

Remember
the Word of God
not the word of scoffers

2 Peter 3

Pastor Jim Rademaker

Have you ever read the Bible?
Yes? What are you going to read now? Seeing that you've already read the Bible, I'm assuming you know it all and don't need to read it anymore. Oh, what is that? You *don't* remember everything you read? Maybe you've forgotten a bit of it?

Every worry? What does the Bible say about that? Oh yeah, "don't". Every think that God doesn't care about you? What does the Bible say? Oh, yeah, He cares about you more than you can ever imagine. Ever start thinking that maybe life came about by chance, that we evolved from lower life-forms? The Bible says what? God spoke and created us in His image.

Maybe you shouldn't give up reading your Bible just yet. Maybe there's a few things you might happen to forget from time to time. Ever need reminders? Sure, you do. That's what Peter is doing as he writes his letter - reminding

us of what the Bible says. Why? Because, for a lot of reasons, we too easily forget.

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, that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.

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."

What are they doing? They're basically making fun of God and His Word, scoffing at what He's said, disbelieving what He's said and elevating themselves and their own knowledge above that of God. Instead of following God and His Word, what are they following (for we're all following something or someone)? They're following themselves. Think about it. If you follow yourself, where will you end up? In a circle. Nowhere.

They're following their own sinful desires. They have no wisdom; nothing new to say. Their wisdom is no bigger than themselves and what they want. Why would we ever listen to such scoffing? There's nothing worth listening to.

And yet, we do. We listen. We take in what they say. And we're influenced by what they say. And we also begin doubting God and His Word. Why? Because we also have sinful desires. We also like to elevate ourselves above God and His Word and listen to ourselves and others, rather than to God. It's called a "sinful nature". And every one of us has one ... maybe even leading us to scoff (in our hearts and in our minds) at God's Word from time to time.

The Lord *returning* on Judgment Day? After all these years, it hasn't happened yet. Why would you think it's going to happen anytime soon? People have thought that for a long time now, that Jesus is coming again. Instead, what do we have? What does history show us? Things just keep on going the way they always have. The sun rises and it sets, day after day after day.

"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."

Well, can you argue with their reasoning? Jesus *hasn't* come back as He *promised* He would. And things *do* seem to have just kept on going. Things haven't *really* ever changed a whole lot.

In geology, it's known as uniformitarianism, the idea that Earth's geologic processes acted in the *same* manner in the *past* as they do in the present. "The present is the key to the past." And so, by looking at the way things work now, we can predict what took place long ago in the past.

In a similar way, these scoffers of God's Word that Peter *warns* about say that both the past *and* the present are the key to the future. By looking at what happened in the *past* and what continues to happen even *now*, we can predict what will take place in the future.

And what do we see? Since creation, God hasn't intervened

with things in any real way. The laws of nature follow their course and set the tone and direct how things go. Nothing every really changes, and nothing ever will. Jesus is coming back to earth one day? Yeah, right! I'll believe it when I see it!

"All things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." Are you sure about that? Is such reasoning as solid as it might appear? What does Peter say about these scoffers? *"For they deliberately overlook this fact"*

You know how it is. When you're making an argument, what do you do? You "cherry pick", as they say. You "conveniently" leave out the details that don't fit with your argument, facts that might speak *against* your argument. That's what such scoffers of God's Word do as well.

Peter says, *For they deliberately overlook [hide or cover up] this fact ... that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with*

water and perished, [literally, "laid flat"]. 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.

The Day of the Lord is coming upon an unsuspecting world like what? "Like a thief." You're not expecting him and are totally shocked when he appears! Life will be going on as usual. We'll be going about our normal daily routines.

"For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man."

(Matthew 24:37-39)

In the midst of our daily routines, might we be tempted to forget, to doubt, maybe even to mock the idea that Jesus could return at any moment? Peter wants to *wake us up* from our sleep, from our forgetfulness of God's Word to us. Like Dorothy, Toto, and the Cowardly Lion, in the Wonderful

World of Oz, lulled to sleep by a field of poisonous poppies, *you and I* are lulled to sleep spiritually by our three great foes - our own sinful nature, the sinful world all around us, and our adversary satan, so that it becomes harder and harder to hear the voice of God speaking to us.

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 - waking you up to remember the Word of God. Why? Because you're prone to forget. But also, because you'll meet scoffers, whom, with their fine-sounding arguments, will tempt you away from your Lord and Savior.

Remember what God has said in the Scriptures, *knowing this first of all*, that scoffers will come, saying, *"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."* 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, and that by means of these the

world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.

If you read about fossils today, you'll hear about *marine* fossils (remnants of animals that once lived in the ocean) being found in the highest mountain ranges all over the world. How did they get there? The title of an article from the New York Times reads, "Whale Fossils High in Andes Show how Mountains Rose from Sea".

God's Word says what? That, in judgment upon people because of their great wickedness and rebellion against Him, he flooded the entire planet, killing everything, (except that which was safe in the ark) leaving tons of fossilized remains all over the place, from the highest mountain to the lowest valley.

Why don't we believe that? Why do we deliberately overlook those words? The mountains may have risen, but why are we so quick to scoff at the idea of the biblical worldwide flood? Instead, why don't our headlines read, "Whale fossils high in the Andes show how God judged mankind and wiped them out with a disastrous

worldwide flood"? Why is such an idea scoffed at?

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, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.

*But by the same word [that created the world and flooded the world] *the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.**

If there was no worldwide flood, if the account of Noah and the ark *isn't* true, you have *nothing* at all to worry about. Everything's just going to go on as it always has. Go ahead and ignore God's warning about the Day of Judgment. If God's Word was wrong about the flood why should we believe what it says about Judgment Day? Don't worry about Jesus coming back. Go ahead and live it up! Eat, drink, and have a good time, for tomorrow you die, and rot. And that's that. So, live

it up now, while you can. That's all there is, anyway.

Many have tried that - living it up like that. They found it fun for a while. But eventually, what happens? It gets old and meaningless. And the *consequences* of living that way eventually catch up to you. *That's* where scoffing at and rejecting God's Word, deliberately forgetting it or hiding it, ignoring it, takes you. Down the road of unbelief and despair.

But Peter reminds us of what the scoffers have lulled us into forgetting. The fact that there *was* a worldwide flood. There *was* judgment for sinners. And there *will be* again for all of us.

No one's escaping Judgment Day. No one's getting out of it somehow. Like the boys from Thailand, recently entombed in their cave, our *only* hope is what? *Rescue*. And that, God has done, coming down for us, taking our judgment on Himself, suffering, dying, in our place. Rising, on our behalf, that our sin might be paid for by *another*. That we might be *saved!* You have been saved, through the blood of Christ!

For while we were still weak [in our sin and unbelief], at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person - though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die - but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners [ungodlily, rebels, unbelievers, scoffers], Christ died for us.

Since, therefore, we have now been justified [declared "not guilty", completely innocent] by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God! (Romans 5:6-9)

It's been a long time now, hasn't it? Over two thousand years! Why hasn't Jesus come back yet? Don't listen to the scoffers. It's *not* because He's *slow* in keeping His promises, if He keeps them at all. *But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*

The Lord is outside of time. What seems slow to us, 1,000 years, is nothing to Him, a mere tick of the clock. Peter is alluding to Psalm 90:4 "*For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just*

gone by, or like a watch in the night."

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

Why hasn't Judgment Day come yet? Why hasn't Jesus returned yet? He's not being slow. He's being patient. Patiently waiting. Waiting for you to stop making excuses. Stop blaming someone else. Waiting for you to repent of your sins. Be honest with yourself. Be honest with Him and come out and admit your sin to Him. Turn from your sin to Him and be forgiven.

Jesus hasn't come back yet because He's waiting for you to come to Him and be saved. But He won't wait forever. Who knows, how long!

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

Your sin is coming out in the open - one way or the other. You're *going* to be exposed - one way or the other. Wouldn't it be wise to do it *now* and be saved, before it's too late?

Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!

*But according to his promise [of the flood, of Judgment Day, etc.] we are waiting for **new heavens** and a **new earth** in which righteousness dwells!*

What will that be like? Isaiah paints us a picture. *"The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.* (Isaiah 11:6-9) "See you later mom. I'm going out to play with lions and the wolves!" "Okay, honey. Have a good time!"

Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be

found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace [living in faith in the One who makes you holy, living out your faith].

And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, [Don't scoff at God's Word, that He hasn't returned yet. Rejoice in it!] just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters.

There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

*You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. But **grow** in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!*

Every read your Bible? Ever need reminders? All the time. Keep on reading. Never stop. And when the scoffers come, and they will. When scoffers scoff ... *remember*. Remember God's Word and His Promise of rescue in the Lord Jesus

Christ. And continue growing in Him until He comes for you into new heavens and a new earth, where those declared righteous shall dwell. *To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*