding on to us.

That the everlasting arms of our Father are around us and underneath us. And Lord, we are constantly in this battle with the evil one.

And we pray, especially for this time, these few moments that we have, to sit under the word of God. That you would rid him from our presence.

And that we would be able to focus on you and your word. Grant us clarity of mind and understanding. And may we be fed in our own souls this morning.

Not from the hand of any man, but from the hand of God. So forgive us. Go before us. Feed us and teach us. In your name we pray.

[2 : 43] Amen. Let me turn back with me in your Bibles to 2 Peter chapter 3. Let us read the first verse again.

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 the predictions of the holy prophets. Of the commandment of the Lord and Saviour. Through you, apostles. I don't know if you can cast your mind back to the time in your life when you had to make some radical decisions.

And especially those decisions I am thinking about or the scenario I am able to paint the picture for. But it is for those of you who are perhaps still in school or maybe you work in school.

And you see these, certainly in my experience, they came to our school when we were around second year or third year. And had to make some choices about our life.

[3 : 58] And this big entertainment group and motivational speakers and inspiring music came to our school. And they were called Choices for Life.

And they would come into our school and they would try and encourage us to make good and right choices. Right choices about what subjects we would take, about what career we were going to do. And even more so about what friends you will make outside of the classroom. They were coming with their motivational speeches and songs. Trying to encourage us on the right path.

When we come to 2 Peter chapter 3, the choice is not merely about what subject you are going to choose. Or what career you are going to do.

But the question is between the choice and the context of the day of the Lord which we will come to. Will you choose the temporary pleasures of today.

[5 : 01] In exchange for the eternal security with Christ. That is the choice. And as we come to 2 Peter chapter 3, I want us to look at the choices.

When you look at this passage initially, you may be thinking, Well, this isn't a passage explicitly about my choice. But as I dug into it and as I read over it and as I look at it.

And as I say in this theme of the day of the Lord. What is the day of the Lord? It is the day when Christ shall return. And in between Christ's first coming and second coming, we are here in the last days.

And I see in this chapter, in chapter 3. First of all in verses 3 to 7, there is man's choice. And man has chosen to be a scoffer.

Man has chosen to set himself against God. Secondly, in verses 8 to 10, there is God's choice. He is the one who is chosen when that day of the Lord shall come.

[6 : 08] When Christ shall return. He is not bound. He is not rushed. By the scoffing of any man. Or by anyone who sets himself against him.

And thirdly and finally, in verses 11 to 16, there is your choice. There is your choice. What will you do with this man, Jesus Christ?

And even those of us who are on that Christian journey and pilgrimage already this morning. How are you all to live your life as you make your way to the gates of righteousness?

Peter here in this letter and in chapter 3, as we just read there again in verse 1, he is reminding us and he is stirring us up again.

He is repeating himself over and over and again, just like the teacher will do to the child in the classroom, in order that they learn what they are being taught. And Peter here is again coming to the fundamentals, to the elementary parts of Scripture, so that it is drummed into them.

[7 : 20] Because Peter's letter here, in the second letter especially, is all about the false teachers. These false teachers are coming and they are coming with a doctrine that is against what they have been taught.

It is a doctrine which seeks to come away from Scripture. It picks and chooses what they want to believe. It teaches something a little bit more comfortable than what has been taught from the pulpit.

And Peter is reminding them and reminding them to stick to what you know, stick to what you have been taught. Remember what you have been taught from the days of your youth.

This is now the second letter he says, that I am writing to you, beloved, in both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminders.

He is saying if the belief is right, then the behaviour will be right. If you know what you believe, then that is the way you are going to live out your life.

[8 : 20] And he is stirring them up to remember what they have been taught. Remember those of whom God has appointed. Remember these prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah.

Remember the apostles, remember the teaching of Christ. Don't just go along with these fickle stories, which the false teachers have brought up, thought up in their own minds.

But hold on to the word of God. And that stands true for us here in Barvis this morning. Hold on to the word of God. Spend time in his word.

It is not outdated, but it is as fresh and it is as needful to every one of our souls today as it ever has been. To remember what you have been taught.

So there is man's choice, God's choice, and your choice. Let us begin with man's choice. These false teachers we see in verses 3 and 4, they come questioning the return of Jesus Christ.

[9 : 32] Where is your saviour? Where is this man Jesus? There has been such a delay. They wanted him. They assumed he would go up to heaven and come straight back down.

But now there has been this delay and they wonder, where is he? Is he ever coming back? The promises of God surely don't hold true anymore.

But even today, now that 2,000 years have passed, how can Paul, how can we proclaim so boldly and confidently that God's promises do hold true, that Jesus Christ will return?

In verse 4 we see the scoffers questioning, where is the promise of his coming? Where is this man Jesus Christ? Well, Peter responds and he says, first of all, that in the last days the scoffers will come.

The scoffers will be there, those who rise up against the true word of God, those who rise up against the prophets and the apostles and the teaching of Christ, the scoffers will come.

[10 : 47] And these last days he speaks of, Peter was in the last days. And in the prophecy of Joel, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

And has the Spirit not been poured out? Yes. And so today we are in the last days. Peter was in them and we are in them.

As I said, it is between the first coming of Christ and the second coming of Christ. This is the last days. This is the last days.

When Christ shall return, the opportunity will be over. This is the last days. Today, the church age, the gospel age, the age that is marked by the presence of the scoffers in between Christ's ascension and Christ's return.

And that prophecy we spoke of there and prophecy of Joel may be a little unfamiliar to us, but this evening we shall look at one chapter of it. But in chapter 3 of Joel's prophecy, and in verse 14, he speaks about this valley of decision.

[12 : 09] He also speaks on the theme of the day of the Lord. When Christ shall return. But he speaks here about this valley of decision and very often this verse is taken out of context.

It's spoken about what is your decision going to be about Christ? You in the pew, what are you going to decide about the Lord your God? But Joel is not talking about your decision about God. Joel is talking in that valley about God's decision about you and I. on that day of the Lord when God shall decide, when the judgment shall come, when there will be no more opportunity because today the opportunity is ours to respond to the good news of the gospel.

What shall you do with this man, Jesus Christ? Today, in the last days, is the opportunity. But this presence of scoffers, of those rising up against the gospel teaching, is nothing new.

They have decided to set themselves against God and their desire is to swerve you and I away from the truth, away from what you have been taught.

[13 : 26] And they will seemingly have good questions for their doubt and they will seemingly have reason for it also. In the second half of verse 4, they say, forever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.

They are making the case that nothing different has happened, nothing has changed, that your God has never stepped into the world to do anything or change anything. And so this is where Peter takes his opportunity.

He steps in and accuses them of being biblically illiterate people. And he steps in and is able to say to them, and as Peter so often does chronologically in his fashion, he says, first of all, going all the way to the beginning of the creation of the world, he says, God stepped in.

And what did he say? He said, let there be light. And what happened? There was light. And not only is there light, but the light is sustained. He is the creator of the heavens and the earth, as we were mentioning a few moments ago to the young folk.

The false teachers, they have ignored this fundamental, this elementary teaching from the word of God, that our God, Yahweh, is the creator of the heavens and the earth.

[14 : 56] But secondly, he has stepped in to flood the world. Because from the fall in the Garden of Eden, there was sin and the climax of sin.

And with this climax of sin came God intervening and saying, no more. And so he steps in to flood the world and to renew it.

With the creation, you remember, and as Peter says, water was the agent he used to create the world and now water again is the agent that he uses to flood the world and to bring the judgment upon them.

And so Peter climaxes his argument and he says, thirdly, that nothing can stop our God, your heavenly Father, from intervening again, sending his Son to come and to judge the world. because that flood that he sent in the time of Noah was a warning of the future judgment that is going to come. Because at the flood it was the human world that was wiped out but in the future judgment it will be the heavens and the earth that shall be destroyed.

[16 : 15] that flood it was a warning but it was only a small canvas painting compared to what lies ahead in the future of judgment.

That judgment is coming. God's judgment will be poured out on that day. You speak to friends, family when you warn them of their need to come to the house of God of their need most importantly to come and to trust in Jesus Christ and they fob you off.

Maybe there's some today and they say I'll deal with that don't burden me with that today don't talk to me about that.

But how needful is it that they respond that you and I respond to the message of the gospel to the message of Jesus Christ because the judgment is coming.

The day of the Lord is coming, these are frightening ideas. We must not find them so frightening that we refuse to believe them because it is God's right to judge the world and he must because he is a just God.

[17:44] But it is in the amazing wonder that in the background of this destruction and darkness has extended the offer of salvation.

And we see man's choice and secondly God's choice. Return with me to verse 4 to the question that the scoffers put. They will say where is the promise of his coming?

Where is this man Jesus Christ? When is he coming? Well you know God is patient. God is patient. I don't think we need to go to any other example but the example of self to understand again the patience of our God.

How patient was he to you my Christian friend and how you delayed and delayed and delayed and put off the gospel invitation and he was so patient with you and I and when our eyes were finally opened the offer was still there.

[19:07] And even since we've come on to the Christian journey how patient your God has been with you when even though he clothed you with this pure white garment and has assured you of forgiveness of your sin we like Peter says at the end of chapter two have resembled the dog going back to his own vomit.

We've returned to the sins of our youth we continually rebel against our God the patience that he has shown you and I the patience that he has shown us even as his own people how long we delayed how long how often we turned back how normal sin has become to us.

The false teachers they looked on this delay of God as his inability they looked on where is Jesus Christ they thought your God is not able but it is not so much a delay in judgment as it is an extension of grace this is his grace abounding for you and I my Christian friend and this is grace abounding for you who stand here still without Christ and this is grace abounding waiting waiting waiting extending the offer of salvation what will you do with this man Jesus Christ the day of the Lord is coming and it is near at hand the day of the Lord is coming we sang in Psalm 19 in verse 4 it is a reference to verse 8 here in chapter 3 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 God sees time with a perspective that we lack he is eternal he deals with us in our time span but he is outside of it he can cast his eye on all of history in a moment but when we enter into heaven we will not be bound by that time and by the clock it's as the home writer says when we've been there ten thousand years bright shining as the sun we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first began in the opening part of our sermon today you may have been thinking this God as the false teachers think he is a wicked God but he is not evil he is not wicked in verse nine the

Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some kind slowness but is patient toward you not wishing that any should perish but that all should reach repentance he is just and judgment will come and this is his choice but he must judge the wicked he must judge the ungodly but his desire is that all should repent and be saved he wants all to come whoever you are and whatever you've done today is the day of opportunity and that day of the Lord has been appointed by the father himself he has chosen the day when his son Jesus Christ shall return only the father knows and so predictions I mean unless you can google them if you so wish you'll find an abundance of predictions for the end of the world all all have come all have gone but the day of the

[23:38] Lord shall come like a thief he says and so we must be ready for that day and able to say as the conclusion of the confession says in chapter 33 can you say this can you pray this come Lord Jesus come quickly amen there's a bold prayer to pray that you desire the Lord Jesus Christ to come today would you have appreciated if Christ came last night wherever you were whatever you were doing or the night before when the sin entangles you so much we need to kill the sin at its source and only able to do that through the power and strength of Jesus Christ now we too can be able to pray this prayer come

Lord Jesus come quickly amen in the book of Revelation chapter 10 and verse 6 it is God who says then there will be no more delay and that day will be an unwelcome shock to those who do not believe those who thought they had plenty of time those who thought I've got till tomorrow but God shall say on that day like a thief there will be no more delay and Christ shall return and he gives this terrifying description in verse 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 the stars will be burned up and dissolved and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed it will be destroyed by fire it goes beyond

our imagination of what that day is going to look like but we turn to the word of God for its description our God he is the creator and he is the judge and he is the saviour of the universe there is man's choice there is

God's choice and thirdly and finally there is your choice and you do have a choice as we've made clear this morning that the delay in Christ's return that is your hope that is your hope this is not God's stalling or his inability but it is his desire that all would repent and come and be saved and his desire Peter says is for you Christian to live lives of godliness and of holiness we don't sit around idle we're not merely Christians who attend church on a Wednesday and a Sunday but Monday Tuesday Thursday Friday Saturday as well morning noon and night you're a Christian we're to be active soldiers of Christ Jesus God has a work for every one of us to do so we must be ready we must be ready to go and to do battle for the king and we must be ready to meet

God our heavenly father on that day in these final words that Peter says in verse 14 therefore beloved since you are waiting for these be diligent to be found in him without spot or blemish and at peace be diligent or make every effort to do the very basics of your Christianity how is our Bible reading this morning how is our time in the closet with the Lord read your Bibles spend time in prayer with the King of Kings that time will never be wasted meditate on his word we are to be spotless and blameless in the two churches I attended over in

America the last two Sundays they have a bigger I think a big emphasis on our sin on the fact that we do sin and that as Christians it's so obvious we're not perfect but we are still sinners and we're still sinning from Sunday to Sunday we are sinning night and day and they both the two churches in two different parts of America I went to they were so concerned and they set aside the whole time for us to contemplate and to seek forgiveness for our sin to confess your sin before the Lord Peter is reminding us that we are to be spotless and blameless sin and Kevin de Young in his book he says not sinking in sin it's too often the norm isn't it that rather than killing sin we're sinking in it and we're living with it and we're becoming numb to it but

[29 : 39] Paul in his letter in Romans 6 verse 1 and 15 he says because grace now abounds do we just get rid of the law he says by no means by no means but in the opening chapter of 2 Peter in verse 10 he says you make your calling and election sure it is a daily battle there is a privilege for us because our father in heaven is there waiting night and day to hear the cry of his children seeking his forgiveness believe his promises believe his promises that his son Jesus Christ is going to return let me ask you that question do you believe

Christ is going to return do you believe he is coming back maybe your Christian immediate answer is yes but think about it because your true answer to that question will surely reflect how you live your life day by day because if Christ is going to return like a thief then would we delight in him returning and finding us sinking in our sin my friend we must battle battle against it we must seek out the loveliness of our saviour Jesus Christ more and more in the final two verses of Peter's letters and of this chapter he gives three words of summary he says first of all be on guard take heed lest you fall it is very dangerous ground if any of us think that we have made it if we think we are beyond sinning or beyond falling like any other

Christian has the devil can be so subtle in his plots but our greatest repellent for the devil is to be plugged into the word of God and so that you as the sheep can clearly distinguish the voice of the shepherd from the voice of the scoffer and the false teacher and he says second of all that you will grow in the grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ because you know there's only two movements in the Christian faith there is either forwards or backwards it is like when you or your children are learning to ride their bike and they think they've got the hang of it and then all of a sudden they forget that they need to pedal and the bike comes to a crashing halt there is only forwards or there is backwards we have to progress from the milking onto the meat and so we must take even this afternoon this opportunity to reflect on our

Christian life am I progressing am I growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ and are we as Barber's free church as the free church as the church of Christ are we moving from maintenance to mission are we moving from just being people who gather here on a Wednesday and a Sunday and are we going out to be a people who are seen and speaking about Jesus Christ in our homes in the homes of our friends and families in and throughout this whole community are we moving from maintenance to mission and thirdly the glorious Christ in verse 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity amen he is ascribing the glory to

Jesus not merely as a man but as the divine as part of the Godhead now and to the day of eternity to the day when Christ shall return and so it leaves you with a decision to make this this is not merely the choice for life but it is the choice for eternal life not merely what career are you going to choose but what are you going to do with this man Jesus Christ amen let us pray oh Lord our God we thank you for your word we thank you for the reminder this morning that the day of the Lord is coming the promises of you our heavenly father still hold true today this morning as they ever have done before that you will send your son

[35 : 07] Jesus Christ to return and on that day our prayer is that every soul in here today will be ready to face their master that they will be ready to stand before the judgment seat of Christ and that the judgment upon them would be that they are sinners who have been saved by grace so lead us guide us go before us this afternoon and may you draw near to us again God willing this evening in Jesus name we pray amen let us sing again this time in psalm 119 and sing psalms in the new first section of the psalter psalm 119 from verse 1 we'll sing that first section down to verse 8 it's on page 157 blessed are those of blameless ways who live according to God's word blessed are those who keep his laws who with their whole hearts seek the

Lord they keep themselves from doing wrong by walking in his perfect ways you have established laws for us that are to be obeyed always psalm 119 from verse 1 to 8 to the praise of God for us who want to be He is in God, who with their whole hearts seek the Lord.

They keep themselves from doing all, by walking in His perfect ways.

You have established laws for us, that are to be obeyed always.

Oh, that my way will step up soar, in great danger keep my aim.

[38 : 16] So when I say, oh, your command, I would not feel His grace or shame.

I'll raise you with an upright heart. And you have lost my land by me.

Oh, your decree, I will obey.

Do not forsake me after Thee. Amen.

In the name of the grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, rest and abide in each one of you both now and forevermore. Amen. Amen.