

# Scoffers

2 Peter 3:1-8

By Scott Huckaby

3/30/2025



This is one of my favorite passages of Scripture that is highly relevant to what we are seeing today.

1. It ties together end & beginning things
  - end things: God used to open my heart to Him
  - beginning things: God used to give me my greatest spiritual growth spurt... when I learned that I could take the Genesis account of Genesis literally, it revolutionized my personal relationship since I did not need a specially trained intermediary to interpret God's Word for me (I could take Scripture literally)
2. It addresses the two areas of Scripture that are most often not taken literally: end & beginning things
3. It explains why churches neglect the study of Jesus returning

## Why is beginning and ending things important?

God ties together the beginning and the end:

*Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. (Isaiah 46:9-10, NIV)*

- God is able to reveal the future to us because (1) He is outside the confines of time and (2) He is in control
- God has revealed the future to us because (1) it enables us to recognize Him for who He is and (2) it gives us hope in the midst of unsettling developments.

Beginning things are foundational... if you get beginning things wrong with flawed hermeneutics, it is just a matter of time before you apply this flawed hermeneutics to other important doctrines.

*If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do? (Psalm 11:3)*

Jesus tied together the beginning and the end:

*But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. (Matt 24:37, NKJ)*

He said there would be similarities & lessons to learn...

*For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know*

*until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. (Matthew 24:38-39)*

Among the similarities most germane to our discussion today is:

- that people would be surprised by the return of Christ because they don't believe God
- God judged the earth before and He will do so again
- People who ignore God's Word do so at their peril

## 2 Peter 3:1-8 (NIV)

*Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. <sup>2</sup>I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles. <sup>3</sup>Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. <sup>4</sup>They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." <sup>5</sup>But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water. <sup>6</sup>By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. <sup>7</sup>By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. <sup>8</sup>But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day*

## v1-2 – Why did Peter write this second epistle?

Peter already wrote about the importance of being reminded (2 Peter 1:12-13). But here he wanted to emphasize what should be known in light of the coming of Jesus and the prophecies surrounding His coming.

## What wholesome thinking did Peter want to stimulate?

Putting our times in the right perspective of the plan of God.

1 Chronicles 12:32 – *the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do*

### v3 – What will characterize the time prior to the return of Jesus?

The time prior to Jesus returning will be characterized by scoffing – people will deny Jesus is returning and ridicule those expecting His return.

### v4 – What did Peter want his readers to remember?

*That you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before:* Peter knew the importance of *reminding* his readers of the Scriptural message, both received from the Old Testament (**spoken before**) and contemporary to his own day (**and of the commandment of us**).

- Peter clearly believed that the **words** of Scripture were important; the **words** themselves, and not merely the *meaning* behind the words.

### Which is more important, the words of Scripture, or the meaning behind the words?

This is kind of a trick question... our inclination is to say the meaning behind the words is more important but:

Matthew 5:18 – *For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.*

Certainly, words have a meaning behind them but it is possible for the meaning of words to change over time and also be subject to human interpretation.

### What is the significance of mentioning the prophets and apostles together?

By placing the messengers of the new covenant on the same level as the messengers of the old covenant, Peter understood the authority of the New Testament, even as it was being formed.

- Peter understood that Jesus gave His **apostles** the inspired authority to bring forth God's message to the new covenant community. He understood this from passages such as Matthew 16:19, where Jesus gave the apostles authority to *bind* and *loose*, much as the authoritative rabbis of their day.

### What are the last days?

In a sense, the **last days** began when Jesus ascended into heaven. Since that time, we haven't rushed towards the precipice of the consummation of all things; but we have run along side that edge — ready to go anytime at God's good pleasure.

Romans 13:11 – *now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.*

Certainly, every day brings us even deeper into the last days.

### What does it tell us that scoffers follow their own evil desires?

*Walking according to their own lusts:* These words remind us that scoffers do not only have an intellectual problem with God and His word. They also have a clear *moral* problem, wanting to reject the Lordship of Jesus Christ over their lives.

### What is the message of the scoffers?

*Where is the promise of His coming?* In the thinking of these scoffers, Christians have talked about Jesus coming for two thousand years and He still hasn't come back yet.

### What is the Parousia?

The Greek word *parousia* (pronounced pair-oo-see-ah) is a noun that means "a coming" or "a presence."

- In the Greek New Testament, this word primarily refers to the Coming of the Lord Jesus.
- It can refer to either His second coming at the end of the 7-year tribulation period, or to His coming to rapture His Church prior to the tribulation.

So, you have to look at the context to determine whether it refers to the rapture or second coming.

### Why do people scoff at Jesus' return?

1. They will be walking according to their own lusts.
2. People will be "looking out for number one" (themselves) to the exclusion of anyone else, especially God; it will be a common practice to yield to one's natural impulses (feelings).
3. A pastor told me He didn't look forward to Jesus returning because He wanted his girls to grow up and experience the joys of marriage and motherhood. He did not realize how worldly his view was... children of God will not miss out on a thing this world has to offer.

### Who will the end-time scoffers be?

1. Certainly unbelievers
2. But also "professing" believers who claim to be Christians but also deny the fundamentals of the faith (apostasy)
3. And immature Christians Paul calls carnal Christians (a.k.a. also babes in Christ). These are content with the superficial milk and not the solid food of Scripture as mature Christians. Consequently, they are quick to embrace false doctrine so that they may be more accepted by the world (like amillennialism and theistic evolution).

*I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. (1 Corinthians 3:1-3)*

### How can immature Christians appear to be mature?

- By getting degrees from respected seminaries and being installed as pastors.
- They accept the amillennial perspective of their learned professors without question.
- They reject or only give lip-service to the inerrancy of God's Word.
- Their extensive Bible knowledge masks their immature relationship with the Lord.

### How do those who scoff justify their scoffing?

- By saying, "*all things continue as they were from the beginning*"
- They say, "every generation of Christians have expected Jesus to return in their lifetime and He hasn't so why should our generation be any different?"

Note that scoffers embrace Theistic Evolution... the idea that God used an evolutionary process to bring about the creation.

- By saying, "*all things continue as they were from the beginning*" they reveal that they are uniformitarians which require great periods of time for evolutionary changes to take place via God-directed mutations.
- This is a compromise with the doctrine of the world that is made to be more accepted by men.

### Why didn't God use an evolutionary process to create mankind?

*God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.* (Genesis 1:31, NIV)

- Morning and evening do not apply to day-ages
- Creation could not be described as "very good" if survival of the fittest was used
- There was no death prior to Adam & Eve's sin

### v5-6 – What do the end-time scoffers forget?

- They forget, "*the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.*"
- Noah's flood... scoffers forget that God brought judgment on the whole earth once before and He will do so again.
- They deny that Noah's flood even happened as the Bible describes it... they cite many "faith traditions" that describe a great flood myth that was only regional

### Why don't people want to believe the biblical account of Noah's flood?

Because they have never seen a widespread judgment of God, they rationalize there will never be one.

- This would force them to have to believe the rest of the Bible
- To accept that God intervenes in our world supernaturally tells us that He cares about us and that there is purpose to our being here
- ...in contrast, deists create an impersonal god in their own image so that they don't have to worry about being personally accountable

### What do the scoffers deliberately forget?

*That by the word of God the heavens were of old:* The Bible clearly teaches that the active agent in creation was God's **Word**. He spoke and creation came into being.

John 1:1-3 – *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ...All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.*

### What was the world like before Noah's flood?

Water vapor barrier (Genesis 1:6-8), no rain (Genesis 2:4-6), diffused light (Genesis 9:11-15), people lived hundreds of years (Genesis 5)...

### How does forgetting the flood cause scoffing about the return of Jesus?

- Dismissing the supernatural way God brought the creation into being goes along with ignoring His Word and is a symptom of not having a relationship with Him.
- It also denies that God will supernaturally intervene in the future ("*all things continue as they were from the beginning...*")

### v7 – How long will the Lord preserve the world as we know it?

- *until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men*
- All people will be judged; you don't want to be judged at the Great White Throne which precedes the Lord renovating heaven and earth by fire (Revelation 20:15-21:1).

The Great White Throne judgment occurs as part of the transition from the Millennial Kingdom to the Eternal State. The Millennial Kingdom will also be characterized by a new earth (Isaiah 65:17-25)

**...So how can verse 7 say the earth will be preserved?**

- The new earth of the Millennial Kingdom will foreshadow the new earth of the Eternal State but the new earth of the Eternal State will be so much different from it that the new earth of the Millennial Kingdom will be like our current earth with some distinct improvements.
- There are many parallels: As God will renovate the new earth of the Eternal State by fire, the fires of the tribulation will usher in the new earth of the Millennial Kingdom.

**v8 – What is the contextual significance of a thousand years being as a day to the Lord?**

- Beginning things: God created the earth in 6 days and rested on the seventh ...seven symbolizes "completion"
- End things: human history will consist of 7,000 years; 6,000 years of struggle followed by 1,000 years of rest during the Millennial Kingdom.
- ~6,000 years of human history to-date is consistent with what the Bible's genealogies reveal: ~2,000 years between Adam and Abraham; ~2,000 years between Abraham and Jesus; ~2,000 years since Jesus.

**Why does theistic evolution contribute to scoffing about Jesus returning?**

- If it took millions of years between the beginning of creation until Jesus came the first time, it is reasonable to expect it to be millions of years until Jesus returns to usher in the Eternal State.
- Thus the return of Christ has to be so far in the future that it has no real bearing on the here and now.

**What applications do we see from this discussion?**

- Scoffers at the return of Jesus is an important sign of the times.
- Beginning things and ending things are connected... Scoffers will also deny a literal interpretation of Genesis.
- Prophecy is important for holy living and making sense of this crazy world.