

8. Scoffers, your time is up

October 9, 2008

There is not one person who can know everything about all the subjects with the exception of God. That means that we must admit that we are ignorant in many subjects. Some people are ignorant because of lack of opportunity to learn or lack of ability to learn. But in the majority of the cases, many people choose to be ignorant in the most important subject of their lives. It is about knowing the truth of our sinful lives and God.

Not knowing everything does not make one ignorant. But when a person ignores the truth because of his own empty pride, that makes him ignorant.

Apostle Peter has dealt with the character and conduct of the apostates in chapter 2, and now he deals with their false teaching. Peter affirmed the certainty of Christ's coming in glory in 2 Peter 1:16, a truth that the apostates questioned and denied. In fact, they were scoffing at the very idea of the return of the Lord, the judgment of the world, and the establishment of a glorious kingdom.

Understanding the correct eschatology – Christ's return and the certainty of judgment – would make us get right with God. There is nothing like it. Every single false teaching either ignore or neglect the rapture and the second coming of Jesus Christ. It is like being inside of a casino where there is no clock or window so that gamblers can not tell what time it is. In my opinion, it is like a children's game – they think that if they ignore the truth long enough, it might go away.

A couple of the ways to discourage us are persecution and scoffings. Throughout the Bible, we see so many godly people were persecuted for their righteous living and the truth they were holding onto.

- Noah was ridiculed for 120 years during his ark construction phase by his neighbors.
- Moses was openly attacked, mocked, threatened by two million people for forty years in the wilderness, including his own siblings Aaron and Miriam.
- David went from penthouse to outhouse in no time. From being favored by king Saul to being hunted by the same king for over ten years.
- Elijah was squared off with 850 prophets of Baal on the Mount Carmel and proved that Jehovah God was the only true God and had all those false prophets to be killed. Queen Jezebel immediately threatened to kill him as her revenge for her pet prophets.
- Nehemiah was mocked, ridiculed and scoffed at by Tobiah the Ammonite, Sanballat the Horonite and Geshem the Arab during the construction of the Jerusalem wall.
- Isaiah was the prophet of the southern kingdom Judah during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah and Manasseh. He warned of the destruction and devastation that would come because of the rejection of God by Israel. A legend says that he was stuffed into an empty log and sawed in half by king Manasseh. I say he was totally beside himself.
- Jeremiah was known as a weeping prophet. Without one single convert in his ministry, he was constantly ridiculed and persecuted for his prophecies.
- Jesus, the Son of God Himself was mocked, persecuted and executed on the cross for our sins. Even His own family treated Him as if He were insane.

- Stephen, the faithful deacon of the early church who refused to deny the Lord, went on to become the first martyr.
- According to John Foxe's renown book "The Book of Martyrs", there were so many gave up their lives for the cause of Jesus Christ.
- The persecution against Christians are still going on widely from the continent of Africa to Asia, just about every county in between. You can read about them from the web site www.persecution.com or five books called Jesus Freaks by DC Talk.
- As we might be facing having the possibility of the most liberal President ever, we, born-again Christians in America might go through our own persecutions by his ultra liberal people.

When we see all these persecutions against our brothers and sisters around the world, it is not unusual for us to think, "Is there any end of this persecution against Christians?" Yes, a day is coming when all persecutors and scoffers will be silenced and stopped. We will rejoice with the Lord Jesus in the end. That is what apostle Peter wants us to know here tonight.

A. BE MINDFUL OF THE WORD

2 Peter 3:1-2 Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), 2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior,

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

I have the utmost faith in the Word of God that if we believe and do what the Lord Jesus says through His Word, we would not have any fear for any attacks against us. Our problems lie in when we allow our doubts to come into our hearts by our own permission like what happened to Peter himself on the Sea of Galilee. You all remember the incident in Matthew 14.

Matthew 14:28-33 And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. 30 But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."

The best source of reassurance and encouragement is God Himself through His timeless Word.

B. SCOFFERS IN THE LAST DAYS

2 Peter 3:3-4 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."

I strongly believe that we are living in the last days right before the rapture is to happen. The Bible tells us that we don't know the day or hour of the rapture, but we would know when the season is near. My brothers and sisters, we are NEAR, so near that you can almost smell it.

One of the scoffers' favorite topics to ridicule is Christ's return. They say, "Jesus promised that He would return soon two thousand years ago. He hasn't returned yet. So it will continue as is." If I got a dollar for each time scoffers mentioned this to me, I would be a rich man. The theory undergirding this view is called 'uniformitarianism', and it is founded on the bedrock of humanistic philosophy.

The greatest threat against Christianity is not Satan, nor Islam, nor communism, but humanism. We have this very enemy within all of us. Most often than not, humanism raises its ugly head against Jesus Himself and tries to take over His throne.

Why do these apostates scoff? Because they want to continue living in their sins. If your lifestyle contradicts the Word of God, you must either change your lifestyle or ignore the Word of God. The apostates would rather ignore the truth from the Bible and they scoff at the doctrines of judgment and the coming of the Lord.

They show a great deal of generosity and tolerance for every religion of the world except orthodox Christianity that contains eschatology they don't like to face.

But from their argument against the Word of God, I get a great deal of confirmation that I am on the right side with God.

C. THE LESSON THEY CHOOSE TO IGNORE

2 Peter 3:5-6 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, 6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.

Where did all the water come from? According to Genesis 7, it tells us that water came from two sources: below the earth and above the earth. Evidently, the source for water below the ground was in great subterranean pools, or "fountains" of fresh water. In addition to that they had down pouring rain for forty days and nights.

Some people argue that Noah's Flood was localized. They would argue for anything and everything. They must be ACLU attorneys. If it was localized, why didn't people move to somewhere else to avoid the flood like the people in the Gulf area before Hurricane Ike hit them? Besides, if the flood was localized what the Bible says doesn't make sense.

Genesis 7:20 The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered.

Evidence of Noah's Flood can be seen all over the earth, from seabeds to mountain-tops. The earth's crust has massive amounts of layered sedimentary rock, sometimes miles deep! These layers of sand, soil, and material – mostly laid down by water – were once soft like mud, but they are now hard stone. Encased in these sedimentary layers are billions of dead things – fossils of plants and animals – buried very quickly. The evidence all over the earth is staring everyone in the face.

You can find fossils all over the world. What does it mean? Something drastic happened in such short time, all the living things became fossils, not in millions and billions years. Why not? It is because a length of time allows these leaves and animals' dead bodies to decay, not fossilized.

As you know I do some drawings. After I finish a drawing like this, I put a signature in the drawing to show that I did it. Obviously, artists have learned that from God.

The Lord Jesus put His signature in human bodies everywhere when He created us.
Colossians 1:16-17 16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. NIV

There are protein molecule called 'Laminin'. Cells are organized in certain molecular structures. That controls what protein they are. Scientists are guessing that there are 10000-16000 proteins in a human body. Laminin is vital to making sure overall body structures hold together. Improper production of laminin can cause muscles to form improperly. Would you like to see Jesus' signature in your bodies? This is the one which holds our bodies together. Can anyone tell me that it has nothing to do with the Lord Jesus?

D. THE JUDGMENT BY FIRE

2 Peter 3:7 But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

God promised that there would be no more floods to destroy the world. The next judgment will be a judgment of fire for those who try their best to ignore Him. This world will not be destroyed by humans, but eventually by God. He will burn up the old creation and all the works of sinful man with it. Then He will usher in the new heavens and earth and reign in glory.

Everything in God's original creation was good. It is man's sin that has turned a good creation into a groaning creation. According to Genesis 3, God could not permit sinful man to live in a perfect environment, so He had to curse the ground because of man, so that they can live on it.

Scoffers should be grateful to God for not shortening His promise too early. Our God is full of mercy, abounding in love. Why would He do that? It says in v9.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

E. APPLICATIONS

1) Understanding the correct eschatology – Christ's return and the certainty of judgment – would make us get right with God.

2) The best source of reassurance and encouragement is God Himself through His timeless Word.