

Global Warming

Address Covid 19

Gnosticism and Peter in the First Century Church.

False teachers come from within....24 characteristicsThey are a threat...a very real threat.....Peter is angry...Chapter 2 is his boiling point. We learned last week that at times we are to get offended because God is offended. We are to hallow His name...to make sure it is honored....revered...worshiped.

As we begin Chapter 3 we again see Peter shifting his focus from those who would attack his church to those in his church...He is after all their pastor.

2 Peter 3:1–2 (ESV) 1 This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved.

I love the word beloved. I wish we still used it today. It is so endearing. Peter's pastoral heart is once again being shared as he turns toward the close of this letter...and his life.

This is the second letter. Do you remember that we spoke about how letters were not easy to write or send in the first century? From what I have read about Peter, I suspect he was not a frequent letter writer.

He is the impulsive one...the one who acts and then begins to think. I picture Peter sitting down to write a letter like I used to be as a child at my sister's piano recitals. Peter says...look...friends...loved ones...believers in Jesus...this is my second letter...it is that important...and he says...without saying....it is my last.

2 Peter 3:1–2 (ESV) 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,

He repeats his purpose...In both of them I am trying to stir you up by way of reminder. We have seen that before right?

2 Peter 1:13–14 (ESV) 13 I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, 14 since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me.

Notice that Peter's focus here is not to remind us....he doesn't want to just remind us of the truth...remind us of what the prophets said...he is not into just having you remember something....

Instead...by way of reminder...He wants to stir us up...to move us to action....to get us not to know something but to do something.

Peter says you should remember the predictions...the prophecies...you should remember the law...the commandments...the truth protected and given to you by the apostles.

It is good to know and remember these things...but...Peter says....I want to have you remember these things so that you will act....because...something is about to happen.

The Law was given to Moses so that the Israelites would know how to act....The prophecies were given by the prophets so that man would know how to act....The truth has been handed down to and through the apostles so that man would know how to act.

God's Word has never been about information...it has always and will always be about transformation.

You are about to be tested....Just like I was...Peter says..when I failed Jesus....I am praying for you just like Jesus prayed for me...that you faith..what you know to be true...will not fail you. Because this is what I know about you future that you do not know.

2 Peter 3:3 (ESV) 3 knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.

What does Peter want us to know...First of All...First of ALL....above all else...before anything else...if you only remember one thing...if you never get around to number 2 on the list...first of all...scoffers will come

Scoffers...not just false teachers....scoffers.

Scoffing is America's new favorite past time. It is arrogance and ignorance manifested as false intelligence. (Repeat that).

Scoffers seem to be intelligent. They seem to have answers. They develop a following of people. But their knowledge is only superficial.

When they are challenged about their ideas they are exposed. People try to engage them in an exploration of ideas and because they don't have answers they see that as a personal attack. So they go on the offensive. Literally they become offensive.

What is a scoffer? Someone who doesn't just disagree with your ideas...they mock..ridicule and scorn the belief of others who disagree with them.

Deep down they are insecure about their ideas and they don't want them challenged

A scoffer cannot rest until they have demonstrated the foolishness of any idea not their own.

A scoffer voices their disagreement, ridicules all who stand against them, and actively recruits others to join their side. They do this to avoid being exposed.

They are not interested in truth or sharing ideas or thoughts....there is no effort or desire to gain a new perspective...to learn about the other person..to appreciate diversity...or to celebrate the freedom to express conflicting ideas.

Scoffers attack those who disagree with them as if it is a personal assault on them. They are insecure and that drives their arrogance.

Back in the 70's when we couldn't think of anything to counter an opinion we would come up with a Your Mama joke. "Oh yeah....well your Mama thought Taco Bell was a phone company." But today, the responses are no longer a joke.... they are viscous. Their words are like bullets..they desire to destroy your character, your integrity and your self worth.

Scoffing24 hours a day...7 days a week...the newscasts on every channel are full of scoffers. Pundits of both sides of the political spectrum mock, ridicule, and scorn the belief of anyone who disagrees with them.

Scoffing is easier than learning. Scoffing is primal. It is a lower brain function. Rather than explore truth, reason together, and understand one another, I will just react with my fight or flight response.

Scoffers are those who choose to fight. They don't have flight of ideas...they have fight of ideas. They are...it seems.....always looking for a new fight.

The President....Congress on both sides...The Media...chat rooms..social media posts...are almost all scoffers. Few want to learn from an open exploration of ideas. They are more interested in looking right and making everyone else look wrong. Right or wrong doesn't matter anymore...it is just important that you appear to be right. The more you scoff the more your ratings soar.

Scoffing is the defense response that you have when you exhaust your intelligence....when you and I can't come up with a good reason for why we believe something....rather than admit that and learn from it....we just attack the character of anyone who disagrees with us.

Scoffing is ignorance pretending to be intelligence.

And there is one kind of Scoffer who is worse than all the rest. It is one thing to become a scoffer about politics....but...these people Peter warns us...are scoffers of God.

Biblical scoffers say in their hearts, "There is no God" and make it their ambition to ridicule those who follow God.

Psalm 14:1 (ESV) 1 The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is none who does good.

God hates pride....look at His response to those who mock Him.

Proverbs 3:34–35 (ESV) 34 Toward the scornful he is scornful, but to the humble he gives favor. 35 The wise will inherit honor, but fools get disgrace.

In Acts, Paul is teaching...

Acts 13:40–41 (ESV) 40 Beware, therefore, lest what is said in the Prophets should come about: 41 " 'Look, you scoffers, be astounded and perish; for I am doing a work in your days, a work that you will not believe, even if one tells it to you.' "

He was quoting Isaiah...One day...a day in the future...in your days...God says I am doing a work...a work you will not believe....even if someone tells you.

Isaiah described and Paul reminded us of the scoffers...of our day.

Toward the last days....people will come...and they will mock God. Peter says...be ready...I want to stir you up to be ready for action....they are coming. You can't just know and expect it...you have to be ready to do something about it. Don't just be stirred up...be stirred up to action.

But notice something else that Peter tells us about these people....

2 Peter 3:3 (ESV) 3 knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.

Scoffers are going to come...and guess what they are going to do? Yep scoff. Scoffers will come in the last days scoffing. An odd statement right? What Peter is saying is this. There are people who are generally scoffers...but in the last days...that is all they will be.

In the Last Days, these people will ramp up their attack on God and God's people. These people not only have the potential to attack..they will be attacking....Scoffers will come scoffing.

We know...because God tells us...that as we get closer to the end..scoffers will increase...they will begin to feed off of each other...they will find traction for their stupidity.

2 Timothy 3:1–5 (ESV) 1 But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. 2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, 4 treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.

And then I love what Paul says just a few lines later.

2 Timothy 3:6–7 (ESV) 7 always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.

Always learning...but never gaining knowledge..or truth. That is a scoffer. Enlightened ignorance.

But notice something else about these people. Peter adds that they follow their own sinful desires. Scoffers not only teach falsely...they not only mock God and bring lies into the church...but they follow their own lies.

They follow their sinful desires. You don't just have to listen to their lies, you can see them living out their lies.

The ugly truth is that they are driven by their own evil desires to oppose doctrines that should restrain them from pursuing those desires. They cannot tolerate the notion that the return of Jesus will bring judgment on their actions

These scoffers are not just questioning of God's apparent delay of promised events, but they are really saying that God does not exist. The scoffer is not interested in God's timing....they don't believe that he is coming back because He doesn't exist. They have believed a lie ...a worldview that does not include even the possibility of God's interfering in the course of human history.

The sovereignty of God in human affairs is simply unacceptable to them because they want to be God.

In fact, the reason they mock God is so that they can continue to follow their sinful desires. Denying God makes no sense...it really doesn't....He is evident everywhere....no matter how much they don't want God to exist...He does...and deep down they know it. But they can't surrender to Him so they mock those who do.

If God interferes in human lives then God could one day interfere in their life. Essentially they are saying that Jesus can't come back....because...well because....I don't want Him to...so there.

These are the people Peter warns about...challenging God...daring Him to do something about it. And when God gives them grace instead of frying them...this is what they say.

2 Peter 3:4 (ESV) 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."

There have always been and will always be scoffers of God. People who believe they know more. People who mock and ridicule God and those who follow Him.

In Peter's time, scoffers confidently expected everything to continue as it always had so they mocked God and did what they wanted. We still have those scoffers today, but there is a new kind of scoffer in our day.

Peter was dealing with people who said nothing will ever change. The world will go on as it always has....But today...that is not the case...People seem to know that we are winding down to the end. Almost no one believes anymore that things will go on forever as they always have.

It seems scoffers today are realizing that everything is coming to an end. So they say, there is no God, and they do what they want. Let me read to you....

In the best-selling Culture of Narcissism,written in 1979.....Christopher Lasch observes: As the twentieth century approaches its end, the conviction grows that many other things are ending too. Storm warnings, portents, hints of catastrophe haunt our times. The "sense of an ending," which has given shape to so much of twentieth-century literature, now pervades the popular imagination as well. The Nazi holocaust, the threat of nuclear annihilation, the depletion of the natural resources, well-founded predictions of ecological disaster have fulfilled poetic prophecy, giving concrete historical substance to the nightmare.... Impending disaster has become an everyday concern, so commonplace and familiar that nobody any longer gives much thought to how disaster can be averted. People busy themselves instead with survival strategies, measures designed to prolong their own lives, or programs guaranteed to ensure good health and peace of mind.

Scoffers of God either have to depend upon the human race to save the planet...Humanism...the fastest growing religion in America..where the human is exalted as God..believing that Human intelligence can save us...OR they have to stockpile the precious commodity of toilet paper and hope to survive the inevitable catastrophic event.

Once you dismiss God, you are on your own...Why are we seeing world wide panic over a virus that the overwhelming majority will not get and those who do will have minimal difficulty?

Once you dismiss God...you are on your own...and that leads you to one very sobering truth that eventually becomes self evident....YOU ARE NOT GOD and YOU ARE NOT IN CONTROL....and that drives people to stock up on toilet paper.

Fortunately, God through Peter has a better idea

2 Peter 3:5–6 (ESV) 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.

Peter says they have missed the obvious. God has been actively engaged with us since the creation. God is not passive...He is not disinterested...Just because He hasn't fried you yet doesn't mean that He won't.

Peter tells us that just the opposite is true.

There has not been a single moment that God has not been in control and been active in the events of our world. Peter says..look..all of this only exists because he spoke it into existence.

The heavens existed long ago...Then God decided to create....The Spirit of God hovered over the waters...And out of those waters...God spoke and created the earth....His Word...His Spoken Word over the water..brought the earth and all that we know into existence. The earth was not just good it was very good. But it didn't stay that way.

God didn't create the world and then ignore us. He didn't leave us to ourselves.

When man rebelled, God took the earth back to its beginning. Once again using the waters and recreating.

The flood of water in Noah's era, which was God's means of judgment on creation returned it again to watery chaos. In this way Peter points out that the history of the world has been and can be sovereignly altered, for it is still governed by God who is both Creator and Judge. Peter is so convinced of the dynamic nature of God's active oversight in his world that he knows the false teachers could only deny that truth by deliberately putting out of their minds the whole history of creation and flood. By sinful choice they close their minds to

These scoffers can't really deal with facts. Doing so would lead them to the conclusion that God exists...God cares...God is active in His creation...and God is coming back.

God's spoken word brought all of this into existence...And God said let there be light...And God said let there be an expanse of waters...and God said Let us create man in our image...God spoke...creation happened. In His perfect timing...with His perfect voice.

Then in God's Perfect timing and with God spoken voice....God spoke to Noah.

God intervened once again and with His spoken word He brought a flood....and returned the earth to its watery beginning.

Like a potter reforming the clay and starting over...God reformed creation and took the world back to a watery blob. Not to destroy but to create once again.

Peter says, God has consistently been speaking into His creation and He will do so again in the future.

The word of God that created and destroyed the world long ago can and will destroy the world again. God did it once, he can do it again, and he has promised to do it again.....but not with water

2 Peter 3:7 (ESV) 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.

Peter says...remember God made a promise...He promised that He would never destroy the world again...do you remember the rainbow?

Did you catch what I just said? Do you see how easy it is to introduce false teaching? I just told you that God promised...with the rainbow...never to destroy the world again....Is that true? No it is not.

Genesis 9:11–15 (ESV) 11 I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." 12 And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: 13 I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. 14 When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, 15 I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.

God promised to never again destroy the world by flood...by water. He does promise to destroy the world...by fire. Global warming was God's idea....but it is not the global warming that concerns most humanists.

Zephaniah 1:18 (ESV) 18 Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them on the day of the wrath of the Lord. In the fire of his jealousy, all the earth shall be consumed; for a full and sudden end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

Zephaniah 3:8 (ESV) 8 "Therefore wait for me," declares the Lord, "for the day when I rise up to seize the prey. For my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out upon them my indignation, all my burning anger; for in the fire of my jealousy all the earth shall be consumed.

1. Malachi 4:1–3 (ESV) 1 "For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. 2 But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. 3 And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the Lord of hosts.

1 Corinthians 3:13 (ESV) 13 each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.

God has been crystal clear...The End is coming...Jesus will bring judgment. He will return to set things right. He will test everything in the fire...Do you know the only thing that will survive the test? We will come back to that.

Then Peter tells us that Scoffers don't understand time. They think that God is limited to the human clock and the human calendar. Not so Peter says.

2 Peter 3:8–9 (ESV) 8 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. 9 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.

God has and will always have His own calendar. God's calendar is based on eternity. Man's calendar is based on our lifespan. If God is going to do something He must do it in our lifetime. But our problem is that we don't see time the way God does.

We see the movement of time as a sequential series of still frames, passing one-by-one, as in a motion picture. A Happens....the B Happens as a result of A and then C Happens..as a result of A and B....Time moves from one moment to the next. That is human time.

But God isn't limited by human time. God lives eternally. He has always existed and will always exist. Things don't go from A to B to C on God's calendar. IT is all happening at once. He sees you now...He sees who you will become...He sees you into eternity...He knows it all and experiences it all at all times.

Thus, Peter concludes, the Lord is not "slack" concerning His promise. He never stated the exact time in which He would return. It is in the Father's hands. Not even the angels know the time of His return. The verb translated as "not slack" is *bradúnō*, which means to delay or tarry. God is never late. He is always on time. He is never delayed by outward circumstances or by others. He is always in control. His motive is always love. He so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son. And it's because of His love for the world that Jesus has not yet returned.

Thus, Peter concludes, the Lord has not returned for one simple reason—it is not yet the Father's time. And the reason it is not yet the Father's time is because of His longsuffering. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

What the scoffer ridicules is the ultimate irony. Peter tells them essentially...the reason Jesus has not yet returned...is well you Mr Scoffer.

You are the reason..He is hoping that you will come to your senses...because while you are scoffing Him...He is loving you. He doesn't want anyone to perish...even those who scoff.

But Mr Scoffer Peter says.....God does have a calendar and their will be a day. A day of God's swift Judgment...and it will not be Global Warming...it will be global incinerating.

2 Peter 3:10 (ESV) 10 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.

Peter tells us this day will be swift...everything will be destroyed...and those who are in unrepentant Sin...those who reject and scoff at Jesus...will be....incinerated

Don't miss that...I worked all week on that one...they will be IN SIN Erated....Or IN SIN ERADICATED...

God promises in His Scriptures that one day it all burns up. He created it al and He will destroy it all.

That is hard to believe when you think about it. I mean..God created all of this...every mountain, the oceans, the heavens, every animal, every insect, wind, sunrises, the human body, gravity...this place is incredible....it is mindblowing....the detail...the beauty...the specificity....the intricacies....and yet...God says....I am just going to burn it up...

Think about that for a moment....everything that you have ever known to exist...Mars...Jupiter...your latest gadget....everything...burned up in fire. Why? Because God says...and don't miss this...it is you I love. It is you I have always loved. I created all of this for you. The only reason the Grand Canyon exists is because I wanted you to enjoy it. The reason the stars exist is because I wanted you to see my vastness....I created all of this for you. It was nothing for me. I can do it again...All I have to do is speak.

The only reason the earth has any value to God is because it is home to those who bear the image of God. It wasn't until God put Adam and Eve here that He said it was very good. And the moment Adam and Eve sinned....nothing was good anymore and everything would then have to be tested in the fire of judgment.

Romans 8:18–24 (ESV) 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

Paul says..not only have you been waiting to be restored to Jesus...but all of creation has been waiting for that to happen to. Man's fall...Man's sin..put all of creation under a curse. Man and the world are coming to an end and everyone can feel it. God will take everything and test it in the fire....and the only thing that will survive are those who bear the image and Spirit of God.

The World is all that we know....it is the most incredible thing that we know...Many here on earth worship the planet...pay respects to Mother Earth and believe that nature is the most profound cosmic accident ever.

But God says....nah...I can make another one...a better one....The only thing of any value on earth is you...and me...we are created in the image of God Himself....

God told us to take care of the world...not worship it. Once God's people are gone...nothing here matters anymore.

It is as if God is still telling us....even as He burns up all that we know....I really love you. This place only matters because you are in it. I created it for you. I wanted you to enjoy it...All of creation displays my glory...my creativity...my imagination....but only you display my image. Without you...nothing here matters.

Scoffers are going to come. They are going to attack me through you. Their destruction has been planned for years. Everything will happen in my timing...based on my calendar. This world still exists because I want all to turn to me. You still exist because I want all to turn to me. But there is a day...a day in the future...when my image bearers are called home....and just like I destroyed with the flood...I will destroy with fire....and I will do a new thing....because I love you...can you perceive it?

Let's Pray