



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

2 Peter 3:1-9

“Is It God’s Will that None Should Perish?”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father we again ask Thy blessing upon us as we study the Scriptures together. We thank Thee for the great truth of the second coming of Jesus Christ, and we thank Thee that we may through the Scriptures have a sure and settled hope as we look into the future, because our hope is grounded in the living and vital and reliable word of God. We ask now that as we look at 2nd Peter chapter 3 that Thou will give us understanding, enable us to grasp the things that have come before Peter’s mind as he sat down to write to the saints many hundreds of years ago. May his words be edifying to us in nineteen seventy-six. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

[Message] Tonight we are turning to 2nd Peter chapter 3 and looking at the first nine verses. Our subject has to do with the scoffers, or is it really true that God is not willing that any should perish? We look now at the first nine verses so I will read them, and you follow along in your text. I’m reading from the Authorized Version if you have another version, you’ll understand therefore the slight differences that exist between this one and yours. Peter says,

“This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: 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: 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. 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: by which the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: 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. 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. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

It’s evident that the doctrine that Peter particularly had to combat in these verses is the denial of the second coming of the Lord Jesus. It is his prophecy that there shall arise in the last days, scoffers, who walking after their own lusts shall ask the believers, where is the promise of his coming? And then they shall give some rational reasons why all things have continued as they have been since the beginning of the creation and why we should not expect the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus. Now this is another one of the heresies of destruction that Peter has spoken about in chapter 2 verse 1. There, remember he had said, “but there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who secretly shall bring in destructive heresies, (heresies of destruction) even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.” And so it’s evident then that this is another one of these heresies of destruction. The Lord Jesus is really not coming again, hundreds of years have

passed by and nothing has changed in our creation. We still are the same creation that we were when the apostles were here, where is the promise of his coming? So, another one of the heresies of destruction will be the denial of the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This of course will be typical of those who do know something about the Scriptures. Obviously, the person who denies the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus is a person who does know something about the Bible. He knows that the Bible does say something about the second coming or he knows that the Christians expect the second coming. So we’re not talking about the mocker or scoffer, who has no acquaintance with the Christian faith at all, but we’re talking about a scoffer who does have some acquaintance with the Christian faith, but being an unbeliever, he does not accept the things that are set forth in holy Scripture.

Sometime ago, I mentioned to you an experience that one of my friends had with a pastor of a very large church in this city. In fact it happened so long ago that I could mention the church without knowing the precise name of the pastor. It was the Highland Park Methodist Church. My friend had an opportunity to give a testimony to this man who was the pastor of the church at that time, not the present pastor, and when he finished giving his testimony the pastor looked at him with a rather cynical look on his face and said, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.” Another preacher of the same denomination who was pastor of the White Rock Methodist Church some years ago said the Bible was like a banana, you keep the part you like and throw the rest away. Fortunately, since the man made that statement, he has left the ministry. But there will be in the last day, men who will deny some of the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith and one they shall deny will be the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus.

Today’s attitude in our churches in to repeat, “Thy kingdom come” in the opening part of the service, but have no faith whatsoever in the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus. They repeat the apostle’s creed in which they speak about the Lord Jesus coming to

execute judgment, but they do not believe that there is going to be any judgment. Alan Richardson who has written an outstanding book from the standpoint of religion, on the subject of Christian apologetics has said, “The myths of the Day of the Lord, the second coming, the judgment, and so on, such myths are spoiled if taken literally.” So we are not to think that there is to come a Day of the Lord, we are not to think that there is to come a second coming of Jesus Christ to the earth, and we’re not to think that there is going to be a time in which eternal judgment is exercised upon men.

Peter speaks of the claims of these markers in the first four verses of the 3rd chapter of his epistle, and as he opens this section here, he also speaks of his purpose in writing. And there is a rather interesting point here that I want to mention. It’s really incidental to what Peter is saying, but it has relevance to a question that is frequently raised by people who are not Pre-millennialist, that is who do not believe that Jesus Christ is actually going to rule and reign upon the earth and I want you to notice that. As he speaks of the purpose of writing in verses 1 and 2 he says,

“This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance. (Now I would gather that that means that it’s perfectly alright to preach a sermon over again that you have preached before.) That ye may be mindful (Now Ye 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:”

Now remember, the Bible says that there is going to come a kingdom of the Lord Jesus upon the earth. Bible students have believed ever since the days of Irenaeus in the earliest of the testimonies of the apologists of the Christian faith in the second century, that there is to be a kingdom of God upon the earth. That is, the Lord Jesus is to come back to the earth, he is to establish his kingdom upon the earth, and he is to rule and reign upon the earth for a thousand years. Now that is the pre-millennial hope. There

are other types of prophetic understanding, there are some who do not believe that there is going to be any earthly kingdom, they call themselves a-millennialists, that is they do not believe in a millennium at all, they believe that the Lord Jesus shall come a second time but there will not be any kingdom of God upon the earth. That when he comes back to the earth, we shall enter into the eternal state. There are a vanishing breed of prophetic students who have believed that the church through the preaching of the gospel would be able to bring in the kingdom, and having brought in the kingdom by the universal dissemination of the truth, the Lord Jesus would come back to an earth and rule and reign on the earth for a thousand years after we have been able by our efforts to bring in the kingdom. That coming would be a post-millennial kingdom of the Lord Jesus. We would bring in the kingdom, and he would come at the conclusion of that kingdom. The pre-millennial hope is that the Lord Jesus shall come before the kingdom and by his coming, execute judgment upon those who are opposed to the God of the heavens and introduce the kingdom himself in his own power, and he shall rule and reign with his saints. The Bible also states that the church of the Lord Jesus shall rule and reign with him.

Now sometimes individuals who do not believe that there is going to be a kingdom upon the earth will make statements like this, “When you turn to the New Testament, you do not have any clear evidence that the Lord Jesus and the apostles believed that we would reign upon the earth.” It is true, I grant. So the a-millennialists say “The Old Testament has many prophecies that speak of a kingdom upon the earth, but when we turn to the New Testament this reference to the land is practically non-existent.” And so the explanation of that is according to the a-millennialists, that those prophecies of the land, those prophecies of our Lord ruling and reigning upon the earth are to be spiritualized, they are not to be taken literally. And the evidence of it is that in the New Testament, we do not have these prophecies of ruling and reigning upon the earth repeated. Now that is a very good objection to the pre-millennial viewpoint, that is

if you want to try to prove it wrong, because it is true that in the New Testament there are not many references to our Lord ruling and reigning upon the earth. We do have one in Revelation chapter 5 in which the saints are said to rule and reign upon the earth. And then we have reference in Revelation chapter 20 to some such thing.

But now I want to suggest to you that the reason there is not this repetition in the New Testament is because the apostles of the New Testament did not regard the Old Testament as a book that was out of date. They did not regard the Old Testament as irrelevant. I know that there are large groups today who regard the Old Testament as irrelevant. For example if you speak to one of the members of the Church of Christ, they will frequently say, the Old Testament is not for us, it is irrelevant to us today, we live by the New Testament. That of course is generally true, but not specifically true. And there are many things in the Old Testament that are still for us. Now look at what Peter says here, he says,

“This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: 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:”

Now you see in this verse here, Peter has put together the words of the prophets of the Old Testament with the commandment of the apostles in the New Testament, and he has said that, “You are to be mindful of both of them.” For there are many of the prophecies which the prophets uttered which have not been fulfilled, so they are still valid for us. And the New Testament writers interpret the Old Testament in that way. In the Epistle to Hebrews, the writer of the Epistle of the Hebrews back in the 12th chapter at the 2nd chapter of the Book of Haggai and there says that there is a section of that prophecy in Haggai which has not been fulfilled yet. So they knew the difference

between the prophecies that were to be fulfilled at the First Advent of the Lord Jesus and the prophecies that were to be fulfilled at the Second Advent.

And so they didn’t think that it was necessary for it to be repeated over and over again that the saints would rule and reign upon the earth, or that the Lord would come and establish a kingdom which would be a kingdom over the earth. It had been said scores of times in the Scriptures and for them the Scriptures were the Old Testament. So it was not necessary for them to repeat it over and over and over again, and that is why we do not have those references in the New Testament as our a-millennial brethren request. I think that the prophets would have said to some of my good a-millennial friends, “Well my goodness it has been said scores of times in the Old Testament, how many times do you expect us to keep on saying it? Any numbskull would see.” Now I don’t know whether they know that word or not, but I’m sure that they would have a word that would go along with it. “Any numbskull would know that after reading the Old Testament there was going to be a kingdom upon the earth, and so when we speak about the kingdom, we’re talking about a kingdom on the earth.”

Now I mention that because I have had some of my good friends, a man who taught me Hebrew many years ago, I saw him some years afterwards, and he had abandoned his pre-millennial viewpoint and I said, “Well why have you abandoned your pre-millennial viewpoint?” And the only reason that he could come up with was that in the New Testament they didn’t have prophecies of the Lord reigning upon the earth specifically. And that puzzled me at the time, and I really didn’t know exactly what to say to him on the spur of the moment. Now I know that’s hard for you to realize that would ever be a time when I wouldn’t have something to say, but there have been such times. And I didn’t have a whole lot to say and wasn’t long afterwards that I was reading this text right here and it was just like a light bulb flashing over my head. “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,” those Scriptures of the Old

Testament are still the Scriptures of the apostles and the readers of this epistle. And incidentally, my good Christian New Testament friend, the Old Testament is still our Bible. And so these prophecies of our Lord ruling and reigning upon the earth are in our Bible, they are there. And so such an objection drives a wedge between the Old Testament and the New Testament which should never be driven.

Now we go on to talk about the prophecy in the third verse, “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers,” and then Peter adds the words, “walking after their own lusts.” Evidently, there’s going to be a great deal of preaching of prophecy in the last days, because one of the doctrines these unbelievers are going to single out is the doctrine of the Second Advent, and that is what they are going to deny. They’re going to deny that there is to come a second coming. And Peter adds about them that they “walk after their own lusts.” It’s always true, false doctrine leads to unholy life. Inevitably, false doctrine leads to unholy living. Now that is why I am so burdened to bring you to the place where you understand sound doctrine, for sound doctrine means sound Christian living. You cannot possibly have a sound Christian life if you don’t know sound biblical doctrine. You’ll be going out putting on the side of your car, “I found it!” [Laughter] Like the rest of the Arminians. [Laughter] Instead of saying, “He found me!” You’ll be talking about an “it” instead of a person, and you’ll be talking about what you have found instead of the fact that he, a person has found you. You see what I mean?

Now there is nothing wrong with putting “I found it!” on the back of your car, that’s alright, there’s just something a little better, that’s all. Now I hope you won’t take that too bad. Some of you are looking kind of shame faced. [Laughter] We’re getting up some stickers, “He found me!” that we’re going to put on the cars of all of those who are sound in the faith. [Laughter] I couldn’t resist that. I was in Nashville last night, and I have a couple of good friends up there in the Bible class, and they said, “Say something tonight about that I found it!” And I said, “Well I was going to say something about it any way, I couldn’t stand it any longer.” [Laughter] So any way, that’s alright, keep it on

there, don’t take it off. I’ve already had a good friend who had an opportunity to say something to someone about Jesus Christ because he had a button, “I found it!” Someone did some up and say, “What in the world have you found?” And he did have an opportunity to say something about the Lord Jesus, so I’m not going to fight it, just criticize it a little bit. [Laughter] Now knowing this verse, that there shall come in the last days, “Scoffers walking after their own lusts.” The point I was trying to make is simply this, it is a valid point, that if we are sound in the faith, we are able to be sound in life. If we are not sound in the faith, the chances are we shall not be sound in our Christian living.

What shall they say specifically? They shall say mockingly to the Christians, “Where is the promise of his coming?” Now what are they saying here? They add, “For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” They’re going to be saying, “Where is the promise of the second coming? When is Jesus Christ coming?” How can he come? Is what they mean. Because they will say, “go all the way back to the creation in the Book of Genesis when God created everything, and there has not been any change in this world in which we are living. Since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.”

Now what are their claims? Well they’re saying first of all that the believer cannot account for the time since the promise of the Second Advent. “Where is the promise of his coming?” And every day that passes, every morning, every night that Jesus Christ doesn’t come adds force to their objection. Now Peter is going to answer this question, and he will answer this claim, and this aspect of it in verses 8 through 10. And he will point out that there has not been status quo since the day of the creation. That’s their claim, but it’s not true.

And then the second thing that they are saying is that the believer cannot account for the undisturbed creation. Now what does that suggest? I wish I had a lot of time

here, because what we really have here is a kind of syllogism. Since the creation, nature is unchanged, the coming of the Lord Jesus would change things, therefore, the coming is a false hope. What is the doctrine that lies back of this? Why it is the very relevant doctrine of uniformity. All things continue as they have since the creation of the world, it is the kind of doctrine that is associated even today with the doctrine of evolution, the doctrine of uniformity. Isn’t it interesting how relevant the word of God is? That hundreds of years before, Peter could prophesy of the denial of the Second Advent and could actually give one of the great principles of the deniers of that Second Advent today. The Bible is a very relevant book, and guided by inspiration, the apostle is able to not only anticipate the denial, but even give the reason for it. I have a statement here before me, it is significant that Peter predicted the apostasy from the Lord’s coming and also predicted that it’s basis would be the very teaching which is predominant in scientific circles today. And he does it all in a single sentence. “Evolution,” says Edward Cloyd “knows only one heresy, the denial of continuity.”

Sometime ago I read a little paragraph, and the author, speaking about something that he had read in *The American Magazine* spoke of a manufacturer who expressed himself thus, “It takes a girl in our factory about two days to learn to put seventeen parts of a meat chopper together. It may be that these millions of worlds, all balanced so wonderfully in space, it maybe that they just happened, it may be by a billion years of tumbling about they finally arranged themselves, I don’t know, I’m merely a plain manufacturer of cutlery, but this I do know, that you can shake the seventeen parts of a meat chopper around in a wash tub for the next seventeen billion years, and you’ll never make a meat chopper.” [Laughter] That’s not a scientific denial of evolution incidentally, those of you that are interested in some theological comments on the doctrine, you can get the tape in the systematic theology series on evolution. But it is striking that Peter, in denying or in setting forth the denial of the second coming has said that they will deny it on the very principle that dominates evolutionary thinking today.

Well now we want to take a look at Peter’s answer to this denial that he prophesies that men shall give of the second coming. So let’s look now at the cause of the error of these scoffers. And first of all in verse 5 and verse 6, he says that they have neglected the flood. Verse 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: by which the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:” Now what is Peter trying to say here? It’s very simple, this a beautifully arranged paragraph, in fact, the Apostle Peter here argues just as logically and as reasonably as anyone in the New Testament. It’s often said that the Apostle Paul was logical in his thinking; well this is one of the most beautifully written chapters in all of the New Testament.

Now he says, first of all that these men are willfully ignorant of something. Our Authorized Version text has, “for this they willingly are ignorant of.” But the Greek word here is much stronger. It speaks of willful ignorance. In other words, it is a matter of the will by which they are ignorant; it is something that they are purposeful in their ignorance of. So they are willfully ignorant of the flood. Why does Peter mention the flood? Why he mentions the flood, because the false teachers have said, “Where the promise of his coming, every thing is has been the same since the creation.” He says they have forgotten that everything is not the same since the creation, a great flood took place and God did intervene in human life.

And as a matter of fact, he practically started over again with the eight souls that came out of that ark. So to say that all things have continued since the creation, is false to that which we know about history, the flood has taken place. Now we don’t have time to talk about any historical or archeological evidence for the flood. It is I think a very well known fact that there is a practically universal tradition of a flood in the eastern world. And so regardless of what any one might say about the precise fulfillment of the flood in the archeological discoveries that have been made to the present time, there is good evidence of this universal tradition of a large flood. And so Peter is speaking about

something that is not only in Scripture, but which we can say is largely spoken of in the historical records to which we have access today.

He says in the 7th verse, “But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word.” Now that would suggest that the same word that prophesied the coming of the Lord is the word that prophesied the coming of this fire that is to come. And so if the same word that prophesied the coming prophesied the fire, and there’s no question but that the fire is going to take place, then look out, it is sure to come. That’s the second thing that they have neglected, in the 7th verse, “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.” So Peter in effect has said to them with reference to their denial, “Where is the promise of his coming, all things continue the same since the creation of the world?” Why these individuals have forgotten the flood that was in the past, they have forgotten what the Bible says about the fire in the future. And the same word that has prophesied of the flood prophesies of the fire, and that same word is the word that prophesies of the Second Advent. So Peter’s argument is rather strong at this point.

Now finally, he turns to in verses 8 and 9 he issues a call to the readers, and he asks them to remember a relationship. This verse is so often misunderstood that I want to spend a few moments on it, “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.” There are some who have constructed remarkable doctrines of prophecy on the basis of this particular statement. I have a very good friend, he’s a very good friend of mine, who has on the basis of this, constructed a doctrine of every dispensation being approximately one thousand years. And he has a theory, based on this text, that one day is with the Lord as thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. And then there are some who have constructed a kind of year day theory of creation on the basis of this. That when Adam spoke of the creation in six days we are not to think of six twenty-four hour periods, but

in the light of this text, we are justified in seeing each one of those days as at least a thousand years. And then we also have individuals who on the basis of this 8th verse would like to deny even the pre-millennial return and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. And on the basis of this say that when the text of Scripture in Revelation 20 verse 6 says that the Lord Jesus is going to come back and rule and reign for a thousand years that we’re not to take that literally, because in the Bible a thousand years is as one day, and one day is as a thousand years, and so that is a symbolical period of time. So all types of things have been argued on the basis of this text.

What does Peter mean? And what is the context of this reply? Well now in the first place, I want you to notice that he does not say, One day is a thousand years and a thousand years is one day. He simply says, “beloved, do not be ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” What he is saying is that time makes no or little difference with the individual who has promised a Second Advent of the Lord Jesus. Why, after all, he’s the high and lofty one who inhabiteth eternity. So from his vantage point, one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like one day. Now what does he mean when he says, “One day is with the Lord as a thousand years with us” Why he means simply that the Lord can do as much in one day as it would take us a thousand to do. So one day is with him as a thousand years with us. He can crowd everything into one day which it would take us a thousand years to do. Now that’s only incidental to his argument, the next part is really the important thing. “And one thousand years is with the Lord as one day with us.”

Now that has direct reference to these scoffers, these scoffers had said, they’re going to say, “Where’s the promise of his coming? All things continue as they have been since the creation of the world.” Why Peter’s answer to them is, “Don’t you know that a thousand years with the Lord is as one day with us?” Now the Lord Jesus when he was here repeated those prophesies of a Second Advent, when two thousand years have passed since a thousand years is with the Lord as one day, what will be the time feeling

with reference to God? Why it will be just as certain as if he made that promise day before yesterday by our thinking. For us, one day seems a very short time, a thousand years with the Lord is like one day with us. Why it seems just a few moments ago that I got up this morning at six thirty in Nashville and here I am tonight here in Dallas, the day is gone, it’s just passed like that. That’s a thousand years to the Lord. Two days? Practically nothing. Now if he made a promise of a Second Advent two thousand years ago, it’s just as if he’d made it day before yesterday. Now if God made something day before yesterday, why you can be sure that it’s still fresh in his mind if it’s fresh in our minds. It’s just as if two days ago the Lord Jesus said I will come again and receive you to myself. One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years is one day. Don’t you realize you scoffers that when two thousand years have passed it will be with God just as if he made this promise day before yesterday?

Now then, that brings us to the 9th verse, “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” Is it really true that God is unwilling that any should perish? Now let me say first of all, that a little thought on your part would very quickly bring you to the answer no. Is God unwilling that any should perish? No, many shall perish. How can we possibly say God is unwilling that any should perish? Many shall perish. We read over and over in Scripture that many shall perish. In this epistle, we read over and over about heresies of destruction, heresies of perishing, so how can we say that God is unwilling that any should perish? Of course he’s willing that some perish. We know from his decree that he has determined by his eternal decree the things that are going to come to pass. So the answer to that is Of course he is willing that some perish.

Well then, what does this text mean? Why a little attention to one of the fundamental principles of Bible study would help greatly. Every Bible teacher that I know stands behind a pulpit and says, “If you’re going to understand the Bible, you must

read the context. You must read the context. Now I have had innumerable people come up to me and quote this text at me. When I’ve said there are some who are elect and there are some who are not elect, almost inevitably, there will be someone who will come up and say, “What about that passage that says God is not willing that any should perish?” And I go through the same thing with every one of them, stop and say, “Have you looked at the context?” “Well no, I haven’t really looked at the context; I don’t even know exactly where it is.” Most of them, they just say, “you know that text somewhere.”

Well now let’s look a little at this text, I’m going to read it out of the Greek text, “The Lord is not slack with reference to his promise as some men reckon slackness (or slowness) but he is long suffering with reference to you, not willing that any perish, but that all have room for repentance.” Now I’m going to change that slightly and read it again, I want you to notice the difference. “The Lord is not slack with reference to the promise as some men count slackness, but he is long suffering with reference to you, not willing that any perish but that all have time for repentance.” Now there are a few things that we need to note here. First of all, the word for willing is the strongest word we have in the New Testament, “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” Now I’ve been saying up to this point, “Of course the Lord is willing that some perish.” And I know what you’re thinking, you’re thinking, well Dr. Johnson, you must have gotten your tongue twisted. No I didn’t get my tongue twisted, because I was using the any in the sense that you were using it, so many of you use it, not you, you’re smart and intelligent, that of course is just a general you. But if you mean by that any, “not willing that any should perish,” if you mean by that any, any man as it is normally meant, then the answer is of course no. God is willing that some perish.

But now who are the any of this verse? Well now look at the context again, verse 8, “Let not this one thing escape you beloved.” Did you see that? “You, beloved” now who are the beloved? Come on somebody, they are the elect, or the saints. “Don’t let this one thing escape you, beloved.” Now the 9th verse says, God is not slack concerning

his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering with reference to you. You who? Who? The elect, the saved, not willing that any, any who? Any of the elect, any of the elect. Not willing that any of you, you see the context demands that the any be the beloved, the elect. Now then, is God not willing that any should perish? Is he willing that any should perish? No, he’s not willing that any should perish, any of the elect. But if you’re talking about a broad any of all people, he is willing that some perish. So you see this text makes beautiful sense.

Now why did Peter give this text? Why did he say that God is not willing that any should perish? Why what had the scoffers been saying? Why they’d been saying, it’d been two thousand years or more let’s say. Let’s take some of these scoffers who are denying the second coming like Professor Alan Richardson right now, denying the Second Advent, now they are saying, two thousand years have passed, the Second Advent has not come. Peter first of all says, don’t you know that a thousand years is with the Lord as a day, it’s just as if he made it day before yesterday. But furthermore, do you know why he’s delayed? He has a program, he has a plan. You see the reason that he is waiting, is that he may gather together all of his elect ones. God is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness, he’s not delaying. You know we often use the expression, “If the Lord tarries, now the Lord is not tarrying, he’s working according to a plan, he knows exactly what is taking place. He even knew it when you put that “I found it!” on the back of your car. He knows everything that’s transpiring, and he has been waiting and waiting and waiting, now for nineteen hundred years since the Lord Jesus was here.

For what purpose, frustrated, disturbed, upset, discouraged and defeated because down through the years individuals have been rejecting the word of the gospel? Is he a frustrated God? Is that the kind of God you have, a frustrated God? Oh he’s not frustrated, he just has a plan. He’s working according to a plan; he’s not slack concerning his plan as we measure tardiness. He’s longsuffering, he’s waited down through the time, not willing that any one of his elect should perish, but that all, all who? All of the elect,

you’re learning to read the context. That all of the elect, now this is very interesting word here, that all should, the word which is translated in the Authorized Version is “Come to repentance.” The word translated come there is not the usual word for come like I came to church tonight, but it’s a word that is related to the Greek word for room, space, so choreo means to have room for or have space for or have time for. Not willing that any of the elect should perish, but that all should have opportunity for repentance. That’s why he’s delaying, that’s why the Second Advent has not taken place. The Second Advent has not come because God is working his plan to bring all of the elect into the presence of God. Not one of them shall be left out. And incidentally, there shall not be any one intrude in who was not one of those written before the foundation of the world in the Book of the Lamb.

I always remember a story of a young preacher who went up to an older preacher and said, “Been deeply disturbed about the doctrine of election, and I’ve finally come to believe that there is such a thing as a doctrine of the election of the saints and therefore I do not feel that I can do any more dissemination of the word universally, I can not preach the gospel anymore to everybody.” Now the old man said, “Now I think you are misunderstanding the Scriptures, the Bible tells us that we are to preach the word to everyone, because we do not who the elect are.” Mr. Spurgeon used to say that if the elect had a stripe up their back, then the proper work of evangelism would be to go around raising shirt tails, and then you could preach to the right ones. Well this young man was disturbed over this, and the old man said, “You just keep preaching, and if you get someone to Heaven through the preaching of the Gospel who was not one of the elect, that will be alright with God, because he loves sinners.”

Well now, that’s a good story, but it’s not very theological, there shall not be any one there like that. But we do preach the word to everybody and we preach it passionately and we preach it with the urging of the Holy Spirit, because we do not know the elect, we just know that there are elect. That’s why I preach with great enthusiasm

and with great confidence, because I know there are elect, and if they all had been gathered into the family of God, there would be no further need for me to preach. But he’s left me here to preach. And so there must be some of those elect who have not yet had the opportunity and responded to the gospel. That’s what Peter is saying. These scoffers you see do not understand what God is doing. And so down through the years he’s been waiting until finally, the last one of the saints shall believe and then things are really going to happen. Another step in his program will take place, and he shall carry on his work. So Peter’s answer then is very plain and very clear, don’t you know a thousand years with the Lord is if as one day. He is just as if he made that promise a couple of days ago. And if you wonder why there has been a delay, it’s because he’s longsuffering and he wants his saints to come to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

Let me say just one final word to some believers and then a final word to the unbelievers. How are we going to respond to this fact of the second coming? Well Peter has told us in the 2nd verse that we should be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets. And then in verse 12 and verse 13 and verse 14, the passage we shall look at when next week we look at the subject of the Day of God and the Day of the Lord, three times he has said that we should look expectantly for the great events of the future. And so our attitude is the attitude of believing expectancy, waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus. Wouldn’t it be a wonderful thing if tonight were the day in which the Lord Jesus should catch up the whole body of the saints because the last one to believe before the rapture has just come to faith? It’d be great.

Now a final word to the unbelievers, how are you to respond? Well the Scripture says here that God desires that men have room for repentance. That’s why there is still preaching of the Gospel, that there may be room for repentance. Peter speaks of salvation in the 15th verse, “An account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation.” That’s why he’s waiting, that there may be salvation. Now the perils are awful and final. I have a list of one two three four five six passages in 2nd Peter which I took out of my

Greek concordance this afternoon in which the term perdition is used. In 2nd Peter chapter 1 we have, “Heresies of perdition.” That is false teachings that if we accept them bring us to everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. In 2nd Peter chapter 2 verse 3, incidentally, the word perdition is mentioned twice in that first verse, there’s seven mentions of the word. Verse 3, “Whose perdition slumbereth not,” speaking of the false teachers. And then in chapter 3 and verse 6, “The world that then was being overflowed with water perished,” just as men perished in the flood, so there shall be men perish in the fire that is to come. In the 7th verse we read of the “Day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.” In the 9th verse, “not willing that any of the elect should perish,” that’s the alternative to salvation. And verse 16, Peter speaks about false teachers who take Paul’s epistles and wrest them to their own destruction or perdition.

Now let me remind you of one thing in connection with this. Peter has said that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. What does that mean my dear unsaved friend in this audience? What does that mean about your past sins? What does that mean about the sin you committed five years ago? Why it’s just as open and present before the Lord as if it were committed a moment ago. Those sins of ten years ago, those sins of twenty years ago, and some of you, those sins of forty years ago, a thousand years with the Lord is as one day. Time makes no difference in the guilt of sin before God. A sin committed forty years ago is just as guilty, makes you just as guilty before God as one committed a moment ago. Time does not erase any of the guilt of human sin.

If you are here tonight, and you have never come to forgiveness through the saving work of the Lord Jesus who died for sinners, we appeal to you, we urge you, we exhort you in the Holy Spirit to come to Christ. If you wonder, “Am I one of the elect,” you can settle it right now by believing in the Lord Jesus. Within your own heart, “I thank Thee Lord, I know I’m a sinner, Christ has died for sinners, I flee to him and his salvation and I trust him.” That settles the question of your election. You discover of course,

having made the decision and having come to faith in Christ, you were elect in him before the foundation of the world, but there must come that time when you truly believe in the Lord Jesus. But if you sit out in the audience and you say, “Well I don’t like that doctrine of the cross and I don’t like that doctrine of election, I’m not going to come, it’s unfair!” Well then you are going to get exactly what you want, you shall be lost. But that would be a terrible thing, especially since you’ve had an opportunity to hear that Christ died for sinners. May God speak to your heart, and may you come, come and receive life. Let’s bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these great passages in holy Scripture. We’re so thankful that Thou art not willing that any of the chosen ones shall perish, and that Thou has been longsuffering and hast gathered in the recalcitrant sinners of which number were we. And how longsuffering Thou hast been with us, we were wayward, we were sinful, we displeased Thee, we suppressed the truth that we had, we fought against Thee, but Thou has overcome. We praise Thee O God for the great work of the Holy Spirit, and that Thou didst exercise longsuffering with reference to us and Thou hast brought us in...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]