

**Text: 2 Pt 3.3-6**

I always hate cancelling services for any reason, so I am sorry we missed last week. There is a reason we live on the Island, and it is not because we like snow.

Last time, our topic was, *Beloved, Be Mindful*. Today we will talk about what they (and we) must have in our minds as we confront a world full of false teachers.

Our passage today is very bracing in our modern world. Our world has convinced itself that it has evolved “beyond religion,” that it has the answers to deep philosophical questions, and that science disproves the Bible.

Peter’s words that we consider tonight will challenge those notions.

I had thought to go a bit further in the text with our message, but of course I discovered more information I wanted to share, so tonight’s message is Part 1.

*What You Need to Know (1)*

Read 2 Pt 3.1-10, text 3-6

**Proposition:** The truths scoffers ignore overthrows all their mocking ridicule of God’s word.

**I. The reality of mockers and their mocking (3-4)**

A. Be mindful: “first of all”

1. Of prime importance
2. The case of “know” is unusual, and points back to “beloved” in v. 1: “Beloved, know this, first of all”

B. The last days Peter has in mind

1. A frequent expression in the Scriptures
2. Certainly points to the time around the prophesied return of Christ
3. In NT, the apostles spoke of their own day as part of the “last days” — as in the days after the OT era

#### 4. Hiebert points out that the word “last” here is plural:

This: “seems to extend these days over a longer period of time. One cannot set dates for the beginning or duration of these ‘last days’ or ‘last times.’”<sup>1</sup>

The longer the Lord delays, the more the mocking intensifies.

#### C. The sure arrival of mockers

1. Schreiner calls the expression a “semitism”<sup>2</sup> — a Hebrew way of talking “mockers in their mocking”
2. Emphasizes their attitude
  - a. Intellectual superiority
  - b. Disdain/contempt of the Scriptures (look down on)
  - c. They “sit in the seat of scoffers” (Ps 1.1)
3. Mocking gives license to their lifestyle (or is energized by their lifestyle)
  - a. “Following after their own lusts” points back to the licentiousness described in ch. 2
  - b. But mocking is also a fruit of their lusts: they mock because they *want to mock*

#### D. The focus of their mocking (in the last days) — the promise of his coming

1. The return of the Lord, bodily, to the earth, is a fundamental truth of Christianity
2. Mockers mock this teaching

Jehovah’s (false) Witnesses deny a bodily return. They are mockers.

So, too, are liberal theologians who spiritualize away the promise of a literal, bodily return.

<sup>1</sup> D. Edmond Hiebert, *Second Peter and Jude: An Expository Commentary* (Greenville, S.C: Bob Jones University Press, 1989), 142.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, v. 37 (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 372.

## E. The basis for their mocking: “nothing has changed”

### 1. Since the time of the fathers

a. Some debate here, some think this refers to early Christians like Stephen and James who died

1) Some will go so far as to attack Peter’s authorship on this basis

2) If a reference to early Christians, and if Peter is author, we are only talking about 30 years (not much of a time frame to claim “nothing has changed”)

b. The phrase “the fathers” always refers to the OT patriarchs at least

c. Assuming these aren’t necessarily Jews, I take the phrase to mean “since the dawn of recorded time”

2. This mockery assumes the universe has always continued without deviation since the beginning, why expect any change to come?

a. The philosophy of materialism coincides with this notion

“One could hardly find a better summary anywhere of the philosophy of naturalism, which so thoroughly permeates contemporary western civilization, than what this verse contains.”<sup>3</sup>

b. The Second Coming is a far-fetched “myth” since nothing like this has ever happened (say the mockers)

## II. The error of mockers and their mocking (5-6)

A. Peter’s answer takes the mockery in reverse order

1. Verses 5-6 answer: “all things continue”

2. Verses 7-10 answer: “where is the promise of his coming”

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<sup>3</sup> Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), 2 Pt 3.4.

## B. Their error is deliberate

1. “Escapes their notice” = deliberate disregard
2. They overlook two key facts that lie at the heart of the debate creationism has with scientism

## C. Two events that show that “all things” do NOT continue uniformly

### 1. Creation itself (5)

- a. The heavens existed by the word of God: a fundamental truth of Genesis

Gn 1.6-8 ¶ Then God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.”<sup>7</sup> God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so.<sup>8</sup> God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

Heb 11.3 By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

- b. Everything came into existence by the Word of God
- c. At first, creation was a “watery chaos”<sup>4</sup>
- d. Then God “separated the waters from the waters” (Gen 1.6), or “out of water and by water” (2 Pt 3.5)
- e. In v. 4, the mockers speak of the beginning of creation, but...

“Even though the scoffers apparently concurred with creation (see v. 4), they had not drawn the right conclusions from it. The world God created was initially watery chaos, unformed and undeveloped (Gen 1:2). Human life could not have existed if the world were left as it was. The world, however, was ‘formed’ (*synestōsa*), that is, it took shape, ‘by God’s word.’”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 376.

<sup>5</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 376.

f. **The point:** Creation itself is a cataclysmic example of the power of God's word.

*Don't mock God's promise!*

## 2. The destruction of the flood (6)

a. The same means that created the world (v. 5) destroyed the world (v. 6)

1) The word of God

2) And water

b. The record of the flood (Gen 6-9) establishes the doctrine of creation *and* the doctrine of judgement

1) God by his word destroyed the world that then was

2) And by his word will destroy the world that now is

More could be said on these points, but two observations here:

1. Creation and the Genesis Flood are made critical doctrines by this passage

2. The coming judgement is as real as creation

## III. The future of mockers and their mocking (7-10)

A. The future judgement is our subject for next week, but note:

But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire

B. Our future rests on the truth of the past (creation, flood) according to Peter

### Conclusion:

We don't understand everything about God's plan, or what God did at creation, or how the flood worked.

But this teaching is of primary importance: "know this first of all"

**Proposition:** The truths scoffers ignore overthrows all their mocking ridicule of God's word.

We trust God.