

Heaven
Why is God Waiting? • Message 4
Perry Duggar
May 17, 2026

Prayer Points for Prayer Time:

- Pray to stay faithful while you wait for Christ's return.
- Pray that you love Jesus more than anything this world offers.
- Pray that Brookwood will boldly share the gospel.

Worship Psalm:

"I will sing of your love and justice; to you, LORD, I will sing praise."

Psalm 101:1 (NIV)

Scripture Reading:

So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, "Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?" He replied, "The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!"

Acts 1:6-11 (NLT)

This is the Word of the Lord

Perry Duggar

A. Introduction: This morning we continue our series entitled *Heaven*.

(Matthew 24:30. C/R: Matthew 24:36; John 14:3; 16:27; Revelation 22:7,12,20)

This message deals with the timing of Jesus' return.

1. Theme verse:

Matthew 24:30b (NLT) – "... And they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

2. The Bible establishes that Jesus is returning: New Testament writers explicitly referred to Jesus' return in 23 of 27 books; two more refer to it indirectly (Galatians and 1 John), only Philemon and 2 John don't mention it.
3. Jesus spoke of His return numerous times toward His last days on earth: Matthew 24:30, two days before arrest, John 14:3 and 16:27, during the Lord's Supper, just before arrest.
4. 60 years later [95AD], Jesus spoke to John in a vision, saying, "...I am coming soon!" [3 times: Revelation 22:7,12,20 (NLT)]
5. We have been waiting for almost 1900 years! How is that *soon*?
6. The Greek word translated *soon* or *quickly* [*tachus*, takh-oos'] can also mean "without unnecessary delay" or "suddenly;" it does not have to mean "immediately."
7. Jesus' meaning seems to be that, once end-times events, like those listed in Matthew 24 are set in motion, Jesus will come "suddenly," without any unnecessary delay.
8. Signs of Jesus' Second Coming from Matthew 24:3-51:
 - False messiahs and prophets (v.4-5,11,23-26)
 - Wars and conflicts (v.6-7)
 - Natural disasters (v.7)
 - Persecution of Christians (v.9)
 - People turning away from faith and each other (v.10 and 12)
 - Increase in evil (v.12)
 - Gospel preached throughout the world (v.14)
 - Destruction of the Temple (v.15-22)
 - Sun and moon darkened, stars fall from the sky, the heavens will be shaken (v.29)
 - Indifference about Jesus' return (v.37-39)
9. It seems that many, if not all, of the signs are occurring now, so *Why is God Waiting?*

10. Remember that God revealed to no one, including Jesus, the timing of His Son's return.
11. **Matthew 24:36 (NLT)** - *"However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows."*
12. Peter wrote letters to encourage believers who were becoming bewildered by the delay.
13. He instructed them to reject false teachers in the church who were doubting Jesus' return and injecting skepticism into the churches of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey).

B. Reasons for God's Delay (2 Peter 3:3-15)

1.) Jesus ISN'T returning.

(2 Peter 3:3-7. C/R: Ecclesiastes 3:11; Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Peter 2:1-22)

1. **2 Peter 3:3 (NLT)** - *Most importantly, I want to remind you that in the last days scoffers will come, mocking the truth [denying it] and following their own desires.*

[Gk. course of conduct or long-term behavior. 2 Peter 2 describes their *shameful immorality*.]

2. These *scoffers* and *mockers* were false teachers who were present in the church.

3. They didn't reject Jesus' Second Coming based on any scriptural or theological reason, their reasons were personal - they were living sinful lives, so they comforted themselves by denying there would be future accountability for their behavior.

4. Immorality is the real reason that many, including these false teachers, deny Jesus' return.

5. ILL.: My experience is that people deny judgment, hell, even God and Heaven, out of fear of eternal punishment.

6. People innately, instinctively, know eternity exists, something comes after death. (inborn)

7. **Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NLT)** - *...God... has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end. [by revelation]*

8. ILL.: Instead of trying to convince people of God's existence, ask, "Why don't you believe?"

9. When believers forget about Jesus' Second Coming and focus instead on the things of this world, they become absorbed in the temporal and grow apathetic toward the eternal.
10. **2 Peter 3:4 (NLT)** - *They [scoffers] will say, "What happened to the promise that Jesus is coming again? [taunting sarcasm] From before the times of our ancestors [likely Old Testament patriarchs], everything has remained the same since the world was first created."*
11. The scoffers argued "nothing ever changes, everything is the same. There's no evidence that God will intervene in this world (including Jesus' return) *if* He even exists."
12. Peter disagreed by appealing to Old Testament history to defend Jesus' Second Coming.
13. **2 Peter 3:5-7 (NLT)** - *They deliberately forget that God made the heavens long ago by the word of his command, and he brought the earth out from the water and surrounded it with water. [Creation] Then he used the water to destroy the ancient world with a mighty flood. [God will intervene again...destructively. World is fading away; 1 John 2:17] And by the same word, the present heavens and earth have been stored up for fire. [Bible associates fire with final judgment. Old Testament: Isaiah 66:15-16; New Testament: 2 Thessalonians 1:6-8.] They are being kept for the day of judgment, when ungodly people will be destroyed. [Eruptions from earth's core, nuclear explosions?]*
14. APP.: Do you believe that God is involved in the world He created and will hold people personally accountable for their lives? (Ecclesiastes 12:14; Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 4:5; 5:10)
15. **Romans 14:12 (NLT)** - *Yes, each of us will give a personal account to God.*

2.) God's perspective on TIME is different.

(2 Peter 3:8-9. C/R: Psalm 90:4; Isaiah 57:15; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18; 1 Peter 4:12-19)

1. **2 Peter 3:8 (NLT)** - *But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. [paraphrase of Psalm 90:4]*
2. Jesus' followers, including His disciples and the early church, believed His return was imminent [about to occur, happening soon; Paul apparently did: 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18]
3. This letter was written about 35 years since Jesus' ascension, which is a lengthy amount of time when compared to a human lifespan of 60-70 years during the 1st century.

4. These people were suffering discrimination and insults from other Jews as well as the threat of persecution from Roman officials, so, due to their suffering, they were eagerly awaiting Jesus' return and deliverance. (Suffering described at 1 Peter 4:12-19.)
5. God created time for the universe and people to live in, but He doesn't live in time.
6. His existence is timeless, stretching from eternity past to eternity future. (Isaiah 57:15)
7. God is constantly aware of us and His plans for us; everything in His mind is present.
8. God is interested in being intimately involved with our lives every day, so we don't feel overlooked or abandoned while we await Jesus' return.

3.) God's delay has a PURPOSE.

(2 Peter 3:9-10. C/R: Romans 8:29; Ephesians 1:4; 2 Peter 1:1; Revelation 13:8; 17:8)

1. **2 Peter 3:9 (NLT)** - *The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. [Some MISS, on your account] He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.*
2. To discover who *your sake* refers to, we must look at Peter's greeting to his recipients.
3. **2 Peter 1:1b (NLT)** - *I am writing to you who share the same precious faith we have. ...*
4. Peter wrote to tell these believers God is pausing Jesus' return for *their sake*, so that none would perish, but would repent and come to faith and be forgiven (according to v.9).
5. This is a reference to people who *share the faith*, who have not yet come to faith, but will.
6. God knows all who will ever be saved, their names were written down in the Lamb's Book of Life before the world was created. (Revelation 13:8; 17:8; also, Ephesians 1:4)
7. **Romans 8:29 (NLT)** - *For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.*
8. God's waiting is gracious longsuffering - not because He is indifferent, powerless, or distracted; He's patiently allowing unbelievers time to come to repentance.

9. While his patience currently holds back his judgment, the time of grace that we now enjoy, however long it may seem by our standards, will not last forever.

10. **2 Peter 3:10a (NLT)** - *But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. ...*

11. The *day of the Lord* signifies the final judgment of unbelievers on earth and destruction of the universe when God will reveal His glory and establish His Kingdom - the new heavens and earth and the holy city - the new Jerusalem (Revelation 21:1-7).

12. Peter's reference to the day of the Lord as arriving *like a thief* meant that it would be unexpected, without warning, and would be disastrous for the unprepared. (Paul referred to the day of the Lord arriving as *a thief in the night* also at 1 Thessalonians 5:2)

13. **2 Peter 3:10b (NLT)** - *...Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire [atomic components of the universe], and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment. (Matthew 24:35)*

14. The *terrible noise* speaks of a rushing, whizzing, crackling sound like the whizzing, crackling sound as the atoms of the universe are disintegrated by the flames.

16. APP.: Do you believe God's delay has a purpose - a purpose that will end one day?

4.) Our RESPONSE.

(2 Peter 3:11-15. C/R: Matthew 9:37-38; 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Romans 1:16; 1 Peter 3:15; Revelation 21:1-22:3)

1. **2 Peter 3:11–15a (NLT)** - *Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live [outward actions and internal attitudes], looking forward to the day of God [eager anticipation, expectancy] and hurrying it along [hoping for the personal arrival of Jesus rather than fearing the earth's demise]. On that day, he will set the heavens on fire, and the elements will melt away in the flames. But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world filled with God's righteousness. [Revelation 21:1-22:3]*
And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to be found living peaceful lives [from saving relationship with God] that are pure and

blameless in his sight. [Living with true Christian character, integrity and holiness motivated by future accountability and heavenly rewards.]

And remember, our Lord's patience gives people time to be saved. ...