

The Mocking of Jesus' Second Advent

2 Peter 3:1 – 7

Introduction:

- The Apostles and Paul along with many of the early church leaders and Christ followers lived and thought that Christ was going to return to planet earth and set up His kingdom during their lifetime.
- They write as if to stay expectant with hope, stay busy using your spiritual gifts to do God's work bringing heaven down to earth, and pray.
- The early believers, shortly after Christ ascended to heaven began to greet one another as they left each other with the word "Maranatha". – Even so come Lord Jesus.
 - For these believers, the second advent of Christ was the church's blessed hope – Titus 2:11 – 14
 - The utmost longing – Romans 8:23
 - The great climax; the crescendo of history – Matthew 25:31-46
 - The time of redemption – Ephesians 4:30
 - The judgment of God's enemies – 1 Thessalonians 2:1-2
 - The beginning of Jesus rule and reign on earth for 1,000 years.
 - Now we look at Peter's writings concerning Christ's return.
- Peter is going to show us in his writings today about people who are ignorant but sad to say, willfully ignorant to their own demise and the destruction of many who will follow them

"Everybody is ignorant, only on different subjects." – Will Rogers 19th and 20th century vaudeville performer

- Peter has shared in chapter one the power of the divine nature to transform us and that we need to be reminded and stay in that truth.
- Chapter 2 brought us the character and content of the false teachers
- Chapter 3 deals directly with the false teachings of Peter's Day. The skepticism and dismissal of the return of Christ! Peter affirms earlier in this book the coming of Christ in all of His radiant and majestic glory

2 Peter 1:16

16 For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty

- Just like those early church leaders and Christ followers, we need to live in urgent anticipation of Christ coming in the clouds to rapture those who are alive at that time.

- We should live as if each day will be our last day because one day, it truly will be our last day.

Scripture Reading

2 Peter 3:1 – 7

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, 3 knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, 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.” 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, 6 and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. 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

Purpose: Every Christ follower must trust in God’s patience as He continues to carry out His work until Christ returns

Transition: Let’s look first of all at;

The power of God’s word through prophecy – 2 Peter 3:1 – 2

- Stir up your mind

2 Peter 3:1

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

- Peter is referring most likely to I Peter when he says this is his second letter to his audience of believers who are scattered all over the place and many facing extreme persecution.
- We again see Peter’s pastoral heart by use of the word “beloved”. He had a heart filled with love and compassion for his readers.
- He is saying wake up from your complacency, Jesus is coming soon!
 - There are times each of us needs a good wakeup call spiritually
 - We come to church and we get so used to the way we worship; we have heard the Gospel many times after we have made our decision for Christ. It is like we need some cold water splashed on our soul to remind us of why we do what we do and the importance of obeying and following Christ
 - Always remember as you read God’s Word that He sacrificed so much for us to have His Word and He has done amazing things to

preserve His word so that many can have a copy of it today in their own language.

Romans 13:11 – 14

11 Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. 12 The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires

Illustration: There once was a time people were awakened, not by a cell phone or even an alarm clock, but by a “knocker-upper.” For many workers in early 20th century Britain, the daily alarm clock was a service worker. Known as the “knocker-upper” these predawn risers would pass by working-class buildings, rapping on the windows of those who need to get up.

Rural laborers, used to keeping time with the seasons, had relocated to manufacturing cities. They not only had to adjust to dangerous, fast-paced industrial work, but to new schedules. There were alarm clocks at the time, but they were expensive and unreliable.

Some workers might only find out they’d been called in for a shift from the knocker-upper that morning. Conditions could be cutthroat. Author Paul Middleton writes, “Life for the employed was forever balanced on a knife edge. Being late for work could mean instant dismissal and a speedy spiral for those workers and their families into poverty, homelessness and destitution.”

The job went obsolete around a hundred years after it was invented, as alarm clocks became more affordable and reliable and working conditions improved.

- Stir up your sincere mind – Sincere – Sun Judged / Son Judged – without wax. Have a mind that is pure, holy and discerning. Be remembering what was taught earlier in this letter and the previous letter
- See the past fulfillment of God’s predictions

2 Peter 3:2

2 That you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles

- Predictions of the holy prophets
 - Both the OT and NT speak extensively of Jesus second coming

- From Isaiah to Malachi, there are many predictions of Jesus coming not once but twice to earth and what that second coming looks like
 - It will be a time of great judgment on all people who have ever lived at the end of the one-thousand-year reign of Christ
 - A phrase that is often used of that day of judgment in the Bible is the “Day of the Lord”. It will be the time that all will stand before God in final separation of the true Christ followers and those who did not believe in Christ, those who rejected Christ or had a head knowledge but not a willful heart surrendered relationship with Christ.
 - Another phrase you will see in the Bible is the “Day of God” – This is what we will describe later as the time God sets up His new heaven and new earth and God will reign in perfection over all of the earth and its inhabitants.
 - The “Day of Christ” refers to the rapture of the church. The dead in Christ will rise first and then we who are alive at the end of the church age will be caught to be with the Lord in the air and then face the judgment seat of Christ.
- **Commands of the Lord and Savior through your apostles**
- In the NT, from Matthew to Revelation, the writers all speak of Jesus return except for Philemon and 3 John.
- 260 chapters in the NT and in there are 300 instances referring to Christ’s second coming
 - So, we see the importance of being ready for Christ to come in the clouds to transform us instantly and to ushered into heaven in the twinkling of an eye. 1/63 of a second.

Application: The time to be urgent and intentional about sharing Christ and His Gospel is now!

Transition: Second;

The provocation of the mocker – 2 Peter 3:3-4

- The mockers want to continue in their sin

2 Peter 3:3

3 Knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires

- Knowing this first of all. This is not a statement about sequence or chronology of time but a point of emphasis. Peter is saying that this is of first importance.
- Scoffers / Mockers are false teachers who deny the deity of Christ and that He will return to earth. These false teachers take lightly what ought to be taken seriously.
- The last days are the days between Christ's first advent until His second advent after the Tribulation period.
 - Noah's day – 120 years of warning about impending judgment and no one listened but Noah and his family.
 - The people of Sodom and Gomorrah never thought the judgment of fire and brimstone would ever destroy them and their cities.
 - People today go about their lives as if everything will forever continue on as they have always gone not knowing that Christ could return at anytime or that they will face a judgment for what they did with Christ immediately after they die.

Illustration: Jonathan Sacks, the former Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, once referenced what he called the "counter-intuitive phenomena of Jewish history"—a phenomena that applies to Christians as well. "When it was hard to be a Jew," Sacks wrote, "people stayed Jewish. When it was easy to be a Jew, people stopped being Jewish. Globally, this is the major Jewish problem of our time." - Source: Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, Future Tense: Jews, Judaism, and Israel in the Twenty-first Century (Schocken Books, 2009), page 51

- These false teachers, these scoffers of Christ's return are motivated to mock because they want to continue in their sin.

2 Peter 2:10, 18

And especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority

For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error

- You see that when you are confronted with the Word of God, you either change your lifestyle by surrendering to God and let the Spirit fill your life or you change the Word of God to fit your agenda and lifestyle and that is exactly what false teachers do.
- **As committed followers of Christ, we have to adjust and adapt our lives to the Word of God not change the Word of God to justify our lifestyle choices and behaviors that go contrary to God's Word**
- These false teachers were arrogant and snobby. They had a disdain for the coming judgment of God.
- Peter wants to remind his readers not to doubt the return of Christ no matter what the false teachers are saying. He is saying the real reason false teachers want to deny that Christ will return is that;

- The mockers do not want to face the consequences of their sin

2 Peter 3:4

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.”

- Where is the promise of His coming – Fathers – most likely they are referencing the patriarchs of Judaism. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
- Peter shares their argument from the teaching of uniformitarianism
 - **Uniformitarianism is the cosmic processes of the present and future can be understood solely on the basis of how the cosmos has operated in the past. The past tells us how the future will go with no exception to it. The universe is eternal!** – Deism
 - They do not believe God will intervene into the world of science which is a “closed” system. In other words, there is no divine intervention, no miracles and every unusual event that occurs in the world can be explained by science
 - Uniformitarianism rose in popularity in the 19th century due to a man called Charles Lyell. He was a British lawyer and geologist
 - He wrote a famous book at that time called “Principles of Geology”.
 - It is interesting because Charles Darwin who taught the theory of natural selection which is the foundation of the theory of evolution, used this as a strong pillar for his belief system on how the world came to be.
 - It is purported that Charles Darwin carried a copy of Lyell’s book with him on his trips of exploration.
 - It is interesting because in modern times, science is moving away from uniformitarianism because an unexplainable, catastrophic event happened as geologists are seeing.
- As Christ followers, we believe the universe is an “open” system that is uniform and that is consistent as we see from science but at times, God intervenes and interjects Himself or brings things into this world that can only be explained supernaturally.

Quote: “Anthropocentric hedonism (man-centered, pleasure seeking) always mocks at the idea of ultimate standard and a final division between saved and lost. For men who live in the world of the relative, the claim that the relative will be ended by the absolute is nothing short of ludicrous. For men who nourish a belief in human self-determination and perfectibility, the very idea that we are accountable and dependent is a bitter pill to swallow. No wonder they mocked.”
 – The Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of James – Grand Rapids, Eerdmans publisher – 1968; page 127

Illustration: Bertrand Russell – the Voltaire of Cambridge educated, child of privilege, renowned philosopher and mathematician, and famous for his diamond-sharp intellect. This man who thought of himself as a logic machine wrote:

“The root of the whole thing is loneliness. I have a kind of physical loneliness, which almost anybody can more or less relieve, but which would be only fully relieved by a wife and children. Beyond that, I have a very internal and terrible spiritual loneliness.. . I have dreamed of a combination of spiritual and physical companionship, and if I had the good fortune to find it, I could have become something better than I shall ever be.”

- Life without Christ is an eternally lonely experience.

Application: Pay no attention to those who mock Christ’s return

Transition: Our last point this morning talks about;

The power of God’s word through the ages – 2 Peter 3:5-7

2 Peter 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

- The world came into existence by God’s word
 - Peter responds to the scoffer’s mockery by arguing about how God worked in the past and how God works consistently but varied mind you through the ages.
 - We see God’s physical wrath and judgment in the OT by the destruction of those who disobeyed Him.
 - These false teachers willfully ignored the evidences we see throughout history of God’s working
 - First example stated here is the creation of the world in Genesis 1 & 2. God created the heavens and the earth. Created – ex nihilo in the Hebrew. God made something out of absolutely nothing

Psalm 33:9

For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm

- Nine times in Genesis 1 you see God speaking things into existence
- In the creation story, the heavens existed on day two of creation
- It says that on day three, the earth was formed out of the water.
 - Upper water – vapor canopy that held water and protected Adam and Eve in the perfection of the garden

from the harmful rays of the sun which may have caused people to live longer than now

- Lower waters – underground reservoirs, streams, lakes and even seas.

Hebrews 1:3

He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power

- Despite the evidence, these false teachers willfully deny God's working and the evidence of His working in the world around us.

Romans 1:20

For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

I Corinthians 1:18, 21, 25

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God

For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe

For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men

- The world was destroyed in the past by God's word

2 Peter 3:6

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

- God used how he had created the upper and lower waters to bring the worldwide flood that destroyed every human being and animal outside of the ark.
- Deluged – Greek word – cataclysmic/ catastrophic
- The story goes in Genesis 7 concerning the worldwide flood that the vapor canopy was opened up and the waters of the deep came out of the ground and then add forty days and forty nights of torrential rain, you see the total destruction of all living things on the surface of the planet. The earth was saved, but the judgment was focused on the sinful people who were unwilling to repent from their sins and turn to God.
- Skeptics that say the flood recorded in Genesis could not have been a worldwide flood,. There just wasn't enough water to cover the entire earth

- Realize that three fourths of the earth is currently made up of water and add to that the amount of water from the upper vapor canopy and the lower waters along with the rain for forty days and nights, it is not hard to believe or accept that the flood was a worldwide phenomenon.
- Fellow human beings, be reminded that there is a God and we are not it and if we try to fit God into a box, to make Him a superhuman expression of mankind, and make Him fit in our logic, then He ceases to be the God that I want to serve. He is too small of a God. God is the sovereign ruler of the universe He created.

Psalm 115:3

Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases

- One takeaway we see here is that Peter is a seven-day literal creationist and a believer in the worldwide flood!!
- **The world will face destruction at Christ's second advent** – 77 Days until Christmas

2 Peter 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

- God is preserving this heaven and earth we live on until day reserved comes
 - Example – reservation at a restaurant. Layaway until it is paid off
- Be sure of this, judgment day is coming!!
- Just as Arnold Schwarzenegger said “I’ll be back” in the movie; The Terminator”, God knows the day and the moment of his swift and powerful judgment.
- Stored up for fire. We will talk more about this next week but remember God’s promise of the rainbow? He will not destroy the world again by water but Peter is stating here that judgment will come by fire. This is the only place we see these words in the Bible I believe that discuss the judgment by fire for the earth.
 - Did you know some scientists believe that the inner core of the earth is made of molten rocks that have heat estimated at 12,400 degrees. There is a ten-mile crust that separates human beings from the blazing interior of the core of the earth
 - Do you realize that the entire creation of God is made up of atoms and exist in atomic structures. We are living with the potential of a nuclear explosion all around us if God were to so choose.

Application: Trust God's timing for His sudden return

Transition: We close with the big question to end this message.

Key Thought: Will you listen to God's voice of truth or will you listen to the world's voices that mock God and His soon return? – Who will you believe?

- If you are a true follower of Christ, the great and fantastic news is that we will not face the same judgment of any kind that those who deny and reject Christ will face. These false teachers will lead themselves and others to horrendous destruction but we will be in heaven with Christ and then return with Him to rule and reign forever with Christ.

I Thessalonians 5:9

9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ

Closing Illustration: And here is the hope we live in - 'I Shall Return'

On March 11, 1942, a month before Bataan fell, President Franklin Roosevelt, knowing the American troops would soon be forced to succumb, ordered MacArthur to leave the last stronghold at the island of Corregidor. The order surely fell on the proud and loyal MacArthur all the more heavily because he knew he hadn't acted quickly enough in the wake of Pearl Harbor, leading to devastating losses that had crippled their defenses. What might have been if he had reacted quicker? How many of his men's lives might have been spared?

MacArthur and his family rode by boat to an airstrip 560 treacherous miles away, barely surviving the rough seas and Japanese gunfire. As the general sailed away from what may have been the greatest loss in American history, knowing what the brave men he left behind would now suffer, he resolved, "I shall return" — a promise he would repeat over and over again. When his plane touched down in Melbourne, Australia, he gave a now-famous speech, declaring,

When I landed on your soil, I said to the people of Philippines whence I came, "I shall return." Tonight, I repeat those words: I shall return. Nothing is more certain than the ultimate reconquest and liberation from the enemy of those and adjacent lands.

MacArthur did return, two and a half years later, on October 20, 1944. This month marks 78 years since the day he landed on the shore of Leyte, with 280,000 soldiers under his command, to recapture and finally liberate the Philippines, a story that reverberates with an even deeper and more epic victory.

Jesus said that if I go, I will come again!!

Questions to Ponder This Week

- 1. Are you awake to how urgent it is to share Christ and His Gospel with others?**
- 2. Are you aware of how fast our culture is moving away from God?**

3. Does this urgency cause you to live a pure life in anticipation of Christ's return?