

The Evidence for the Second Coming

II Peter 3:3-9

INTRODUCTION:

Peter is writing this epistle to help believers overcome false teachers and their false doctrine. In this third chapter, Peter comes to a climax of his discussion of false teachers by presenting an argument against their denial of the coming of Christ.

All Stand and Read Scripture

2 Peter 3:3-9 (NASB)

³ Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts, ⁴ and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For *ever* since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." ⁵ For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God *the* heavens existed long ago and *the* earth was formed out of water and by water, ⁶ through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. ⁷ But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

⁸ But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

As we prepare to look more closely at Peter's passage this morning, let's bow in a word of prayer.

Prayer

The text reveals that the mockers argument follows three paths.

1. The argument from ridicule. Verse 3 "*mockers will come with their mocking,*"
2. The argument from morality. Verse 3 "*following after their own lusts,*"
3. The argument from uniformity. Verse 4 "*For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.*"

Their argument is this: "There will never be a great cataclysmic judgmental event at the end of history because that is not how history works. So you have here

- An emotional argument that mocks the second coming because of the length of time that has occurred since Jesus walked on earth. They will say "Where is Jesus? He said He was coming soon. Two thousand years have passed and He is still not here. When are you going to admit that this all just a hoax?"
- A moral argument that really boils down to the fact that they want liberation from morality. They do not want to be able to do whatever they want without

accountability. So they develop their "religion" so it will allow them to be immoral and follow their lusts.

- And then there is their intellectual argument from verse 4. It is the argument of uniformity which is their best intellectual shot. "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation."

They say "Jesus will never come." Why? Because He promised that He would return and He never has!

It is like saying, "I will never die. Why? **Because I never have!** (Pause)

These people are revising history. Here is what they say "Well ever since the Old Testament patriarchs fell asleep everything has gone on the same. They reach back as far as they can and argue that nothing ever changes. It is just a gradual evolutionary process. Just like the evolution that is taught in the schools today. Evolution is the Devil's tool to accommodate immorality. If they can just rationalize to themselves that there is no God, then they will not be accountable for their immorality and they can do anything they want without consequences.

Since they believe that everything moves along at a constant pace, they will claim that things like cataclysmic events just don't happen. They deny scriptural truth. The heavens and earth were not created, they are just the end result of a big bang. Man does not have a Creator, he just evolved to this state over time. There wasn't a Noah's flood. Even if a worldwide flood did occur, it had to be from natural causes. The Red Sea did not actually part. There haven't been any supernatural miracles. Things like divine intervention and eternal judgment just doesn't happen. They will say there will never be intervention from God **because there never has been and there never will be.**

They look at their little piece of time on earth and make conclusions about all of history. This is devastating! If Satan can get people to believe in evolution, he has cut them off from effective evangelism. One of the things that you learn in the book of Acts is that when the apostles preached in the cities they used one of two methods of evangelism.

To the Jews they would start with the Old Testament prophets and show how their prophecies were fulfilled by Christ.

To the Gentiles who did not know the Old Testament scripture their evangelism was always based upon creation. They were told how God created the heavens and the earth. How God supplies the rain that they need for their crops and takes care of their needs.

So Satan works very hard to get people to believe in evolution. Then when the gospel is presented to them, it will not be effective because they have been taught to believe that everything began by natural evolution.

Now Peter is going to give us several arguments to refute the arguments of the scoffers.

The first argument that he is going to use is found in verses 1 and 2.

BODY:

I. The Argument from Scripture.

2 Peter 3:1-2 (NASB)

3 This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, ² that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the **holy** prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior *spoken by your apostles*.

Here Peter pulls the Old Testament and the New Testament together as scripture which bears witness to the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Peter says you need to go back and be read the Old Testament. It has much to say about final judgment.

The scoffers were having some effect or Peter would not have bothered with this.

The reason he uses the phrase "holy prophets" is very simple. He is contrasting these prophets with false prophets. The true prophet is holy. The false prophet is unholy.

Look back to chapter 1

2 Peter 1:20-21 (NASB)

²⁰ But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter of one's own interpretation*, ²¹ for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

So you go back and read those holy prophets who moved by the Holy Spirit to speak the Word of God. Because if you go back and read that, you are going to read about judgment.

By the way, I wish we had time to do a full study of the Old Testament and read what it says about final coming judgment, but we don't. Just let me give you an example.

Isaiah 13:9-11 (NASB)

⁹ Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, Cruel, with fury and burning anger, To make the land a desolation; And He will exterminate its sinners from it.

¹⁰ For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not flash forth their light; The sun will be dark when it rises And the moon will not shed its light.

¹¹ Thus I will punish the world for its evil And the wicked for their iniquity; I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud And abase the haughtiness of the ruthless.

¹² I will make mortal man scarcer than pure gold And mankind than the gold of Ophir.

¹³ Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, And the earth will be shaken from its place At the fury of the LORD of hosts In the day of His burning anger.

But Peter also says "you should remember..the commandment of the Lord and Savior *spoken by your apostles*."

That is the New Testament. It is clear full of scripture concerning the second coming of Christ and the judgment.

Are you ready for this?

There are 27 books in the New Testament. 23 of the 27 talk **specifically** about the Lord's return. Three of the other four that are remaining are only one chapter long (Philemon, II John, and III John). The fourth book that doesn't **specifically** speak of the Lord's return is Galatians. It does, however, **imply** the second coming in two places.

Galatians 1:3-4a (NASB)

³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age,

That implies our deliverance from this world of sin.

Galatians 5:5 (NASB)

⁵ For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.

This "hope of righteousness" is of course the assured hope of eternal life with God in Heaven where we will be free from all sin and be surrounded by His righteousness.

Also note that there are 260 chapters in the New Testament. Within those 260 chapters there are approximately 300 references to the second coming.

The New Testament is filled with warnings about judgment, information about the Lord coming to separate His own from the wicked, establish His Kingdom, and bring in eternal righteousness.

II. The Argument from History.

2 Peter 3:5-7 (NASB)

⁵ For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God *the* heavens existed long ago and *the* earth was formed out of water and by water, ⁶ through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. ⁷ But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

The scoffers willingly forget that God has already judged. Peter refers to Noah's flood and the judgment by water. Peter reminds us that when the earth was originally created, it had a blanket of water over the earth. Genesis tells us that when the flood came, the waters from above the earth and the waters from below the earth sprung forth and flooded the entire earth and all living creatures died except for Noah and his family, eight people in all.

So, how can they say that God has never caused devastating destruction? They are willingly ignorant of the flood.

The argument from uniformity is ridiculous. It is a deliberate rejection of truth. They choose that belief, not because history verifies it, but because they want no accountability for their sin.

III. The Argument from Eternity.

2 Peter 3:8 (NASB)

⁸ But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.

The fact that the Lord has not already come does not mean that He is not coming. It does not mean He is late because one day with the Lord is as a thousand years and a thousand years is as a day. God does not operate on a timetable like man, He operates on an eternal schedule. You cannot confine God to a human timetable.

It may seem to man to that it has been a very long time since Christ promised to return again. But remember, to God a day is as a thousand years and a thousand years is as a day.

IV. The Argument from the Character of God.

2 Peter 3:9 (NASB)

⁹ The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

Peter says the delay is not a delay of indifference. It is not a delay of distraction. It is a delay of patience. God is waiting because His patience causes Him to wait. Because He does not wish for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance.

This very important verse needs to occupy our thinking so we have a good understanding of it. I want you to follow along in your Bible as we extract the truth that is found in this wonderful verse.

First statement. "**The Lord is not slow about His promise,**". That is a very significant statement! The fact that so much time has passed since Jesus walked on earth calls for this explanation. Even in the time that Peter was writing it, there had only been just a few years since Jesus said He would come back. They were already wondering why He had not come back. They were definitely hoping and thinking that it would come in their lifetime.

Now, Peter knew that he would die before Jesus came because Jesus had told him that he was going to die in John 21. So he knew that he would not live until the return of Christ, but there were many believers that assumed that they would and Jesus hadn't come. So they were questioning "Why hasn't He come?".

To which Peter answers "**The Lord is not slow about His promise,**". That word means "**late**". It can also mean "**to loiter**" He is not loitering!

The scriptures tells us that God does everything in the fullness of time. He does everything on schedule, on time. And when God says something will happen. IT WILL HAPPEN! You can count on it.

Hebrews 10:23,37 (NASB)

²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;

³⁷ FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING **WILL** COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY.

God is faithful and He keeps His word. He may seem late to the scoffers, but He is not late. He is perfectly on schedule.

Peter says the Lord is not slow "as some count slowness". God's apparent delay is not due to some failure on His part. He continues to say "but is patient toward you". Here is the key thought in this entire passage. The apparent delay is not due to a failure, it is due to the CHARACTER OF GOD. This is Peter's summation in terms of argument.

Back in I Peter 3, Peter takes us back to the time of Noah and it says that the people in Noah's time were disobedient "when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah".

How long did God wait? 120 years while Noah built a boat and kept preaching. And God remained patient allowing men time to repent. God is patient for the purpose of salvation. Consider His patience. He endures all of the sins of man. All of our sins as well as the hardened sinner.

The scoffers present the slowness as a vice but Peter presents it as a virtue.

Remember that the second coming will either be a time of eternal condemnation for the ungodly or a time of rejoicing and the start of an eternal life with God for the godly.

CONCLUSION:

So, where is Christ? Why hasn't he returned?

Here we are two thousand years later and the question is more pertinent for us than ever before. We might reason that "It was been a very long time! Not just a decade or two, but two millennium and He still hasn't come. **Where is He?**".

Yet the promise of scripture is clear. 23 of 27 New Testament books say He is coming. People have been preaching the return of Christ for 2,000 years. But the fact that He has not yet returned is not a sign that He will not return. God is not bound by time.

So the two thousand years since Christ ascended into Heaven is like a couple of days to God. Christ IS coming back!

The question that each of you must answer for yourself is: Will it be a **terrifying event** or will it be a **glorious event** for you?

Have you placed your faith in Jesus Christ? Have you obeyed Christ's command to repent of your sins and be baptized for the remission of those sins? Are you remaining faithful? Jesus IS coming again. You must be ready for His return!

Jesus was crucified as an innocent sacrifice for your sins so you can be found righteous before God on judgment day. He has spared your life until now. When your life ends, just as it was in Noah's day, your opportunity to accept and serve His Son is gone forever. He wants to give you His free gift of salvation. Will you hear His voice and follow Him?

He is Lord!