

2 Peter 3:1-7

“Doubting the Day of the Lord”

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I. Intro

As we start the third chapter of Peter’s letter we note three things in the very first sentence.

1. First Peter address them in a tender way calling them “*beloved*”. It is a clear distinction that Peter makes having just spent much of this letter warning about false teachers he wanted to let them know that such conversation wasn’t because he was angry at them but rather because he loved them so.
2. Second, Peter mentions that this was the second letter which tells us that this was the same group of believers that he had written to previously. The importance of this is that often we think that our ignorance is due to lack of information, but it is clear that their ignorance was twofold.
3. Finally, Peter informs his readers that their ignorance was lack of activity in the right things (stir up pure minds) and a “crowded mind”, too much activity in the wrong things (by way of reminder). He had taught them these things previously when he had been with them. Peter was not writing to these believers about “*New Subjects*” instead he wanted to remind them of those truths which had changed their lives and would continue to do so if they had the right activity in the right things.

Peter changes from topic of false teachers to the encouragement to the followers of Christ.

There are two things that we can learn from the subject matter in this section.

- It seems that one of the false teachings that was peddled had been to discourage Christians concerning the “***Second coming of the Lord***” (verses 4-5).
- The second thing is that his readers would know where Peter had such hope and confidence as he defends his steadfast faith by giving examples from the word of God. Nothing had happened during the time that Jesus had ascended to change his view of truth.

It is important to examine for a moment why this particular false teaching was so effective in discouraging believers. As it magnifies why it didn't work of Peter. The argument of the false teachers is found in verse 4-5 “***Where is the promise of His coming***”. Their reasoning was “***For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.***” The false teachers that Peter calls “scoffers” in verse 3 saw the universe as stable, a closed system and determined that God does not intervene in human history. They were saying things like, “***You keep talking about the King, His presence His ministry, His promises. Well, where is he in this evil generation. He is not attentive in His ministry; he is not doing anything.***” It is easy for me to understand why this false teaching is effective as our vista is from time, space, and matter. And as those things move slowly through our lives from day to day we are tempted to believe in the inactivity of God, but nothing could be further from the truth. When time passes without the promise realized discouragement can set in.

II. Vs. 1-2 Unmixed minds

Vs. 1-2 By use of the phrase “*I now write you a second epistle (both in which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder)*”; that the problem with these first century believers was not lack of information! The word in the Greek for “**pure**” means **unmixed** and it is here that we see why confusion enters the hearts of saints, it isn’t the immediate abandonment of truth but rather the slow mixture of the worlds lies with God’s truths that eventually over time turns the heart. What Peter wants to “*stir up pure minds*” **before they become mixed up has to do with the 2nd coming of the Christ.** Peter also lets you know “**HOW**” he is going to do this in verse 2 as it will be making them “*mindful of the words which were spoken before the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and savior.*”

Peter is specific as too what these false teachers were mix up in the minds of these believers in verse 4-5 as it had to do with the 2nd coming of the Lord. Before we can understand Peter’s scripture encouragement we need to be specific as it relates to what about Jesus’ coming was under attack. Was it:

- A. Jesus’ coming in the air to “catch” out His church?
- B. Jesus’ coming to earth to reign?

The word in the Greek for “coming” in verse 4 in the scoffer’s argument is “to be alongside” and speaks of a personal presence. It is a word that is used for both the rapture and the coming to earth to reign. The context of verses 4-5 makes it clear that mixing up was not dealing with the rapture as verse 10-12 clarifies that it is the promise of the second coming that was being mixed up and the dissolving of the earth and humanities judgment that scoffers were deliberately mixing up. The reason this was effective was that Christians of all

ages our prone to examine the promises of God under the microscope of earthly life, we suffer from “nearsightedness” that cause us to not to trust the vision of the throne of God.

The bible tells us that there will be a definite end to the world as we now see it and Peter will go on in verse 7 will even reveal how it will occur. There is going to be a great and climatic end to the world in a final judgment. But it is hard for even Christians to believe this. There are several reasons for this:

1. Natural self-preservation
2. Natural reason and human observation

Peter’s reply to them is not based upon reason or human logic as there is a flaw with using those as it relates to the second coming of Christ or for matters of faith in general. The works of God aren’t meant to be understood, to be figured out in time space and matter we are limited. Not they are meant to be believed based upon the revelation of God and trust in His nature. Atheists trust in human reasoning above Devine revelation and they do so knowing full well in human history that it is human reasoning that has been shown to be consistently wrong and not Devine revelation. Scoffers, Peter says are willfully ignorant. He picks out of human history one story that proves his point the flood scoffers mocked and ridiculed the man of faith, Noah for 120 years. They mocked the only truth that could have delivered them from judgment.

III. Vs. 3-5 Devine revelation verses human reasoning

Vs. 3 The first reason Peter says that you cannot believe the Scoffers can trust in Devine revelation is that Devine revelation saw their mocking coming when these same Scoffers could not see Devine revelation coming. Which accurately predicts the other? Not only does Devine predict that Scoffers will come it goes further than generalities and gets into specifics

revealing why they scoff as it has to do with their own “lusts” or evil desires. The bible predicts that instead of the gospels influence in the world that at the second coming of Christ humanity will not improve, that the world will not be getting better. In fact, the whole of the world will be in total apostasy and rebellion against God. Jesus said in Luke 18:18 that “when He comes again will He even find faith on the earth.” Despite scientific advancements, educational standards global communication we don’t see the improvement of humanity. Yet human reasoning said that our failures can be traced to the lack of advancement in those things. So how do they explain their failures, well they blame faith in God of course! And Devine revelation predicts even that. We ought not to become depressed by the current condition of humanity as it has happened just as God said it would and indicates that His word can be absolutely trusted and is 100% reliable for us to be obedient. The word of God knows man more than human reason who has said that humanity is going to just get better and better with advancements and the eradication of faith in the living God. That’s what John Lennon sang about in his song “Imagine” the irony is that John’s death was at the hands of what he believed was getting better. If humanity is getting better and better than there is no need to insist that law abiding citizens should no longer have the right to bear arms as there would clearly be no need to protect ourselves.

Vs. 4-5 Devine revelation also predicts the Scoffers argument being is in very vulnerable area of human suffering and injustice. The Scoffers see nothing changing, no intervention in humanity through human history. The point is that God can’t be trusted because He is either unable to deliver or unwilling to do so and on either of these one that cannot be counted upon. The problem with this argument is that it is aimed at our perception of time in which Peter will correct in verse 8 when he corrects that God’s watch is more accurate than ours.

Where is God the Scoffers ask, things aren't changing, where was He when your wife was sick with cancer and died? Where was he when you lost your job etc. The argument ought to sound familiar as it is the same one used by satan to Eve in the garden, "Did God really say?" God is not indifferent nor unable, but His ways are far above ours and His timing as well as His love and justice is always perfectly distributed!

IV. Vs. 6-7 And winner is

Vs. 6-7 Peter goes to the true trusted source of Devine revelation as the answer bring up the flood that human reason ignored even though they had a preacher proclaiming its coming for 120 years. These early human ancestors trusted on their human reason above Devine revelation saying, "*Our human science reveals to us the impossibility of your faith.*" Only to find out the horrible reality that their deaths proofed the reliability of Devine revelation. Scoffers fail in the same place every time, "*Devine revelation isn't meant to be understood to be beneficial it is meant to be believed and obeyed!*" And even this the Bible predicts the reason for their willful disobedience as in verse 5 we are told that "**For this they willfully forget: that by the WORD of God...**"