

Scoffers in the Last Days

2 Peter 3:1-7

Thought for the Day: Followers of the Lord Jesus Christ need to know the teachings of the Bible so well that they are able to recognize and respond to those who scoff at the soon coming of the Lord and the judgment that will follow.

In chapter two Peter dealt with the subject of false teachers in the Church. Chapter three turns our attention to coming events in the future and how we should prepare for them.

I. Two Things Believers Need To Remember (3:1-2)

1 This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved.

A. The Importance of Remembering (3:1)

In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember...

- Throughout the Bible we are reminded of the importance of remembering what we have learned from the Scriptures. (2 Peter 1:12-15)
- Remembering is for the purpose of doing: "Remember these things and put them into practice."
- "Repetition is the mother of learning, the father of action, which makes it the architect of accomplishment." (*Zig Ziglar*)
- We need to continually remind ourselves of the truths of God's Word by reading it, reflecting on it, studying it, and sharing it with others.

B. The Old Testament Scriptures (3:2)

...the predictions of the holy prophets...

- All the writings of the Old Testament.

C. The New Testament Scriptures (3:2)

...and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles...

- All the writings of the New Testament.
- We need to remember the writings of both the Old and New Testaments. Together, they are the Word of God for us.
- A well-known preacher and teacher in the Church today recently said that we need to "unhitch" ourselves from the Old Testament, that it should not be the "go-to source regarding any behavior in the church. . .[First century] church leaders unhitched the church from the worldview, value system, and regulations of the Jewish scriptures. . .Peter, James, [and] Paul elected to unhitch the Christian faith from their Jewish scriptures, and my friends, we must as well."
 - Peter: 2 Peter 1:19-21. At no point in the history of the Church are we supposed to "unhitch" from the teachings of the Old Testament!
 - Paul: 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11.
 - James: James 1:22-25.
 - We are witnessing the prophesied apostasy of the Last Days! Pastors and

teachers are leading their people to reject the Scriptures; they are “unhitching” themselves from the Word of God, and consequently, from God Himself!

- The “scoffers” of 2 Peter chapter 3 are the “false teachers” of chapter 2.

II. Two Things Believers Need to Know (3:3-7)

A. Scoffers Will Come in the Last Days (3:3-6)

3 knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing...

- Keep this fact in the forefront of your mind as a high priority so that, when it happens, you will not be thrown off track.
- A scoffer is one who derides the truth – “to laugh at or insult contemptuously; to criticize; to express a lack of respect or approval of.”
- When you deny that God’s Word is true, that you don’t have to believe or obey the Scriptures, that you can ignore what the Bible says, that you can “unhitch” from it, I would say that you are scoffing at it!

1. They Follow Their Own Sinful Desires (3:3)

...following their own sinful desires.

- “Having rejected the knowledge of God, they fearlessly indulge their appetites. They advocate permissiveness with total disregard of any impending judgment.”
(MacDonald, Commentary, p. 2399)
- “Their desire to live in sin with impunity drives them to deride biblical truth and those who believe it.” *(ESV Study Bible, p. 2421)*

2. They Deny The Lord’s Return (3:4)

4 They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming?”

- They deny the Rapture when Christ comes *for* His saints to remove His Bride, the Church, from the world before the outpouring of His wrath. (1 Thess. 4:13-18)
- They deny the Second Coming when Christ comes *with* His saints to set up His Millennial Kingdom on the Earth. (1 Thess. 3:13; Rev. 19:11-20:6)
- “What they really say is this: “You Christians have been threatening us [for years] with warnings about a terrible judgment upon the world. You tell us that God is going to intervene in history, punish the wicked, and destroy the earth. It’s all a pack of nonsense. We have nothing to fear. We can live as we please. There is no evidence that God has ever intervened in history; why should we believe that He ever will?” *(MacDonald, Commentary, p. 2400)*

3. They Claim That Nothing Changes (3:4)

For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.”

- “Since it has not happened up to this time, it will never happen!”

4. They Deliberately Deny God’s Creation of the Universe (3:5)

5 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...

- They willfully choose to deny the truth of God's Word.
- They deny God's creation of the universe as described in Genesis 1-2; they reject Him as their Creator. (Romans 1:18-23)

5. They Deliberately Deny the Worldwide Flood (3:6)

6 and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.

- They deny God's judgment and destruction of the world by a worldwide flood as described in Genesis 6-8.
- In denying the Flood, they deny God's intervention in the world to punish wickedness. They know, if it happened once, it can happen again!

B. God Will Judge and Destroy the World with Fire (3:7)

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.

- The scoffers deny the coming judgment of God upon the world which Peter describes in the next paragraph. (Cp. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Isaiah 66:15-16; Zephaniah 3:8)
 - By the same powerful word that created the universe and brought universal judgment upon the world, God is going to bring an even greater judgment upon the world by fire that will destroy the ungodly.
- Some of the greatest scoffers are in our pulpits and in our seminaries! They are false teachers who are leading our churches into apostasy from the truth.
- Like the Bereans in Acts 17:11, we need to "search the Scriptures daily to see if these things are so."