

PREPARED TO LIVE IN VICTORY: ANSWERING THOSE WHO MOCKER

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2 Pet. 3:1-2

"This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, 2 that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles."

I. PETER'S PURPOSE IN WRITING HIS SECOND LETTER

- A. The purpose of the second epistle of Peter was to remind them of fundamental biblical truths about salvation, life in the kingdom, and God's plans for the end times, so that they would not be influenced by false teachings. Both Peter and Paul proclaimed the value of repetition.

Phil. 3:1b "...To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you."

- B. It is through continuous repetition that the basic principles of knowledge are introduced and established in the child's mind. **Sometimes we are too interested in seeing and hearing new things when what is needed is a repetition of the eternal truths and commandments that we forget so quickly and whose meaning we sometimes resist seeing.**
- C. When Peter tells them that they have a "*sincere mind*," he shows that he believes in the value of praise. W. Barkley says: *'The preacher's approach should be not to treat his hearers as despicable creatures to be condemned, but as splendid creatures to be saved.'* **We motivate better things in people we believe in than in those we despise.**

II. RESPONDING TO THOSE WHO MAKE FUN OF THE REALITY OF JESUS' RETURN

2 Pet. 3:3a "knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing..."

- A. **"knowing this first of all,"** It is of primary importance to be prepared to respond to the scoffers who will speak against those who have a sense of urgency to wait and prepare spiritually for the return of Jesus.
- B. **"that scoffers will come in the last days":** This speaks of that in the years before Jesus returns there will come people who treat lightly what the Scriptures present as important and serious. They mock the truth about God's judgments and the dramatic changes that will occur in the world.
- C. In God's perfect plan, mockers give the Church the opportunity to reinforce its biblical convictions about the end times, in fact helping the body of Christ to refine, clarify, and deepen its understanding.
- D. After Peter prophesied that scoffers would come, he directly addressed his arguments in four ways: morally (3:4), historically (3:5-7), theologically (3:8-9), and prophetically (3:10-13).

III. MORAL ARGUMENT

2 Pet 3:3b-4 "...following their own sinful desires. 4 They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."

- A. **"following their own sinful desires"** Sinful desires create a prejudice in the opinion of these scoffers; they do not walk by biblical truth or facts about the end times, but by their lust-driven prejudices and agendas for more money, comfort, and man's approval. Their mentality of intellectual superiority and disdain for biblical truth will lead some to fall into immorality. Many of those who make concessions in their private lives mock the holy life.
- B. **"Where is the promise of his coming?"** That was a Hebrew expression that implied that what was being asked did not exist at all (Mal. 2:17; Ps. 42:3). Some scoffers say things like, "Every generation has said that Jesus will return soon"; or **"Since the creation of the world everything has remained the same."** They appeal to the stability of the created order and the lack of dramatic interventions from God.
- C. This is a very modern argument for rejecting the physical and supernatural second coming of Jesus. It simply states: the laws of nature are invariable, the sun has risen and set, the seasons have followed one another, for thousands of years in perfect order; Therefore, we must expect this constancy for the future, and any thought that heaven would be rolled up like a scroll and that the earth would be purged, with a global fiery judgment by the returning Christ, is unimaginable. **But this position ignores what Peter says next.**

IV. HISTORICAL ARGUMENT

2 Ped. 3:5-6 "For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, 6 and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished."

- A. Scoffers misinterpret history. Pedro mentioned two events to show that things have not always been the way they are now. They are events that cannot be explained by natural means but by the word of God: the creation of the world and the flood in the days of Noah. Scoffers do not understand the power of God's word or the place of catastrophic events in God's plan.
- B. **"For they deliberately overlook this fact"** They forget the historical fact that by the word of God the heavens and the earth were created and then destroyed in the flood. Peter points out that the vision of history of these scoffers does not take into account either the creation or the flood, in addition to other interventions on the part of God in history such as the ten plagues in Egypt (Ex. 7-12); the opening of the Red Sea (Ex. 14) and the Jordan River (Josh. 4), just to name a few. His view of Jesus' return agrees with his non-biblical view of the world. Scoffers are not qualified to accuse God's plans, since they lack knowledge of what God did in the past.
- C. **"heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God"** The power of the Word created the heavens (the heavens, the stars and the solar system) and the earth. Jesus

created them by his word (Col. 1:16). Peter's argument is that the heavens and the earth were created and judged by the intervention of the word of God.

- D. ***"the earth was formed out of water"*** Water was the active agent that formed the face of the earth. The elements of the earth were originally held together by water until the earth arose from the water. According to the biblical narrative, the earth was originally covered with water, both on its surface and in the sky.

Gen. 1:9-10 *"And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. 10 God called the dry land Earth..."*

- E. They also forget that God then used the waters of the flood to destroy them. Those who mock God's plan to intervene dramatically forget that about 4,500 years ago (a couple of days ago to God) a flood occurred in the days of Noah. Just as the ancient world was destroyed because of ungodliness, so this present world, which is full of ungodliness, is reserved for the time when it will be purified and cleansed by the fire of judgment. The Old Testament prophets spoke of the destruction of the earth by fire (Deut. 32:22; Ps. 97:3; Isa. 30:30; 34:4; 66:15-16; Eze. 38:22; Am 7:4; Zeph 1:18; 3:8; Mal. 4:2).

2 Ped. 3:7 *"But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly."*

Isa. 66:15-16 *"...For behold, the Lord will come in fire, and his chariots like the whirlwind, to render his anger in fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. 16 For by fire will the Lord enter into judgment, and by his sword, with all flesh; and those slain by the Lord shall be many."*

Zeph. 3:8 *"...for in the fire of my jealousy all the earth shall be consumed."*

2 Thes. 1:7-8 *"...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels 8 in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God..."*

V. THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

2 Ped. 3:8-9 *"But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."*

- A. How the Lord views the timing of His promises about the end times is different from human conception: Scoffers misunderstand the reason for the delay in Jesus' coming. Peter presented his case against the scoffers related to the delay of Jesus' return. It doesn't matter if God gave his promise a day ago or a thousand years ago; He will fulfill each one.
- B. Here Peter responds to criticism that Jesus has delayed so long that people do not believe he will return. In the experience of God's time not much time has passed. God's delay in fulfilling his promises is not like the delay of humans. A late promise from God is not a forgotten promise.
- C. *"The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness."* Peter explains that God's promise that Jesus will come will be fulfilled in his perfect

time. God extended time to give people the opportunity to repent. From God's perspective, his plan is short-term. The delay gives the multitudes more time to accept salvation (1 Tim. 2:4).

- D. God does not rule in a state in which there is no time. Time defines how the relationship of an event to other events is measured. Eternity is not the absence of time; It is an infinite time. We are not qualified to criticize God's plans because we do not understand His calendar..

Psal. 90:4 "For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night."

- E. "One day is like a thousand years": The Lord can accomplish more in one day of His work than man can accomplish in a thousand years of work. In one day, He can judge the sins of many generations and/or accomplish the work of a thousand years in one day. Peter's point is that God is not limited by time. Peter offers another response to the scoffers by telling them that the passage of time has no bearing on God's faithfulness to fulfill his promises about the coming of Jesus or his judgment on the wicked.

VI. REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Why are we sure that the scoffers' arguments are invalid?
2. What does the historical argument consist of to refute the scoffers?
3. Why can you be sure that Jesus is coming back?

THIS WEEK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. If you have not been baptized, we invite you to take the preparation class on Monday, November 27 at 7:00 p.m. in the Affirming Your Steps room. The Baptisms will take place during services on December 2 and 3. Please register at the table outside or at www.housesoflight.org
2. Worship Team Auditions Saturday, December 9 at 9:00 a.m. You can register at housesoflight.org
3. Holy58 Movie Night "The Nativity Story" December 18 at 6:30 p.m. Tickets will be available at the door.