

King James Bible Study Correspondence Course

An Outreach of Highway Evangelistic Ministries
5311 Windridge lane ~ Lockhart, Florida 32810 ~ USA

II Peter Lesson 7**2 Peter 3:1-9**

return pages 6, 7 & 8 only

Scoffers in the last Days

When you pray for an unsaved loved one, how specific do you get? Do you go as far as asking Christ to wait to rapture the church until after your loved one has been saved? Do you witness with urgency because of Jesus' imminent return? Do you know how to witness to those who scoff at the idea of a rapture or of a new millennium ruled by Jesus Christ?

A Sure Thing

Can we Christians even be sure that Christ will come again? Peter, along with the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament apostles, said yes! Their affirmation comes in spite of the total rejection of the idea by false teachers. Errorists scoff at the thought of Christ's return, for it would be a miracle, and miracles are not a part of natural law. Why does God put up with such skepticism? Peter answered this question and confronted the false teachers' mockery.

Stirring Up the Mind

Peter had a pastor's heart. He intended to obey Christ's personal command to him and to stir up the minds of his readers so that they-so that we-would remember the truth that they (we) have received (2 Peter 3:1). It is vital that we remember the truths of God's Word. A memory lapse of the truth can result in serious difficulties for us. Christians who forget what God's Word teaches often make poor choices in the decisions of life.

The first readers of Peter's letter had "pure minds" (2 Peter 3:1). Their minds had not been tainted by the seductive influence of false doctrine. Our minds are very important, for we discern the truth with our minds. Peter was constrained to stir up the minds of believers so that they would not be polluted doctrinally in their thinking (2 Peter 3:1). It is important that we both know and remember God's Word during our pilgrimage through this world. We simply cannot afford to be lazy in our study and our remembrance of the truth.

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2 Pet 3:3

3 *Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,*

(KJV)

Christians should be on the alert to the emergence of scoffers in these last days. There is no cause for panic, for GOD's Word supplies us with the answers to their skepticism.

Prophets and Apostles

The prophets and apostles were the human penmen whom God used to provide us with His Word (2 Peter 3:2). The words of the text of Scripture are God's Word in the first place (2 Timothy 3:16). With his reference to the prophets and apostles as the human writers of Scripture (2 Peter 3:2), Peter affirmed the inspiration of all the Scriptures. It is imperative that we know and remember what is written in God's Word, since God has spoken!

Both the prophets and the apostles testified to Christ's second coming. But false teachers raise the question of His return (2 Peter 3:4). Peter first asserted the authority of God's Word; then he addressed the blatant denial of false teachers. With his reference to the prophets and the apostles, he drew together the testimony of both Testaments, showing the unity of thought in the Bible. An understanding of both the Old and New Testaments is essential to our full comprehension of God and His plan.

Scoffers Will Come

Believers must be alert to the presence of scoffers (2 Peter 3:3). Jude, as well as Peter, warned believers of this serious threat (Jude 17,18).

Peter announced that these mockers would appear in the last days (2 Peter 3:3). "The last days" began with Christ's first advent (Hebrews 1:2) and will conclude with Christ's second advent. One characteristic of these last days is the opposition of false teachers to God's truth (2 Peter 3:3; 2 Timothy 3:1-7). These scoffers are the false teachers of 2 Peter 2.

While they deride God's Word, scoffers follow after their own lusts (2 Peter 3:3). They reject the teachings that contradict their beliefs and behavior. Second Peter already provides us with sufficient information so that we can identify the doctrine and character of these men and women. False teachers are with us now in these last days. We must be on the alert!

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Denial of the Promise

While living in self-indulgence, false teachers mock at the idea of Christ's return. They are consumed by intellectual arrogance and sensuality. It is no wonder that they oppose any suggestion of a future judgment. A day of future accountability is inherent in the return of Christ (Isaiah 2:1-4; Jude 14-16).

The skeptics argue that the promise of Christ's second coming is unreliable (2 Peter 3:4). They ask why He has not returned by now. Their question is followed by the reason for their skepticism. They believe that the universe operates by natural law, which has been in operation since the beginning. "Natural law cannot be violated," they reason; "therefore it is impossible for a miracle to occur. For a miracle would be a violation of the natural order of things. Christ's return to earth would be a miracle. Since there is no possibility for a miracle to occur, we must reject the second advent of Christ."

Underlying this view of natural law is the scoffers' rejection of a sovereign God Who created and controls the operation of the universe. Therefore they not only deny Christ's return and a future judgment, but they also reject the existence of the God of the Bible. They are not irreligious, however, for they do worship the creation (Romans 1:21-23).

Willful Ignorance

Peter responded directly to the underlying reason for the scoffers' question, then he gave his answer to the question (2 Peter 3:4-7). The underlying reason for their skepticism is their deliberate choice to reject God's Word (v. 5). They have chosen to reject the idea that God has a relationship to or with this world. Peter provided four subjects about which skeptics are willfully ignorant: the Creation, the Flood, the present world, and the judgment of fire.

The Creation

First, Peter described the heavens and the earth after the dry land appeared on the third day of the creation week (Genesis 1:9, 10). This particular creative act is an example of all of God's creative activity accomplished by His authoritative decree and power (v. 9; Psalm 33:6). God called all things into existence, including the laws of nature. Natural law, therefore, cannot be used to explain how this physical universe came into existence. The origin of all things is God, not natural law—a fact that scoffers willfully ignore.

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The Flood

Second, Peter referred to the inundation of the earth by the waters of the universal Flood (Genesis 7:11-24). While the Flood was a divine judgment on men (6:5- 7), an interruption of the operation of the laws of nature took place in the pre-Flood world. Since God has intervened in the affairs of the world by judgment once, disrupting the laws of nature, He can certainly do so again. He will do so again when Christ returns! Another fact that the skeptics willfully discount.

The Present World

Third--distinguishing between the present world, which is "now" (2 Peter 3:7), and the pre-Flood world, which is the world that then was" (v. 6)-Peter pointed out that there has been a uniformity in the operation of the laws of nature in the present world. God promised to maintain the agricultural cycle, climatic changes, annual seasons, and the cycle of day and night for this present world (Genesis 8:22).

God will maintain the operation of these present processes in nature until the future judgment, which is still another fact that mockers deny. Assurance of this fact, of this continuation of the present processes, is found in Peter's first statement in verse 7: "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store."

The "word" is God's authoritative word by which the universe was created (v. 5). God will bring all things to a climax in fulfillment of His own purpose in HIS own time. This is as fixed as the Day of Judgment for ungodly men (v. 7).

The Judgment of Fire

God is in control of all things. Someday He will judge ungodly men (2 Peter 3:7). False teachers and their followers react negatively to this divine intervention in the affairs of men, because reacting positively to it would bring them into accountability. As far as those who live in error are concerned, there is no coming judgment. They, therefore, reject the doctrine of Christ's return. For this rejection, they bring the righteous judgment of God upon their own heads (2:1).

God and Time

Obviously, time has value to God. Even though He is above time and is not controlled by it, He works within time to accomplish His purpose.

We find God's perspective on days and years in Psalm 90:4. His dwelling place throughout all generations is outside time. For this reason, a

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day might as well be a thousand years and a thousand years as brief as one day. Peter reminded us that God is timeless!

God's Desire

God is not as slow in fulfilling His promises as some men might think (2 Peter 3:9). Peter wrote in his first letter that the end of all things is near (1 Peter 4:7). The flaw in misjudging God resides in the minds of those who think about God from a human perspective. Men simply cannot measure God's activities on their own time scale. When they try, the result is a total misrepresentation of God.

Neither is God slow in fulfilling His purposes in the world (2 Peter 3:9). The seeming delay in Christ's return is due to God's long-suffering. God is patient with men (Exodus 34:6; Romans 9:22).

God is long-suffering because He desires that all men be saved (2 Peter 3:9). This is God's "desirative" will (1 Timothy 2:4). He has not decreed the salvation of all human beings, but He desires all people to turn to Him in repentance and faith. God is always ready to show His mercy to all (Romans 11:32).

God's long-suffering does not mean that all men will be saved. God has determined that He will judge the ungodly (2 Peter 3:7). Christ's death is sufficient to save all (John 3:16), yet only those who believe will be saved (5:24). God's patience awaits those who will respond to the gospel by faith. Believers must use the time to witness to the unsaved.

Notes

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**2 Peter
Lesson 7**

Name _____

1. What task did Jesus command of Peter (see Luke 22:32)?
2. What did Peter want believers to know "first" (2 Peter 3:3)?
3. According to Romans 1:28, what is the result of their confusion about whom to worship and their rejection of God?
4. According to Isaiah 66:15 and 16 and Matthew 3:11 and 12, how will God judge the world one day?
5. What can we learn about time from the following verses?
 - A. Genesis 1:1
 - B. 2 Peter 3:8
 - C. Romans 2.:4
 - D. Hebrews 3:12, 13
 - E. Ephesians 5:16
 - F. Psalm 90:12
6. Why were the minds of Peter's first readers pure?
7. When did the "last days" begin?
8. What are Peter's four answers to skepticism?

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9. Why is time important to Christians?
10. What is GOD's "desirative" will ?
11. Compare the difference between the so-called miracles of the 21st. Century and the miracles of GOD?
12. What is the key verse of this lesson?
13. What are the two key attributes of a scoffer?
14. Peter reemphasizes the need to remember what the scriptures teach, Why?
15. How does society's view of time make 2 Peter 2:8 a challenge for believers living today?
16. When is the best time to get saved? prove it with a verse you have learned from this lesson
17. What other doctrines, besides the return of Christ are under attack by present day scoffers? Explain in detail.

18.



Scripture memorization, write out these verses Hebrews 1: 1-2; Psalm 33:6; Genesis 8:22; Jude 14-16 on the back page

19. **Yes or No ?**

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- Is it OK to thank God that Christ will return and finally judge the world of ungodly men and women?
- Is it OK to take advantage of today's opportunity to witness to the unsaved?
- Is it OK to pray for those whom you know are unsaved, asking God to use you to witness to them in word and by your lifestyle
- Is it OK to Study in depth the answers Peter used to confront the willful ignorance of false teachers concerning Christ's return?
- Do you need to be long-suffering toward someone after you have given him or her the Gospel? or should I try and shove it down their throat until they repent?

Write any questions you may have concerning the subjects in this lesson or any other lesson.