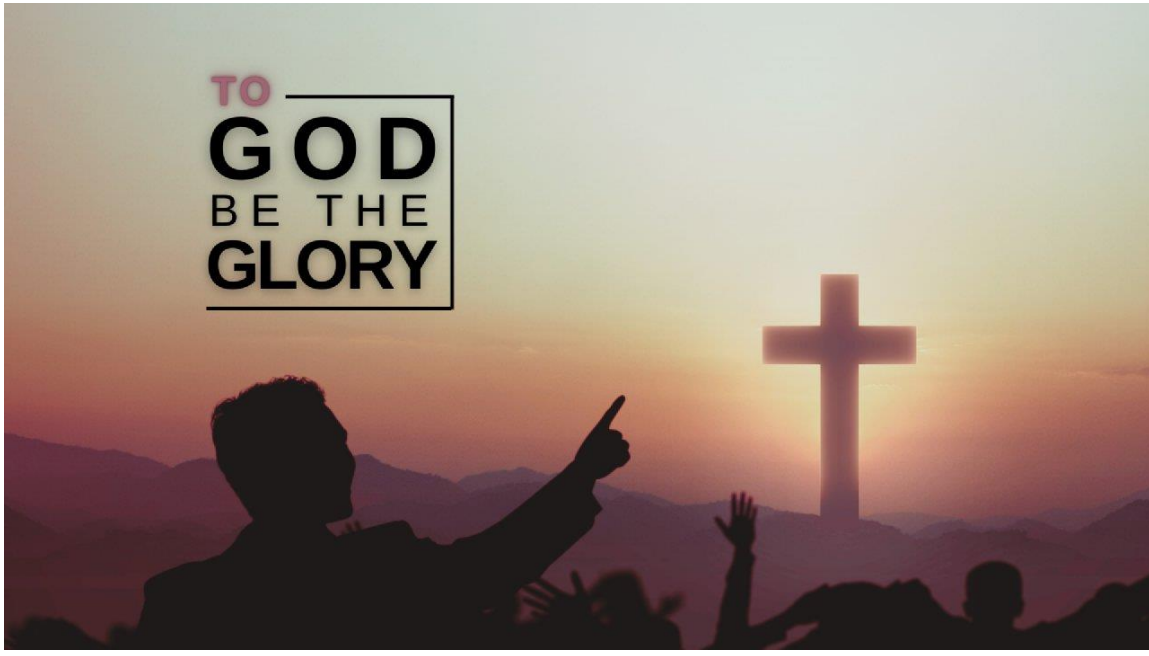


Ministry of Grace Church

2 Peter 3:14-18 - Speaker Notes



Background

Last time we were together we learned that Peter told us that we need to remember the words of the prophets (the writers of the Old Testament) and the apostles (the writers of the New Testament). Why? Because in these last days there will be mockers who deny the truth of the Scriptures. They deny that God created everything that exists in a matter of 6 days. They deny that there was a judgment of the world by a flood (in which the entire population of the earth was killed except 8 people who were believers in God.) And – they deny that there will be another judgment in the future after the return of Jesus (who they deny ever existed.)

Part of the reason that they deny these things is because for them to happen, God has to suspend, or even violate, the observable laws of physics. These mockers are not believers in the God of creation (the God of the Bible). Their god is called uniformitarianism. Because of this belief in their god, they think that the world just suddenly came into existence without any outside influence (even though this violates their own law of cause and effect.)

How do we know these things are true?

By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible. ... And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who draws near to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. ([Hebrews 11:3,6](#))

Unbelievers deny the flood because there is not enough water in all the oceans of the earth to cover the highest mountains. And, since the mountains have always been the way they are today, (that's uniformitarianism) there couldn't have been a world-wide flood.

They believe the greatest threat to their existence is a global climate catastrophe brought on by our use of hydrocarbon fuels. They say that because of the CO₂ that the burning of these fuels creates, the earth's atmosphere will trap more and more of the sun's energy, and it will eventually heat up the earth and melt all the polar ice caps and flood much of the habitable land. However, they conveniently ignore the fact that according to their own science, there has been a time in the past in which the CO₂ levels were much higher than they are today, and it occurred during a previous ice age.

Because the mockers and false teachers of today believe in science and we believe in the Bible, we know that the coming judgment will take them by surprise. But it shouldn't take us by surprise. In fact, we are to be at peace awaiting and looking forward to the return of Christ.

Nonetheless, we Christians should beware of those who distort the truths in the Bible. Based on what Peter has just taught us, we must be on guard so that these false teachers don't cause us to stumble. In order to protect ourselves from the false teaching, we are to put our effort into growing spiritually. In order to do that, we need to give heed to what the Bible says. Here, now, are Peter's final challenges to us.

2 Peter 3:14-15a

Therefore, beloved, since you are looking for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, and consider the patience of our Lord as salvation ...

In the earlier portion of this chapter of 2nd Peter, he talked about the mockers who deny the coming return of Jesus Christ and the Day of the Lord. They say that we, Christians, have been warning about the soon coming of the Lord and His judgment for thousands of years now and there is no more evidence of it today than there was 2,000 years ago. And Peter has just said, "... according to God's promise we are looking for NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH, in which righteousness dwells." Therefore, he says, since we are looking for these things to come to pass just as God said they would, we should be prepared for them to happen. What is it that Peter is talking about? He's talking about the soon coming of the Lord and the judgment that is to follow. Unlike the mockers, we have no reason to doubt these things. In fact, we have every reason to believe the message about the future... and we should be preparing for it.

Remember, the judgment that Peter is talking about is a judgment by fire. This judgment will involve both the nuclear fission (letting loose of the elements) of all earthly works, and the Judgment Seat of Christ (Bema Seat Judgment) where the works of all Christians will be tested by fire. If we believe that this earth and all earthly deeds that we do will be burnt up, we should change our focus. Instead of focusing on the things of this world, we should focus on all those things that will ultimately bring glory to God. Stop for a minute and think about this. In order to expectantly look forward to something you have to believe in it. If you don't believe it will happen, then you won't be expecting it and you won't be looking forward to it.

However, if we believe these things will come to pass, then we should be diligent to be at peace when He comes for us. Since we are in Christ Jesus, we are under no condemnation from God and should truly have peace. This is exactly how He should find us when He returns to judge the world. And – if we recognize the gifts that God has given us (both the spiritual gifts and the material gifts), and if we have been using them to bring glory to God, then we have nothing to fear about the Bema Seat Judgment

Notice that Peter refers to us as spotless and blameless ones. I think he does this intentionally to show the contrast between us and the false teachers he was talking about in the previous chapter. There, he called them stains and blemishes. When you look at the Greek text, you see that the words translated “**stains and blemishes**” (Gk *spiloi* and *momoi*) are the same root words as the words translated “**spotless and blameless** (Gk *aspiloi* and *amomētoi*),” but without the privative “**a**” (meaning, not) in front of them. He said the false teachers are;

... **stains and blemishes**, reveling in their deceptions, as they feast with you, (2 Peter 2:13)

But here he says that we are to be;

... **spotless and blameless** (2 Peter 3:14)

In addition to encouraging us to be spotless and blameless, Peter also says, “**consider the patience of our Lord as salvation.**” In other words, while we are waiting for God to fulfill His promises, we should be using this time to spread the word of salvation by grace through faith.

Both the Apostles, Peter and Paul, indicate that God’s longsuffering is His way of holding back judgment until the last possible moment so that salvation can come to as many as possible.

2 Peter 3:15b-16

... **just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.**

This passage in Peter’s writing is another one that, on the surface, seems confusing and hard to understand, so let’s look at it one phrase at a time.

“**just as also our beloved brother Paul, ..., wrote to you, as also in all his letters...**” At the time of the writing of 2nd Peter, many of Paul’s epistles had been written. Peter, no doubt, had read them and had been himself instructed by them.

“**speaking in them of these matters...**” In Paul’s letters the subjects of the return of Christ, the judgment of the wicked, and the coming of a new heaven and a new earth are all spoken of.

“**in which are some things hard to understand...**” In Paul’s letters there are a number of topics that are not easily understood by these mortal minds of ours. Things such as

- ✓ the timing of the return of Christ, which Paul believed could be any day

- ✓ the rapture both of living and sleeping saints together, with a shout, the voice of the archangel, and trump of God, to meet our Lord in the air
- ✓ the standing of all believers before the judgment seat of Christ, and the account we all must give of our deeds.
- ✓ the manner of his coming in person with all his saints and his mighty angels
- ✓ the destruction of antichrist at Christ's coming, which will be with the words of his mouth

“which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.” Those who have great human knowledge but who have not been taught by the Spirit of God, those mockers who don't really believe, those who do not have the Spirit of Christ and are none of His, who are ignorant and unstable -- they will pervert the teachings of Paul as they have done to the teachings of the rest of Holy Scripture.

The startling thing here is not that Peter refers to the teaching of Paul, but that he refers to him as a dear brother. If you recall, Paul was not one of the original 12 disciples nor was he the one selected to replace Judas (see [Acts 1:15-26](#).) Paul is the only apostle of Christ who was saved after the resurrection. The other apostles were primarily sent to witness to Jews, but Paul was commissioned by the Lord Himself to a ministry among the Gentiles.

Scripture also records the fact that Peter and Paul had several strong confrontations regarding how Christianity was differentiated from Judaism (see [Galatians 2:11](#) and surrounding verses), so for Peter to now refer to Paul as a “beloved brother” shows a remarkable demonstration of humility and acceptance on Peter's part.

This is as much the message of these verses as anything else. We need to accept the fact that none of us has all the answers. In spite of everything that we have been taught through years of sermons, Sunday school lessons, and Bible studies, we all have much to learn from each other. And, as long as the teaching is based on what the Bible actually says (as opposed to hearsay or private interpretation), we need to be willing to be taught by the Holy Spirit regarding these truths.

Let's guard ourselves against heresy and the corruption of false teachers. At the same time, we need to be open to the teaching from the Spirit of God so that we can all be effective witnesses for Christ.

2 Peter 3:17-18

You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest you, having been carried away by the error of unprincipled men, fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Because there will be mockers and false prophets who deny the truth of the Word and who deny that Christ is returning again, people who don't believe that there was a flood or that there will be a fiery judgment... Peter's final warning here is, be on your guard!

Peter is commanding us to protect ourselves from the teachings of the mockers and false teachers. Otherwise, he says, we may be led astray by their erroneous teaching. Remember we learned earlier that they will use a symphony of words to entice us into their false teaching.

How can we protect ourselves from false teaching? As I have said before, people who are trained to detect counterfeit money do not spend their time studying various forgeries and counterfeits. Instead, they study the real thing over and over again in excruciating detail so that they can spot a fake as being different from the real thing. In the same way, we need to constantly be reading and studying the Word of God, over and over, so that we will be able to spot false teaching. It is not sufficient to simply hear a sermon once a week and spend a few minutes reading our Bibles. We need to be reading and studying the Word constantly!

Peter then tells us that if we do get led astray, we may fall from our “secure position.” Peter is not saying that we will fall from salvation. As we’ve shown before, we cannot lose our salvation. What we can lose, however, is our firm footing, our position of spiritual stability, and we can stumble and fall into sin if we get led astray by false teaching.

Peter concludes his letter with a command to “[grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ](#).” Like a tree which continues to grow because it has life fed from the roots sunk deep in the earth, we are to grow because we are being fed from our roots in Christ through the Word of God. The only way to have continual growth is to be fed regularly from the book of life, the Bible. Only through regular constant reading and fellowshiping with the God of the Bible will we receive regular nourishment.

Peter then closes his letter with a word of praise for the one to whom we owe everything. He says, “[To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity](#)” God, and God alone, is to be given recognition for who He is and what He has done. Peter proclaims that this praise and honor is His both now and forever.

So What?

Are you expecting Jesus to return at any time? If so, do you have peace about it, and do you have confidence that He will return to take you home with Him? Earlier I said, “we have every reason to believe the message about the future... and we should be preparing for it.” Are you prepared for the rapture and the judgment that is to follow? Remember, if you’re truly saved then you should have peace because in God’s eyes you are spotless and blameless!

While God is patiently waiting, holding back His judgment, we need to be working for Him, not for ourselves. “But what are we supposed to be doing while we are waiting,” you may ask. I believe that Paul tells us exactly what we are to be doing when he wrote his letter to the church in Corinth. The Corinthians were arguing about who were the better Christians. Some claimed they were better because they were followers of Paul. Others claimed they were better because they were followers of Apollos. Here’s how he responded:

[What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to each one. I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But](#)

each man must be careful how he builds on it. For no one can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:5-11)

Paul used two metaphors here. The first is an agricultural metaphor. He's not talking about growing wheat, corn, or tomatoes. He's talking about growing the church, the body of Christ. He says that there are some who plant churches and there are others who help them to grow. The second metaphor Paul uses here is a construction metaphor. It's all about building God's building (again, it is His church, the body of Christ). Paul says that he, himself, laid the foundation but others build on it. We, on the other hand, are the ones who are building on that foundation. He goes on to say,

Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident, for the day will indicate it because it is revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (1 Corinthians 3:12-15)

He is referring here to the Judgment Seat of Christ (the Bema Seat Judgment), which he also referenced in his second letter to this church.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

While God is patiently waiting and holding back His judgment, we need to be working on building up the body of Christ (the church). We have all been given spiritual gifts as well as human abilities. We need to be using these gifts and abilities to build up the body. We think that if we are not doing something grand and glorious, that we aren't doing our part. But God does not look at our work the way we tend to look at it. God looks at the heart. If we are using our gifts and abilities for Him (not for ourselves) then He will reward us. Do you know what your gifts and abilities are? Then get to work using what he has given you and don't worry about the mockers and don't worry that your part is too small for God to notice.

We know that Christ is coming again (it could even be today). And we know He is coming as the Judge who will perform a trial by fire. We also know that there are many false teachers who would draw us away from our firm footing. Therefore, beware and lift your eyes, for your redemption draws near!

Having completed this study of 2nd Peter, let's submit ourselves wholeheartedly to God and commit ourselves to doing His will, and to using the gifts and abilities that He has given us to build up the body of Christ.

Let's pray.