

2 Peter Chapter 3A

Two couples planning to celebrate their 25th anniversary have prepared a romantic getaway at a wonderful resort for the weekend. Both of them leave their households and their younger children in the care of their 17-year-old sons.

- In one house the young man faithfully follows the instructions of his parents. He feeds the younger children a Kale and Cage Free chicken breast salad for dinner, He leads family devotions and makes sure the younger children are prayed with and tucked in by 9:00. (*What a faithful son*)
- In the other house, the older son trashes the Kale Salad and order's a meat lovers pizza which he shares with his friends who just happened to stop by with a few 6 packs of beer. The younger children are sent to their rooms hungry and when they open the door, the boy beats them and locks them in their rooms.

Well after sharing a romantic candlelight dinner for two the second couple arrived at the resort only to find that their online reservations didn't go through and they have to return home early. How do you suppose they felt when they opened the door and found their teenage son passed out on the floor and their younger children beaten and locked in their rooms?

- In true biblical fashion these parents commended their son to outer darkness where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth.
- The Lord Jesus tells a similar story to his disciples teaching them the great value of faithfulness in the Kingdom of God. Let's begin in Matthew 24

In the context of his second coming and the judgment that is to come, Jesus asks his disciples Matthew 24: 45 "**Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? 46 Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. 47 Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. 48 But if that wicked servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed, 49 and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, 50 the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know 51 and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

- Jesus clearly warned his disciples that there will be a day of final reckoning when He comes again to judge the living and the dead.

This morning as we return to 2nd Peter we remember that the Apostle has just issued a warning, concerning False Teachers who had infiltrated the church.

They denied the second coming of Christ and brazenly promoted immorality among the flock of God.

Like the Wicked Servant in Matthew 24 these False Teachers were saying, "My Lord Delays" and they gave themselves to drunkenness and immoral living.

DO you remember Peter's shocking description that we read two weeks ago:

2 Peter 2:13b **They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you. 14 They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children!**

- These "Accursed Children" are wolves among the flock of God, sent by the enemy to lie, to kill and destroy.
- As a faithful under-shepherd Peter seeks to protect the flock using the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

This morning I hope to cover the first 7 verses of Ch. 3, and bring application to the times in which we live. Here is the outline for our exposition:

1. Reminder – Once again, Peter hopes to stir the church by way of reminder. He focuses our attention on the Biblical promise of Christ's Second Coming.
2. Ridicule – He highlights the skepticism and mockery of the False Teachers.
3. Rejection – Peter points out that these false teachers have deliberately rejected the Word of God in order to justify their immoral lifestyle.

Reminder

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

One of the main reasons why we gather for Sunday worship, the reason why we study the Word of God together on a Wednesday night and practice hospitality, meeting together from house to house is so that we can stir, so that we can arouse, so that we can encourage one another by the Word of God.

If you remember from our study in the first chapter of this book, Peter told us that the purpose of his writing was to stir us up by way of reminder. 2 Peter 1: 13 **I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder,** (Stir, shake, prod)

- *Let's be honest:*

In the same way that cattle need prodding in order to move into greener pastures, In the same way that horses need to be spurred to move in the right direction, we also need to be stirred or provoked to keep moving along the path of sanctification

- Our fleshly habit patterns need to be broken. Our spiritual lethargy needs to be shaken and our minds need to be renewed.
- That's why the writer of Hebrews exhorts his readers to GO to Church.

Hebrews 10:24-25 **And let us consider how to stir one another up to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.**

- Now Listen, I want you to catch this connection.

- Just like the writer of Hebrews, Peter's motivation in stirring up the people of God is the imminent return of Jesus Christ.
- Some of you might ask, what do I mean by the term, "Imminent return?" Well, I mean that Christ could return at any moment.
- Looking at the Gospels we see that Jesus taught His disciples to live their lives in the continual expectation of His return. Turn with me to Matthew:

Matthew 24: 44 **Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.**

- So today as we study 2 Peter chapter 3, I would like to **stir you up 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**
- The O.T. Prophets and the N.T. Apostles teach us that History has a definite beginning and a definite ending. Genesis – Beginning; Revelation – Ending.
- Friends, the doctrine of Christ's Second Coming is a two-edged sword, it warns the sinner of impending judgment and comforts the saint with the promise of eternal glory. Jesus comforted His disciple with these words:

John 14:1, **"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.**

- This morning if you are in the midst of fiery trials, troubled by the tribulation of this present life, I encourage you to take heart, because the Lord has established a place of rest for all who believe and He will return to gather us to himself.

The angels who were present at the Lord's ascension spoke of Christ's glorious return. As the disciples were gazing into the heavens, the angels said: (Acts 1:11) **"Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."**

- From these words we learn that Jesus will return Bodily, He will come again Personally and Visible in the same way that He ascended.
- Paul provides even more details when he writes to the church at Thessalonica.

1 Thessalonians 4: 15 **For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.**

- In the sovereign timing of God, when all of the elect have been regenerated and sealed with the Holy Spirit, the end will come and judgment will begin.
- For those of us who have been cleansed of our sin, justified by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ the HOPE of His return has a purifying effect.

1John 3: 2 **Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.** 3 **And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.**

- Right now, by the grace of God, we who believe have been adopted into the family of God, even NOW we ARE God's children.
- And like a faithful child who practices self-control, knowing that his parents could fling open the door and walk into the room at any time, we who believe are motivated to live our lives in a growing purity because Jesus is coming back to judge the living and the dead.

With that in mind, I want you to remember what we previously learned about the False Teachers who had infiltrated the church in Peter's day.

- They deny the Second Coming and reject the doctrine of final judgment.
- Their eyes are full of adultery and their hearts are trained in greed. They indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority.
- Their false doctrine opens the door to corrupt living. And they were promoting their immorality throughout the church.

John Mac - "Satan knows that if he can get the church to discount the importance of Christ's return, or even completely deny its reality, he can remove a very significant source of Christian hope and motivation. To that end the devil continually places skeptics and false teachers within the church, men who reject, minimize or altar Jesus' promise."

- Now that WE have been reminded of the coming of the Lord Let's move on to Peter's second point, Ridicule:
- These false teachers derided, mocked and ridiculed those who held firmly to Biblical truth.

2. Ridicule

2 Peter 3:3 **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."**

- Before we dig into the mockery of the scoffers let's clear up one important term.
- When you hear the words, "**The Last Days**" you should know that they refer to the entire period of time between the first and second comings of Christ. From the manger, through the cross all the way to that glorious day when he comes on the clouds with great glory. Friends, these are the Last Days.

- When Peter says, “**Knowing this**” He reminds us that the testimony of Scripture affirms the fact that scoffers and mockers have always sought to attack the truth of God’s Word and the Last Days are no exception.

In the O.T. it seems that there was a greater influx of mockers during those times when God was about to move in judgment:

As the Prophet Isaiah pronounces his woes upon rebellious Israel they respond with skepticism saying: Isaiah 5:19 "**Let him be quick, let him speed his work that we may see it; let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near, and let it come, that we may know it!**"

- The attitude of sarcasm behind these words is obvious. We see the same thing in Jeremiah.

In Jeremiah 17:15 the mockers ask: "**Where is the word of the LORD? Let it come!**"

- They don’t believe the Word of the Lord, so with arrogant jesting the mockers invite God’s judgment. (and that judgment came to pass)
- As you can see, there is a blasphemous boldness and a foolish bravado attached to the words of these mockers.

Malachi records the folly of his opponents who express their unbelief in the words: “**Where is the God of Justice?**” He is not coming to deliver us like you said!!!

Here in Ch. 3, Peter informs us that The Days of the N.T. will be no different from the days of the O.T. Scoffers will arise and then He moves on to show the content of their rejection: **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."**

- These scoffers are mocking the promise of Christ, coming, (PAROUSIA – that word incorporates both the arrival of Christ as well as his continuing presence)

The crux of their foolish argument is that since the death of the Patriarchs, God has never intervened in the physical world. They wrongly believed that from the time of creation the world has progressed WITH an order and regularity that excludes divine intervention.

This way of thinking is very similar to the deists who believe that, God spun the world like a top and then walked away from it. He started the whole thing moving and then just let it run its course without any further oversight or intervention.

- IN light of this, they reject the biblical concept of a final and cataclysmic intervention by God when He comes in judgment.

Here in 2018 the voices of skeptics and mockers seems to be growing in both volume and in venom. Radical Atheists, humanists, agnostic's band together in bitter hatred against anyone and everyone who would seek to hold firmly to the Word of God.

- Clinging to the sinking ship of evolutionary science, these modern day mockers jeer at those who believe in a literal 6 day creation and final judgment.

In 2012 prominent atheists and agnostics gathered on the National Mall in Washington DC for what was called "The Reason Rally."

- The rally was promoted as a "Positive experience" designed to celebrate secular values (**Oxy-moron**) and motivate atheists to become more active in politics and community affairs.
- One of the key note speakers was Richard Dawkins, devout atheist, renown professor at Oxford University and author of "The God Delusion."
- Dawkins called on atheists and agnostics to "Ridicule and show contempt" for the religious and their doctrines. He encouraged atheists to mock and ridicule religious individuals in public.
- Friends, if that gathering was in fact a rally for reason why didn't Dawkins urge the crowd to reason with people of faith? (Mockery is not reasoning)
- I think most of us would welcome an opportunity to sit and reason with unbelievers. Later on in this chapter Peter will command believers to:

1Pe 3:15 **In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,**

OK let's summarize what we have learned so far:

1. Reminder - Peter hoped to stir the church by way of reminder. So He focused our attention on the promise of Christ's Second Coming.
2. Ridicule – He revealed the skepticism and mockery of the False Teachers.
3. NOW he will show us that their rejection of the truth has NO historic OR Biblical basis. They are willfully blind when they reject the revelation of God's Word.

Rejection

2 Peter 3: 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.**

- IN order for these scoffers to hold the position that God does not intrude on his creation or intervene in the affairs of men they have to deliberately overlook the Biblical testimony.

Peter accuses them of willfully neglecting; purposefully ignoring the record of God's activity provided for us in the book of Genesis.

2 Peter 3: 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

- In the beginning, the Triune God actively worked to form the created universe. Separating the watery matrix that He spoke into existence into a habitation uniquely designed to display His glory.
- Genesis clearly describes God's activity in that creation.

Genesis 1:2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Genesis 1:6 And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters."

It is easy to see how the False Teachers in Peter's day deliberately overlooked the narrative of Genesis. But I have to ask, WHY would they do that?

- IF they could convince people that God never intervened in the cosmos and never acted in judgment, they could continue promoting their immoral lifestyle.

If they want to prove their point, they would have to rip thousands of pages out of the Bible, NOT the least of which would be Genesis Ch. 6-7

Genesis 6:11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. 13 And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

Genesis 7: 11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. 12 And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights. 13 On the very same day Noah and his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark,

Genesis 7: 21 And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind. 22 Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. 23 He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark.

There is no getting around it, Geological and historic records across the globe bear witness to the Biblical narrative of a devastating global flood.

- You would have to deliberately overlook a massive amount of clear evidence in order to deny the intervention of God in the world.
- The Bible painstakingly describes God’s hand of judgment on multiple occasions in the history of man. Flood, Tower of Babel, Sodom and Gomorrah, Israel overtaking the Land of Canaan, Assyria and Babylon overtaking Israel.
- AND then, of course there is the cross where the judgment of God for the sin of His chosen people was poured out in all of its fullness on Jesus Christ.
- You see, because God is JUST, because He is righteous and HOLY, He simply must judge sin. He is the one who said, “**The soul that sins will surely die.**”
- Among his manifold perfections God is merciful and loving, and He made a way for sinful man to be declared righteous by faith in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- As we draw to a close I want you to see:

As it was in Peter’s day, so it is in our day. False Teachers have infiltrated the church promoting their immoral lifestyles by deliberately overlooking the historic narrative contained in the book of Genesis.

- By ignoring the Biblical testimony of creation, which states, “**in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them,**” by ignoring this text, men and women seek to determine gender for themselves and in doing so they mock the God who created them.
- When people deliberately overlook God’s divine design for marriage, found in Genesis 2 and seek to legitimize all kinds of immoral behavior, thinking that they can call it marriage, they remain under God’s righteous judgment.

Now listen, it is one thing for the unbelieving world to promote foolish and immoral standards (we expect that,) But its quite another thing for leaders within the church to deliberately overlook the divine design for gender and marriage in order to promote their immoral lifestyle.

- That my friends, is false teaching. And those who cling to it will face the judgment of God.
- What should we do when mockers arise seeking to divide the flock of God?

Jude tells us 1: 18 **They said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.”** 19 **It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.** 20 **But you, beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit.** 21 **keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.**

IN order to exercise discernment and protect ourselves from being led astray by false teachers we must remain on the path of sanctification. Jude exhorts us with a series of commands....

1. Build ourselves up in the faith. We are to grow in our understanding of the objective body of truth God has provided in his Word. Then we will be able to distinguish the truth from a lie.
2. Pray in the Holy Spirit, This refers to prayer that is consistent with the desires and decrees of God. This is praying in submission to the Holy Spirit, yielded to His Will and his Word, trusting in His power.
3. We are to “Keep ourselves in the love of God.” How do we do that? Well Jesus said, (John 15:10) “If you keep my commandments you will abide in my love just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in His love.”
4. We are to wait expectantly for the Second Coming of Christ and the Mercy of God that will be revealed at that time