

## **“SCOFFERS WILL SCOFF.”**

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### **Scripture Texts: II Peter 3.1-7**

#### **Introduction.**

Peter spent chapter two warning his Christian readers about false teachers and about how their bad thinking/theology has led them into bad behaving/acting. This is why Paul says to watch both your doctrine and your life, the two go together.

When we abandon the authority of the Word of God we soon find ourselves in all kinds of immorality, sexual immorality, abortion, divorce, and justification of all kinds of practices God has clearly warned us to steer clear of (see Ten Commandments).

Now in chapter three Peter speaks more directly to his Christian readers. This is a pastor writing from a pastor's heart, like a loving parent to his children. This is evident from the term of endearment he starts with.

#### **Peter reminds Christians to remember the truth, 1-2.**

Beloved. What a beautiful expression of heartfelt affection. It's the same word God spoke when He said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." After such strong words against the false teachers, this is a comforting reassurance of Peter's confidence in the faith and faithfulness of his readers.

After a long slog through the nasty business of false teachers in chapter two, Peter returns to his message in chapter one. Compare 3:1-2 and 1:12-15.

**II Peter 1:12-15** *I intend always to remind you* of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. 13 I think it right, as long as I am in this body, *to stir you up by way of reminder*, 14 since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. 15 And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time *to recall these things*.

Remember this is Peter's last will and testament, his dying concern. Think about what you would write a loved one before you died. In fact, you should all have those letters written. What is more important than anything else to you and how do you want to

communicate it? I have mentioned before we have a long letter to our boys at the front of our wills.

Remembering is why we keep coming to church, we all need to be reminded of the truth. We need to be roused out of our lethargy and sleep.

Peter is confronting a specific lie being told by the false teachers about Jesus and the second coming or lack thereof. Since this seems like an irrelevant topic for us today let me frame it in a way that might cause you to listen a little more.

There is a term sometimes used of certain Christians, that they are practical atheists. They believe in God and in Jesus, they say the Bible is the Word of God and true. They go to church on Sundays. But during the week they live and act and talk like there is no God. They neglect God, they don't pray or read Scripture or even think about God except on Sunday. So, they are called practical atheists.

What about the return of Jesus? There are Christians who believe Jesus will come again, but they think it is so far off that they don't give it any thought. It doesn't have any impact on their day to day lives. They are practical deniers, even though they would tell you if you asked them that they don't deny it.

It is human nature that when the cats away the mice will play. When the boss is gone, when the parents are out of the house, we forget how we are supposed to act. When the babysitter or substitute teacher is there, things kind of fall apart.

Day of the Lord is theoretically possible, it is out there somewhere, but it doesn't really affect our day to day lives. What difference does it make?

Sort of like it is theoretically possible the Mariners will win the World Series, but will it ever really happen?

Will Jesus ever come back in bodily form? It has been two thousand years, and He has not shown up yet.

Experience and appearances certainly seem to be on the side of the scoffers and mockers. How long do we have to wait? How can we be sure the day of the Lord will come?

This is a word for us who live in a culture where we are surrounded by those who refuse to take the Bible seriously and willfully ignore the truth.

Peter gives three grounds for his call to remember the truth. The truth of his message rests on three solid foundation stones.

### ***The prophetic Word.***

There are many prophecies and predictions in the OT about the coming Day of the Lord. Just read Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Joel, Amos and Zephaniah.

**Isaiah 66:15ff** “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;

### ***The incarnate Word.***

**Matthew 24:42** Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.

Remember the parable of the ten virgins, five who were prepared and five who were not.

**Matthew 25:13** Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

### ***The apostolic Word.***

Paul in I and II Thessalonians, John in his Revelation.

**II Thessalonians 1:7-9** 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 and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.

### **Scoffers scoff at the truth, 3-4.**

But in the last days scoffers will scoff at all of this. They will mock, make fun of, take lightly what ought to be treated with greatest seriousness.

Don't be surprised by scoffers. They will come and it will be a sign we are in the last days. We are in the last days, so actually everything is happening just as Jesus said and God planned. Everything is right on schedule.

Peter quotes them, he lets them speak for themselves:

“Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of creation.”

This is sort of a reverse crying wolf story. Instead of crying wolf, they are crying there is no wolf, there is no wolf. You have nothing to fear, no one is coming.

So why pray, why live holy, why try to please God, why bother? What’s the point, what difference does it make?

This is spiritual complacency. This is drifting, coasting. This is shifting into neutral.

This is the kind of God our world wants, a God who is silent, a God who doesn’t have an opinion about what they do, a God who isn’t keeping track, who won’t hold them accountable for what they have done in the flesh.

As one atheist put it:

“It isn’t just that I don’t believe in God ... it’s that I hope there is no God! I don’t want there to be a God; I don’t want a universe to be like that” (Thomas Nagel).

That’s honest at least. He doesn’t want to be held accountable, he wants to live according to his will, not someone else’s will. This is deliberate ignorance, willful disbelief.

### **Peter rebukes the scoffers for forgetting the truth, 5-7.**

Here is Peter’s hard-hitting, unvarnished, straight-talking response to their willfully ignorance, and deliberate overlooking of the truth.

Peter gives *three reasons* why the day of the Lord will come. Three things that scoffers have conveniently, deliberately overlooked.

**First**, God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing. God is involved and He acts and intervenes and nothing is too big or too difficult for God.

The point is simple. God created the world, He decided when to get it all started, and He will decide when to bring it all to an end. God is in charge of the beginning and the ending. It’s God’s world, He can do whatever He wants with it and whenever He wants.

Don’t lose sight of who is in charge and that He holds all time in His hands.

***Second***, we know God will come because of the flood. God made the world with water and Word, and He already once destroyed the world with water and Word.

They are wrong to say nothing has ever changed. God judged and destroyed once before. They have intentionally ignored the facts of history.

All the scoffing and joking in Noah's day didn't keep it from happening. They ate, drank and laughed themselves into destruction.

God sent the rain from the heavens and opened up all the springs of the earth, He has the power to break in and do as He wills. God has clearly interrupted history and gotten involved in the past.

If flood is true, then a future judgment is also true. That old flood has bearing on our future.

**Matthew 24:37-39** For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, 39 and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

***Third***, God by the same Word has stored up fire. God said He would never destroy by water, but will destroy by fire. There was a flood of water, there will be a flood of fire. What's hard about that to believe?

There is a coming day of judgment on all the earth and all its inhabitants. The universe as it now currently exists is under a sentence of condemnation and judgment. The papers have been served and the universe is just being kept until the trial date.

God is firmly seated on the throne overlooking, overseeing, over ruling the universe.

The same Word that created the world, the same Word that is holding all things together, is the same Word that is storing up a great fiery judgment.

**Romans 2:4-5** Do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? 5 But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

The Day of the Lord promised by the prophets and by Jesus and by the apostles will come just as surely as the flood in Noah's day and the fire fell on Sodom and Gomorrah.

### **Implications and application.**

I realized there is problem with living in the NW that makes us more complacent (besides all the scoffers and skeptics). We have very few weather crises that cause us to take warnings seriously and to prepare. We don't live under the threat of hurricanes or tornados. It is amazing how those events get your undivided attention if you live in those places.

People who don't pay attention end up like the people in Noah's day.

First, they realized they should have prepared.

Second, they realized Noah was the sane one and everyone else was crazy.

Third, when God warns, they realized they should have listen.

Praise God for His good grace to warn us, to tell us about judgment.

We deserve the flood and fire, but you offer grace, salvation.

True to God's character there is always an opportunity for repentance, a time to turn away from sin and evil and turn to God.

God gave the world 120 years to repent before He sent a great flood in Noah's day.

God gave the people of Israel 350 years to repent before humbling them under the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

Remember Nineveh in Jonah's day. He preached a message of repentance and gave the city 40 days. They repented and were spared God's judgment.

On the judgment day every person who stands before God will be without excuse. God has sent messengers and messages again and again. Mercy loves delays. God's mercy manifests itself often in delays, and second and third chances.

Beloved, it is God's generous grace that He has revealed Himself to us and opened our blind eyes and ears to the truth and has sent us His servants to preach and teach His Word to you. Don't despise His gifts and His grace shown to you.