

**“Foundations of Faith: The Return of Christ”**  
**November 12, 2006 \* 2 Peter 3**

I. Why is it important to think often about the return of Christ?

A. It inspires **hope**.

B. It encourages us in the face of **death**.

C. It is a powerful incentive for living **life well**

D. Without it, the story of God’s salvation of humanity would be horribly **incomplete**.

II. Yet no doctrine has been more distorted and abused than this

A. How did the Thessalonian church mess up?

**Thinking that Christ was returning any time soon, some quit their jobs. Paul had to rebuke them in his second letter.**

B. What issue was Peter addressing in his second letter?  
**False prophets had infiltrated the church teaching that Christ wasn’t coming, and that they should just go and “sin their heads off”. He describes these false prophets in vivid terms in chapter 2.**

C. What abuses have occurred in our time?

**The Jehovah Witness cult encouraging members to quit their jobs and drop out of college in preparation for the Lord’s return in 1975. Numerous Christian teachers of note have set dates for Christ’s return. David Koresh believed Armageddon would begin at their Branch Davidian compound.**

D. Why are some non-Christians fearful of us?

**Because we can sometimes act so strangely when it comes to this teaching. One atheist recently wrote in Newsweek: “Given the most common interpretation of Biblical prophecy, it is not an exaggeration to say that nearly half the**

*American population is eagerly anticipating the end of the world. It should be clear that this faith-based nihilism provides its adherents with absolutely no incentive to build a sustainable civilization – economically, environmentally or geopolitically.”*

E. What kind of thinking is Peter trying to promote in chapter 3?

**“Wholesome” thinking. Thinking that is pure and unsullied. Not weird, but “normal”.**

*Christians should not be thought of as ‘strange’ by unbelievers except for one area in their life:*

**their moral choices and values.**

III. How should normal Christians live their lives when they think about the return of Christ?

A. We should seek to do **good**.

1. When is a school child most inclined to ‘follow their evil desires’?

**When the teacher is missing.**

2. Are adults any different?

**Not at all, only our misbehavior when the “Teacher is gone” is far more sophisticated and destructive.**

3. Would I be better off without God in my life?

**Some argue the world would be a better place if religion were removed. It’s true, sinful people are capable of taking even religion and distorting it into something barbaric, but true faith in the living God, the God of the Bible who revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, that faith will help you become something you’ll never be on your own – more loving, more compassionate, more holy.**

B. We should share our **hope**.

1. How can we “speed” Christ’s coming along?

**Jesus said in Matt.24:14 that he wouldn’t return until the gospel had been preaching to all nations. Therefore we can “speed his coming” by seeing this mission gets fulfilled.**

2. If I ever get bummed out by how long it’s taking Jesus to come back, what should I remember?

a. **Time** is not the same thing to God.

b. There are more **people** that need to be brought to him.

3. The question is not “What is God waiting for?” but rather...

**“Who is God waiting for?”**

C. We should live now as we’ll live on the new **earth**.

1. What are some wrong ways to react to the idea that the earth will be destroyed?

**To quit our jobs, leave college, cash out our retirement accounts, to trash the environment...**

2. If I knew tomorrow that the world will end, how would I live my life today?

**Francis of Assisi said he would “Plant a tree”. We live as stewards over this earth just as we will the new earth. Nothing changes.**

**What do I need to think more about today?**