

I. Introduction

- A. Last Sunday, if you came to church, you applied your heart and your mind to a serious warning in the Bible. In these recent days, we have been thinking together through this book of Second Peter.
- B. Here's a gruff, rough, tough fisherman with a pretty big fishing business in the ancient world. When he was strong, he was very strong. When he was weak, he was off the charts weak. Some Bible scholars say that Peter was a representative man. No one would accuse him of being a saint.
- C. And now, he is concerned that all these false teachers are squirming their way into too many churches.
- D. He can't get to all of them, so he writes to them. He warns Christians — Christians of all ages including ours today. Don't be sucked in, he says. Don't be deceived. These people initiate their own self-destruction sequence. Don't go with them. They are wardens of a mental prison — don't let them seduce you.
 - 1. Stay true to God, to Jesus Christ, to your salvation, to your biblical teachings. Stay true to the Word of God.
- E. Everything in this letter reaches a high point here in chapter three.
- F. Will you think with me today about the topic...

1. **Apocalyptic Mindset Maintenance**

- G. Buckle your seat belts — here we go.
- II. *This is the second letter I have written to you, dear friends of mine, and in both of them I have tried to stimulate you, as men with minds uncontaminated by error, by reminding you of what you really know already. This means recalling the words spoken of old by the holy prophets as well as the commands of our Lord and Savior given to you through his apostles.* (2 Peter 3:1, 2, Phil)
- A. I just want to point out that Peter is a Jew writing to Jews. To the Jews the Old Testament was sacred. It was the inspired Word of God. The holy prophets who wrote the Old Testament gave us the one and only authoritative source of truth.
- B. So Peter sets this truth on a pedestal and says, Remember. Remember this. Never let it slip your mind.
- C. But then Peter takes another step.
 - 1. Peter puts the commands of Jesus Christ on that same pedestal. The Scriptures of the Old Testament, and the Scriptures of Jesus Christ have equal authority.
- D. But then Peter takes yet another step.
 - 1. Peter puts the teachings of the apostles on that same pedestal too. The teaching so the apostles would be the New Testament. In fact, down in verse 15, Peter classifies the writings of the Apostle Paul as Scriptures — meaning the authoritative Word of God.
- E. Half of what I do is teaching. The other half of what I do is reminding.
- F. It's funny to me because most of the questions people ask me are about lessons I've recently taught from this pulpit. In our classes. In our Grace Pathway. In our small groups. In our youth ministries. In our children's ministries. This is what we do. We teach. We remind.

G. **Practice 1 — Routine Decontamination**

The secular worldview is so strong that it will seduce us away from Christ. By routine Bible study, prayer, and fellowship, we are determined to remain unspotted by the world.

- 1. And we pray that your mind will be uncontaminated by error...
- 2. Every single day you swim in an ocean of lies. Because this is the bait that the false teachers dangle in front of you every single day.
- H. Now, Peter puts one very big error in the spotlight.
- III. *First of all you must realize that in the last days cynical mockers will undoubtedly come — men whose only guide in life is what they want for themselves — and they will say, "Where is his promised coming? Since our fathers fell asleep, everything remains exactly as it was since the beginning of creation!"* (2 Peter 3:3, 4, Phil)
- A. I don't think there could be a better description of the toxic spirit of our age. In the last days cynical mockers will come.
 - 1. Nothing is sacred.
 - 2. Everything is a joke.
 - 3. Nobody can be sure of anything.
 - 4. There are no facts, only opinions.
 - 5. No facts, only interpretations.
- B. "Cynical mockers will undoubtedly come." In politics, education, entertainment, media, arts, everything. I include the church and it makes me mad.
- C. This is the historical difficulty. Christ promised to come again in person. He promised he would judge the world. He said, "Behold I come quickly." But two thousand years later, and still he has not come.
- D. Where's Jesus? Where is his Promised Coming?
- E. The Second Coming of our Lord is so vast, so epic, so all inclusive and all important that everything else pales into insignificance compared to this great the mighty event.
 - 1. Biblically, it is called, in Greek, the **Parousia**, (par-oo-SEE-uh), which means the coming... which Jesus returns in his personal and physical presence.
 - 2. It is also called the **Apocalypse** (*Apokalypsis*, uh-POCK-uh-lip-sis). This word means the unveiling or the revealing. In his first coming, Jesus revealed himself in humility. In his second coming there won't be anything humble about it. He is coming in glory, he is coming for battle, he is coming to establish his millennial kingdom, to reign from his throne, to shatter his enemies, to bind Satan in the Abyss, to finally purify his church, to bless his people, and to fulfill every syllable of every promise he ever made — literally and in total. His coming is literally apocalyptic.
 - a) No deniers then.

- b) No more mockers.
- c) No more cynics.
- d) Jesus is our Coming King.
- F. The whole fabric of the Christian faith is woven around his promised coming.
- G. Word of that cataclysmic return did not emerge from some group of radical Jesus-followers who conspired to make up their own mythology.
- H. No. Instead, word of the second coming came from the great prophets of old, from Isaiah, Joel, Ezekiel, Daniel, and all the rest. It came from Moses and from David. It was never a matter of human wisdom. Never a piece of logical deduction. It wasn't cleverly devised tales. Nothing of the sort. It was a revelation from above, promised in the Scriptures for all to see.
 - 1. **Practice 2 — Ongoing Recalibration**
The lies of society are infused with the doctrines of demons, so we continually return to the supernatural revealed truth of God to guide our lives and realign our hearts to the Shepherd of our souls.
- I. The promise of his return is just one of many mind-boggling promises that radiate from one massive central promise like spokes from the hub of a wheel.
 - 1. That one central promise is a promise made by God the Father and God the Holy Spirit to God the Son in Christ.
 - 2. God promised to elevate Jesus Christ. God promised him a crown, a throne, and a kingdom. And God promised him a people — and here we are.
 - 3. God promised to elevate Christ. That's the one central core promise, and from that hub radiate thousands of related promises that detail the time, and the manner, and the content of the riches of blessings that are due him.
 - 4. And the astounding fact is that when God heaps riches and blessings on King Jesus, those riches and blessings spill over to... well, guess who. They spill over to you.
 - 5. The promise of his coming means the outpouring of riches on every child of God, and I hope that includes you.
- J. That is why the false teachers attack the promise of his coming. To deny the second coming, or to mock it, sneer at it, laugh at it — this is a frontal attack against the whole palace of interlocking truths that constitute the Christian revelation claim.
- K. They hate it because they're so arrogant, they will accept no king, no lord, no ruler but themselves.
 - 1. They hate this second coming, because they are in love with their own idea of utopia.
 - 2. They hate the second coming because they think they can make a better world than Jesus can, and bring in their own kind of false truth, and unjust justice, and broken sexuality — they cause oppression in the name of ending oppression, and they create injustice in the name of ending injustice. It is absolutely insane, but they think they can usher in days of heaven on earth by their own social agenda.
 - 3. They are intoxicated.
 - 4. They are under strong delusion.
 - 5. Peter says their whole agenda is stumbling after their own lusts. Just to get what they want, according to their broken philosophies and dysfunctional, twisted emotions.
 - a) This level of narcissism is exactly what we are seeing in our society today.
 - (1) **Practice 3 — Everyday Surrender**
When our own desires and will run counter to the Word of God, we are in a precarious position, which can only be escaped as we choose obedience and faith in every moment of every day.
 - (2) In the tug of war between self-will vs. God's will, you choose the winner. Every single day. Every single choice. Free will is both a deadly dangerous and a beautiful gift. What will it be for you?
 - (3) In the apocalypse, you will answer to God for your choices.
- 6. The mockers hate the promise of his coming because it shatters their whole materialistic, anti-supernatural, irrational bias and it transcends their self-importance, and it shows them up as the fools they really are.
- L. They mock his promised coming because they despise Christ himself. They call him a liar. They call him a weakling.
 - 1. Against all this insanity rises up the revelation of Scripture:
 - a) *For behold, the LORD will come with fire And with His chariots, like a whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire. (Isaiah 66:15)*
 - b) *Our God shall come, and shall not keep silent; A fire shall devour before Him, And it shall be very tempestuous all around Him. (Psalm 50:3)*
 - c) *So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. (Revelation 14:19)*
 - d) *But immediately after the tribulation of those days 'tine sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken,' and then the signs of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the 'Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky' with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels 'with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other. (Matthew 24:29-31)*
 - e) *...When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, (2 Thessalonians 1:6-9)*
 - 2. I'm only scratching the surface.
 - 3. And yet, they mock this.
- M. And look at *how* they mock his coming.

1. *First of all you must realize that in the last days cynical mockers will undoubtedly come — men whose only guide in life is what they want for themselves — and they will say, “Where is his promised coming? Since our fathers fell asleep, everything remains exactly as it was since the beginning of creation!” (2 Peter 3:3, 4, Phil)*
 2. They say everything remains as it was since the beginning.
 3. What do the mockers mean by this?
 4. This is the claim of every evolutionist, atheist, agnostic, skeptic, materialist, and secularist.
 - a) Add to this all the unthinking masses of people who just assume the world ticks on and nothing changes.
 5. This is the idea that the whole cosmos is a closed system. The only laws are nature’s laws. The laws of chemistry, biology, physics, and math. Nothing else. There is no earthshaking cataclysm. No apocalypse. There never has been. There never will be. Just the inexorable playing out of the same laws that have governed the cosmos since the beginning.
 6. To say that everything remains as it was since the beginning is to leave no space for a miracle, no space for an act of God, no space for divine intervention, and really no space for a God who lives in moves in the world we see.
- N. But they forget one thing:
- IV. *They are deliberately shutting their eyes to the fact that there were heavens in the old days and an earth formed by God’s command out of water and by water. It was by water that the world of those days was deluged [kataklysmos] and destroyed, (2 Peter 3:5, 6, Phil)*
- A. You say that there is no such thing as a cataclysmic, earth shaking, apocalyptic event, because it’s impossible?
 - B. Well, I have news for you, says Peter.
 1. There’s already been one. It’s already happened. And every denier today is on the same side as every denier back then, who found out they were on the wrong side, but it was too late.
 2. He is talking about the Flood of Noah. Long before Jesus, long before David, long before Moses, Long before Abraham. God came down in judgment to wipe out all the world.
 3. And that great cataclysm of judgment occurred for the exact same reason that the next one will come.
 - C. A culture that was saturated with complete indifference and apathy to God, and so given over to evil they call what is evil good and what is good evil. So God flushed planet earth, and only eight people survived.
 1. All things remain as they are since the creation? Not so.
 - D. Welcome to 21st century America.
 1. **4 — Constant Vigilance**
We remind ourselves constantly that the universe is a battleground between good and evil, with heaven and hell at stake for every person we meet.
 2. The church is not a feel-good club for nice people. We are military outpost, training and equipping for the battle for souls.
 3. We blow a trumpet and sound a warning that a flood of judgment is coming, but God has prepared an Ark for the world. Get on board.
 4. We are mocked for this. And the world punishes us. And laws are being past against us. Even Christian pastors who should know better are yielding ground.
 5. But the battle belongs to the Lord, and we will not stand down.
 - E. By the way, Jesus himself confirmed the historic reality of the flood...
 1. *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 [parousia] of the Son of Man be. (Matthew 24:38, 39)*
 2. They thought they were secure in their evil. They lied to themselves, saying nothing will change. I can get away with anything.
 - a) I can cheat on my tests.
 - b) I can shade the truth on social media.
 - c) I can define sexuality however I like and divorce it from reality and from God’s laws.
 - d) I can actually break God’s laws and nothing will happen.
 3. God will not intervene. Everything remains as it was since the beginning.
 4. By their willful, stubborn denial they have earned their destruction, they have beed the God of justice to rain the justice of God upon their heads.
 - F. When Jesus said the conditions in the days of Noah will be the same conditions in the day of his return, he issued a giant neon pointer to our day and our age.
 1. In 2020 we saw a pandemic the likes of which the world has never known. God’s warning and wakeup call.
 2. In 2021 we see the rise of evil on every side the likes of which the world has never known. We are proving that nobody paid attention to God’s wake up call.
 - G. God help us.
- V. *but the present heavens and earth are, also by God’s command, being carefully kept and maintained for the fire of the day of judgment and the destruction of wicked men. (2 Peter 3:7, Phil)*
- A. The next time, judgment will come, not by flood but by fire.
 - B. Our world is carefully kept and maintained by God. No one has power over it. No one can destroy the world, and no one can destroy its inhabitants. Not the devil. Not governments. Not armaments. Not human power. Carefully kept and maintained by God.
 - C. Because the next cataclysm will come from his hand.
 - D. Not by flood but by fire.
- VI. The Millennium

- A. There is a massive event in the Bible that is part of the Lord's coming. It is called the Millennium. Let me put on my professor hat and lay out a few terms.
 1. **The Millennium.** This is the reign of Christ on earth, after his coming, for one thousand years. This is the literal kingdom of God. Perfect peace and prosperity under King Jesus. This alone is heaven on earth.
 2. **Premillennialism.** This is the biblical teaching that Jesus has to come again before there can be a millennium. Only Jesus can fix this broken world.
 - a) Only Jesus can heal the wounds of this painfully dysfunctional and increasingly violent society.
 - b) I am a premillennialist because, well, so is the Bible, by far. Our church is premillennialist. Most Bible believing groups are premillennialist. Our family of churches, the Alliance, is premillennialist. Though there is a battle happening right now to change our denomination's official doctrine, and it makes me angry, and makes me sad, and I'm in the middle of it.
 3. **Amillennialism.** This is the unbiblical teaching that there is no millennium. Jesus, when he does come back, just ends earth's history and puts everybody either in heaven or hell. The problem with this view is that it interprets the promises of God figuratively when they should be interpreted literally.
 4. **Preterism.** This is the unbiblical teaching that there is no future prophecy in the Bible. What seems like end times prophecy is actually symbolic, so there will be no literal, bodily return of Jesus. Everything in the Bible has already been fulfilled.
 - a) They scoff at the promise of his coming.
 5. **Postmillennialism.** This is the unbiblical teaching that we can actually create a perfect society on earth through social action and sincere effort. First we Christians create the kingdom of God on earth, and then after that Jesus returns (post-millennial). This view also interprets the promises of God figuratively when they should be interpreted literally.
 - a) They say we are bringing heaven to earth now.
 - b) They say we are ushering in the kingdom of God now.
 - c) They say we are creating utopia now, a perfect society now.
 - (1) And we do not need Jesus here in person to do it.
 - (2) Sometimes this view is called the "social gospel" because saving the social order is more important than saving souls.
- B. Don't worry about all these views, because I made a chart, and we'll email it out this week.
- C. Just get this. When we say Jesus is coming again, we mean that the person who was born of a virgin, died on the cross, raised from the grave, and ascended to heaven... this same person in that same body will return in glorious victory to usher in his millennial reign and show the devil what a liar he's been all along. Jesus is coming again.
 1. It isn't figurative. It isn't allegorical. It isn't theoretical. It isn't symbolical. It isn't spiritual.
 2. It is literal.
 3. It is the hub of the wheel, and everything else radiates out from the promise of his coming.