

Can We Predict When Jesus Is Coming Back?

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3-Year Bible Reading Plan

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Tonight, I want to invite you to turn in your Bibles to the book of 2 Peter 3 and we find one of the definitive chapters in scripture regarding one of the most controversial subject matters in scripture, that which we know as the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and tonight I titled the message hopefully with somewhat of a hook for your interest, it's a very simple question, "Can We Predict When Jesus Is Coming Back?" Now I know what the Sunday school answer is. I know that, the Sunday school answer is, "Well, of course not. You can't." Because in Matthew 24, Jesus made is very clear that, "No one knows the day or the hour, not even the angels in heaven, only my Father knows." However, just a couple of verses before that, he made this very interesting statement, actually it was a parable that he spoke of the fig tree, he said, "When you begin to see the fig leaves blooming," by the way, all throughout your Old Testament the fig leaves are representative of who we know as Israel, "When you see them begin to bloom, know that the time is near." In other words, Jesus said we may not know the day or the hour but I am convinced he said you would be aware at least of the season of the times.

So tonight, as we go into 2 Peter 3, I want to look at what does the Bible say in regards to the timing not only of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ but those who would dispute, those who would doubt, those who would question and again how you and I are to respond therein. Beginning in verse 1 of chapter 3 of 2 Peter, it says,

1 This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: 2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: 3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. 5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: 6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: 7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one

thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 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. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

As we walk through this very critical passage regarding what we know as the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, I want to utilize just a series of typical questions that we might ask regarding any passage of scripture, much less this one. The first question I want to ask in regards to dating the Second Coming, in regards to looking at can we look at the times and the season, can we make any type of somewhat of a prediction of when we might see these things begin to unfold, the first question is this: where do we locate the source material? Do we go to the theologians of old? Do we go to the writings of the ancient Jews? Who do we go to? Well, according to the first two verses, there are actually three "groups of individuals" that give us all the information that we need to know.

It says there in verse 2: the holy prophets. As you walk through your Old Testament, one of the things that you will discover is that the prophets of old spoke more about what we know as the Second Coming than they did the first. In fact, if you want to just quantify it, there are specifically 48 prophecies regarding what we call the First Coming of Jesus Christ that would involve birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. Now hear me clearly. When I speak about 48, there are several of them that are duplicated but there are 48 events or there are 48 specific things that will involve Jesus Christ's First Coming.

Now that's a message and a Bible study in and of itself but let's talk about the Second Coming. On a very conservative side, there are between 400-500 passages, or shall we say events in your Old Testament regarding the Second Coming. On the not so conservative side there's around 1,000. So one of the, I guess, the numbers that we use or the ratios that we use just to kind of go somewhere in the middle is that for every passage or for every event that we have in the Old Testament regarding the First Coming, there are eight passages regarding the Second Coming. So when we talk about the events of the Second Coming, when we address the potential of looking at the chronology, please understand that one of the greatest resources we have is what we know as the Old Testament, men such as Isaiah and Jeremiah, even Ezekiel and Daniel, Zephaniah, even the minor prophets. As you walk through those passages, they were speaking about the coming Messiah and at times they could not even differentiate between that which was the First Coming and the Second Coming. We read earlier today in chapter 1 that the Lord spoke through the Holy Ghost unto them and they simply wrote what God gave them.

The second group found there in verse 2 is the apostles. Now this is important because the apostles called of God did not change what the prophets of old wrote. In fact, if you begin to walk through your New Testament, I'll speak specifically of the Apostle Paul, he's called in Romans 11, he's called the apostle to the Gentiles, he's referred to as the

apostle that was called out of due season. We know his story well. In Acts 9 on the road to Damascus when the Lord gets his attention with the bright light, all that conversion story, but the Lord spoke to him most quantifiably than any other person in the New Testament, and as you begin to walk through the letters of the Apostle Paul, the very first two letters that the Lord gave us through him are 1 and 2 Thessalonians which about one-third of the material involves the Second Coming. In other words, they did not dismiss it as, "Well, that's for another time period." They addressed it in the same manner as the Old Testament prophets that we need to study the aspects of it, we need to look at its particulars and realize that it's just as relevant for the New Testament Christian as it was for the Old Testament Jews.

So you have the Old Testament prophets, you've got the New Testament apostles, and last but not least, the Lord himself. Notice at the end of verse 2, and by us the apostles of the Lord and Savior. When you begin to look at what we jokingly call the red letters of Jesus, those of you who have a red letter Bible, Matthew through John, we know that those red letters, as oftentimes our Bibles print them, are the words that directly came from the mouth of Jesus Christ. And you begin to look at what he taught about, the subject matters and begin to quantify them, you'll discover that Jesus Christ spoke more of his Second Coming than he even did of the cross. Entire chapters about the Second Coming, Matthew 24, Matthew 25, Mark 13, Luke 21, entire chapters dedicated to the Second Coming and yet there will be a passage here and a statement here regarding the fact that though he would be crucified, he would raise three days later. That's important because when we look at the subject matter tonight of chronology and the Second Coming, the thing that we want to be most mindful of is that which was given to us in the Old Testament, that which was given to us in the New Testament, and even more so, that which was given to us by Jesus Christ himself.

The second question that we need to ask is when it comes to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, who is it that speaks contrary to the source material? Who speaks contrary to what the Bible says? Here we have verse 3 and 4. It says, "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." These two verses are critical because every single day that you and I wake up, we're having more verbiage, more communication, more contrary opinions to the idea of the Second Coming because just what we read, they look back on 2,000 years of history and say, "What are the odds that it will actually happen?"

I don't think we understand how odds work. We oftentimes see this at the beginning of any type of sporting event but particularly a high profile football game. They always bring, they used to bring the captains but now in a pandemic world they bring captain there, and they always have a special designated coin. They'll say this side is heads, this side is tails. They'll flip the coin and whoever "guesses right" gets to choose whether to defer, take the ball, whatever it may be. You realize that if you take a coin and you flip it 100 times and it lands on heads every single time, that the odds it will land on tails the next time is still 50/50? And I think one of the mistakes that we make is we look back on 2,000 years of history and say, "Well, if he hasn't come back by now, it must not be." Let

me flip that script. The fact that it's been so long makes it more expedient that it could occur even in the near future.

So who is it that speaks? Allow me to kind of bridge off of the outline this morning. I want you to notice the motive that these individuals have in verse 3, "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts." Why is it that somebody would be a scoffer? What are the lusts? I'll tell you why, because when Jesus physically returns, he takes over the world and you and I and whatever system we've put in place and whatever power system or struggle that we have is no longer in our control. And so man's desire and lust for power and authority and prominence and gain, of course. In fact, some of you may have heard this story in previous days but on a night such as tonight it just bears repeating. It was many many years ago, I found myself in a small west Texas town, leading in a good old fashioned week long revival, and I always preached on what we know as the Second Coming on the last night of however many days we were meeting. I announced at the very beginning just to let them know well in advance, and because people were intrigued by it, it usually is high attendance night of the week. That evening, myself and the pastor and various folks had dinner at a nice family's house. It was a wonderful dinner and the mom of the home, the wife of the home, she asked me, she said, "Jeff, tonight are you still going to be preaching about the Second Coming?" And I said, "Oh, yes, ma'am." And she goes, "Okay, that's fine but I don't think I'm going to come." And I said, "Ma'am, why not?" And she goes, "Kinda like things the way they are."

That's a sad admission, is it not? But it fits perfectly with verse 3 because we have this lust, we have this desire to be in control and to have things the way that we've orchestrated them and we've organized them. And so the motive behind those who would dispute the Second Coming is because there is some type of power or authority or possession that they don't want to yield to the Lord.

What's their message? Where is the promise? Notice verse 4, "Where is the promise of his coming?" We've already addressed this with the illustration of the odds of flipping a coin, but as you read not only the Old Testament but also the New Testament, particularly the letters of Paul, there is this inflection, there is this idea of what we call the imminent return of Jesus Christ at any moment. In fact, in 1 Corinthians 15, it says in the blink of an eye. And so kind of that contrary spirit says he said it could happen at any moment yet it's been 2,000 years, and I don't want to jump too far ahead because we're going to spend a lot of time on verse 8, but I want you to think about this. If a day to the Lord is 1,000 years and 1,000 years a day, then 2,000 years is just a weekend to him, and so from the Lord's perspective is has not been that long.

But the third aspect of those who would be contrary to what we're discussing tonight is found in verse 5, they are willingly ignorant. That's an interesting statement, "For this they willingly are ignorant," listen to the next statement, "by the word of God." In other words, those who would scoff, those that would doubt, those that would question, those that would dispute what we know as the Second Coming, oftentimes do so based on mathematical formulas or philosophical opinions or whatever it may be. But according to

this, those that would speak contrary to, they are willingly ignorant of what the word of God says.

For every passage about the First Coming in the Old Testament we've got at least eight. Out of the mouth of Jesus at least twice as much regarding the Second Coming as even what we know as his crucifixion and resurrection. So those who would speak contrary to what we know as the Second Coming of Christ, I'm not saying that they're unintelligent, I'm saying they're ignorant, not ignorant of the ability to learn but ignorant of simply taking what the Bible says and heeding its message.

The third question that we need to ask in light of the primary question is what is the chronology as laid out? Verse 8, "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Leading up to that very famous passage, he goes all the way back in the book of Genesis and discusses the fact that the world that was flooded is very different than the world that is now, and the world that is now is being preserved unto judgment. The Bible is very clear that this judgment will take place, it will not be a judgment of water but it will be a judgment of fire. In fact, Revelation 20 continues the story to say that all of it will be consumed and completely recreated. That's why in Revelation 21, it says, "I saw a new heaven, a new earth and a new Jerusalem for the former things were passed away."

But the chronology that we have that has been laid out is based on the fact that the earth has been judged by a flood in days past, it is one day going to be judged by a fire in day future, but what is the specifics? The context of this passage, verse 8 is one of the most used but misused verses in all of the Bible. Now we're notorious for doing that, you realize it, right? We're notorious for taking a verse out of its context and making it say what we want it to say about what we'd like it to say about. There are many of a God-fearing willing people who take verse 8 and try to use it to explain the book of Genesis. You go back in the book of Genesis when it talks about on day 1 the Lord established light, day 2 a firmament, etc. and there are those who subscribe to what we call the day age theory. The day age theory is that it wasn't specifically 24 hours of creation but each one of those "days" was a period of time, and they utilize this passage. There are some that believe it's a literal 1,000 years per day. There are some that would stretch it out to 7,000 years per day. And there are some very open-minded people that say we don't know how long it took, we just know that there were different "ages" per day. Here's the problem: if you look at verse 8 in context, it has nothing to do with creation. It has nothing to do with God establishing the creative order as we know it. The entire context is the Second Coming. And so when we look at the chronology of this very famous verse, its context is one of the return of Christ, not the creative order.

Now speaking of chronology, it makes it very clear yet it is very broad-stroked that the earth that was of old, the earth that was judged by water has now been reserved and that earth, though it continues to be navigated by the decisions of man and all the perils of such, that one day it is being kept unto judgment. As I mentioned just a brief time ago, that's fulfilled in Revelation 20. It is going to happen because, as we read in verse 5, they are willingly ignorant simply of what the word of God says. But I want you to notice the

Lord's concern. Look at verse 9, "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." Now I know that verse 8 is contextually about the Second Coming, however the verses leading up to that allude to the earth that at one point perished with water. And I want you to think back to Genesis 6, I want you to think back to when the Lord said that wickedness is in all the earth and everything that man does is wicked. He says unto Noah that his Spirit will not strive with man but for 120 years. The Bible says that whom we know as Noah began to build that very famous ark.

Now those of you who are, shall we say, a little bit more aged or mature than others, I realize that there are times that things begin to start hurting, in fact, we joke if it doesn't hurt, it doesn't work, but Noah was 500 years old when he began the project. Can you imagine even at our current age if the Lord came to us and said, "I want you to build a boat for 120 years." 120 years. According to Hebrews 11, Noah was called a preacher of righteousness.

Now let me just kind of put those passages together. I want you to imagine the scene. Noah's out there building a boat, it hasn't rained one day as of yet. People are walking by saying, "What are you doing?" He says, "Well, I'm building a boat." "Why would you build a boat?" "Because it's gonna rain." "What's rain?" "I don't know but it's gonna happen, it's gonna be bad." What did they do? They mocked, they made fun of, they laughed and according to the biblical record, only eight people got on the boat. Some of you have been to the Ark Encounter up in Kentucky. Some of you have studied what the scriptures say about the dimensions of the boat. You know, a lot of people will question "how many" but can we all agree the boat was big enough for a whole lot more than eight people? And what does it say in verse 9? He is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish but all come to repentance. I think this is important when we talk about chronology. It's real easy to get caught up in dates and times and seasons and calendars, and we'll discuss a little about that in just a moment, but in light of all that, the Lord gave us a very strict calendar in Genesis, 120 years but the point and the purpose and the concern was that humanity would be saved. However, unfortunately most were not and we see a very clear parallel to the Second Coming as well.

Alright, this is the question that everybody's been wanting to get to since we began tonight. When does the source material, when does the scripture, when does the Old Testament, even the New Testament, say that the Second Coming will occur? Now this is where we get to have a little fun tonight. This is where we get to go back and dig into the Bible and see what it says and compare scripture with scripture and see does the Bible truly lay out a methodology for this question. The first thing we've got to address is a very simple comparison, a day to the Lord is as 1,000 years, and 1,000 years is to a day. Why is that important? Because if you haven't noticed, the week starts over every seven days. There is not an infinite number of days in God's calendar. In fact, beginning in the book of Genesis when God began to count time, after seven days he started over. Every single time. He did it in the Old Testament. He does it in the New Testament. He does it before the resurrection. He does it after the resurrection. The way that God counts time,

it's very similar to if you had the skill set to play the piano or any other musical instrument, we call them octaves. Every eighth note begins a new octave.

So when we begin to compare a strict reading of the biblical account, we discover a very interesting phenomena. Now I know there are those that are a whole lot smarter than I am that have done a whole lot more study, but when you get into the Old Testament, it does not say that such and such king of Israel was born in 623 BC and he died in 572 BC. It doesn't say that. What it typically says is he was born in the year of this guy, three years after this event, and 20 years before the earthquake is usually what it says, but when you begin to let those layers soak in, we get a pretty good idea. Why is that important? There was a guy years ago by the name of Bishop Ussher. Now obviously he was a bishop in what we know as the Roman Catholic Church, he wasn't married, didn't have kids, he had a lot of time on his hands so he went back into the Old Testament and he started dating the events not according to cosmology and all that stuff but just what the Bible says. Do you know what he discovered? That what we know as the creative event of Genesis 1 according to a strict biblical account would have occurred roughly 4,000 years before the time of Christ. So that means that you and I, according to a strict reading of the scripture, human history in spite of what other disciplines might say, we find ourselves 6,000 years approximately on this side of the garden of Eden. Why is that important? Because if you do a simple comparison, if 1,000 years is as a day, and a day as if 1,000 years, then you and I find ourselves pretty much toward the end of day 6.

Why is that important? Well, there's a very critical piece of the week that God established that we must discuss. It's called the Sabbath. In fact, if you go through the book of Genesis, you'll discover in Genesis 2:1, we call it the seventh day of creation. If you're not familiar with creation, I guess, studies, chapter 1 is the first six days, chapter 2 begins the seventh day. We know that the Lord rested. Now can we all agree that God doesn't get tired? So it's not that he rested because he needed to, it was a very specific piece of communication. In fact, when you get to Exodus 31, it says that the Sabbath day was a sign between the Jewish people and God.

Now I know a lot of times on Sunday night we discuss signs in the Old Testament. They're very rare and they're very important. When God puts a rainbow at the end of Noah's flood as a sign that he will not destroy the earth again by water, that's a pretty God thing that only God can do. In Isaiah 7 when he says this will be a sign to you, that a virgin will conceive and give birth, can we please agree that's only something God can do? When Gideon places his fleece out and it's dry in the morning and the ground is wet and vice versa the next day, the Bible calls it a sign. Why is that important? The Sabbath was called a sign.

Now think about the Jewish people, particularly as they're walking through the wilderness experience in the book of Numbers. It's coming toward the end of Friday. That morning, you gathered up the manna from heaven and you did what the Lord told you to do, twice as much as you normally would. Now on any other day, if you'd gathered twice as much, the next day when you woke up it would be eaten by the worms. But this day you're believing that God will preserve that "second set of manna" for the

next day because on the Sabbath it's a day of rest, it's a day that the manna not only is not to be acquired but it will not even fall from heaven. The next morning you wake up and on any other day it would be spoiled but on this day, it has been preserved. In fact, time and time again the Lord did the miraculous on the Sabbath to show the Jewish people that Zechariah was right, "It is not by might nor by power but by my strength says the Lord."

The Sabbath is a day of rest. The book of Hebrews 3 and 4, 12 times it says "desire to enter into the rest of the Lord." You know, the Bible speaks in Revelation 20 that there is a time period that is coming where the Lord will return and establish his kingdom on the earth for 1,000 years. Now I know there are some wonderfully willing people who've said, "Well, you know, that's just figurative language. It's metaphorical." When God says something six times in seven verses, I don't think he's being metaphorical, I think he's being literal.

For 1,000 years. You know, we call that time period the millennium, that's just a word that means 1,000 years, and when you think about it, things are at rest, are they not? Let's begin with the biggest piece. According to Revelation 20, whom we know as Satan is bound in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years. That alone brings us all the rest that we need. According to the book of Isaiah, it says that the wolf and the lamb will lie down together. The Bible speaks of little children playing with snakes and not even getting bitten. In other words, the earth is at rest, humanity is at rest, all is at rest. In fact, the millennium is almost as if this elongated Sabbath day where God takes care of his people.

Now let's put all that biblical evidence, kind of put it all into one piece. 1,000 years is as a day and a day as if 1,000 years. It gives us the possibility of looking back on human history as the Bible has recorded it to see that the seventh day or the 7,000 year time period would not only be a day of rest but would be the time of which the Lord himself would reside on his throne. Now I can see the wheels turning and I'm sure those that are watching online are doing the same thing. It's not hard to figure out that if you look back on time and you look at the calendar, we're there. And so you're saying, "Pastor, are you saying that according to 2 Peter 3 that the Second Coming is that close?" Well, don't go there quite yet. Allow me to give a little bit of criticism here, or shall I say, more of an asterisk, so to speak. You know, when it comes to the sports world, we put asterisks on records or attainments that were somewhat out of the scope or maybe there was something unique, so let me put a little asterisk here. One of the problems that you and I have is that none of our calendars are even remotely accurate. None of them. We used to go by what we call the Julian calendar, then we replaced it by the Gregorian calendar, and there are some people that would argue that we're off by a few days, there's others that would argue we're off by years, and some would even say that we're off by decades. And so when you and I look back even though Bishop Ussher did an amazing job at giving us a chronology or a history of the Old Testament from what we know as the garden of Eden to the time of Christ, since the resurrection, since the ascension of Jesus Christ, the past 2,000 years we have not been as diligent with our calendaring of events. It's just very difficult.

The other thing that I would say is that the Jewish people, I would tend to side with, and the reason that I would side with them is that according to the book of Romans, the one advantage that a Jew has over anybody else is that they've had the oracles of God for thousands of years. In other words, those Old Testament scriptures, those constructs, they know a whole lot more about it than we do. You say, "Why is that important?" Because if you go look up the Jewish calendar, we're at least 200 years shy of 6,000.

Now again, whose calendar is right? Who knows. They're probably all wrong at some capacity. Probably the most fascinating theory that's out there, by the way, you can put two asterisks by this and classify it as conspiracy theory within the dumpster fire, so to speak, is called the phantom time theory. I don't know if you've ever heard of this but the idea is that the years that you and I know between 614 AD and 911 AD never actually occurred, that they were completely fabricated by Pope Sylvester who so desperately wanted to reign in the year 1000 so that he could "be seated on the ecclesiastical throne" when he believed the Lord would return.

Now why do I go through all those constructs? Because at the end of the day we really don't know what year it is. We don't have a clue. I know that our calendars tell us it's 2021 but it may not be so. And so I remember decades past, I remember that there were prophets many who were projecting as we approached the 21st century that all that we just read was going to come to fruition and here we find ourselves at least two decades on the other side. I want to call your attention to the fact that I have not once put a date. All I have laid out for you is that the Lord has a chronology and according to what we've just read, that chronology uses a comparison of 1,000 years is as if a day and a day as if 1,000 years. It just so happens to be that that day of rest in the creative account also matches the prophetic words of what we know as the Second Coming.

That being said, we could be hundreds of years off or we could be just a few days, or somewhere in between, which is why the last question is so important. We've asked the where, the who, the what and the when, now it's time for the why. Look in verse 10, "But," don't you love that word? Any time that word shows up, it just draws me in. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." Now why is that illustration so important? Because a thief no matter what they're "thieving" does not leave Post-It notes telling us when it's going to happen. In fact, those who are broken into, those who are stolen from, those who are robbed will testify time and time again that they never saw it coming. As a thief in the night. By the way, in Matthew 24, Jesus Christ used this exact illustration when he was describing there shall be two in the field, one will be taken, one will be left. He described do not be caught off guard as one who has been taken by a thief in the night.

It says, "in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." You know, it's interesting that there's a word in our Christian vocabulary that we have a natural gravitation for. It's called regeneration. Let me use it in John 3 language, to be born again. It's a phrase we're very familiar with, correct? To be born again, to be regenerated, to be given a new beginning or a new start. It's interesting that word is only

used twice in your Bible. Now applied to us personally, it's found in Titus 3:5 that says that we are regenerated by the Spirit of God, and that's exactly the case. In fact, you and I are dead in our sins and our trespasses, when we come to believe in Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit is placed in us and we are born again, we are regenerated, our body though the temple of the Holy Ghost is dying and one day we will receive a new one. The only other passage in the Bible that uses that word is in Matthew 19:28 where it says that one day the creative order will be regenerated, will be started over.

You know, what's interesting is the eighth day started a new week. When you look throughout your Old Testament in particular, when the Jewish calendar began to cycle over, that eighth day was very critical because they were starting over, they were starting anew. If you go back into verse 8, 1,000 years is as if a day, a day is as 1,000 years, then we see 6,000 years of human turmoil and navigation, we see 1,000 years of the Lord reigning, and at the end of that 1,000 years according to the scriptures, God begins anew. In fact, I want to close tonight by calling your attention to Revelation 21. You know, it's real, I guess, interesting to address the subject matter of tonight. And by the way, do me a favor, when somebody asks did the pastor really tell you when Jesus is coming back, I did not specifically tell you because none of our calendars are even remotely close to being right, I just gave you the construct that the Bible lays out.

Chapter 20 of Revelation is that famous 1,000 year reign, that millennium we addressed. At the end of chapter 20 is what we collectively call the Great Final Judgment, the Great White Throne Judgment. I want you to read chapter 21 of Revelation. This is that day after.

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

You and I specifically this day but in general in the totality of our lives walk through difficult times. We've all known people in days recent as well as days present dealing with sickness, illness, disappointment, frustration, anxiety, whatever it may be. I love that phrase "the former things are passed away." When we look at the chronology of the Second Coming, we cannot forget the consummation of the Second Coming, that he will come and reign, he will renew and begin.

Here's the beautiful thing of Revelation 21 and 22, that there is no mention of six days, there is no mention of a day was 1,000 years and 1,000 years is as if a day, in fact, there's

no limit to the time. Some of you may be aware that in my office I have a very special clock, it's a clock without hands, it is a clock with a dial, it has a 12, a 3, a 6, and a 9, and all the hashes and there's one word written on it: eternity. Time without end. You and I today anticipate or are enthralled with the idea of when will it happen and when will things come to an end, and when will he begin, but we look back on all of human history as recorded in the Bible, it's only been 6,000 years and last time I checked, when we sing Amazing Grace, "When we've been there 10,000 years, bright shining as the sun, we will have no less days to sing God's praise, than when we first begun."

I close tonight with a statement that I didn't originate but has been attributed to me many times. Eternity is too long to be wrong. Don't be one of the mockers and the scoffers that says, "When is the promise of his coming," because it's only been a weekend from God's perspective.