

Scoffers

2 Peter 3:1-7

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, ³ knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. 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.” 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. 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.
(2 Peter 3:1-7 (ESV))

In the passage that we just finished studying in chapter 2, God gave us warning after warning about the corruption, the misdeeds and the blasphemous behaviors that will, in the “last days” begin to creep into our churches, false teachers bringing in deceptive teachings to lead unstable souls away from believing the true, inspired, inerrant, infallible word that is given to us within these pages.

And now, here in chapter 3, God is again warnings us, telling us that in the “last days”, along with those “false prophets” and the “false teachers, “scoffers” will join in with satan’s band of accomplices. And with clever and powerful tongues that are set afire by hell itself, they will not only themselves deny Christ, but they will do all that they can to convince you and me to do the same!

And please do take note here of this very special point of warning being given in verse 3, that though it may never even occur to most of the people who stop to listen to these “scoffers”, these days that we are living in, right now, are actually the “last days” of the existence of this earth. And folks, this is no small matter. It was a message of warning and reminder that God put upon Peter’s heart right from the very beginning of His ministry.

In chapter 2 of the Book of Acts, as Peter was first beginning his leadership of the church, God gave him a message of sure and certain warning that there will surely come a time when He will call life, as we know it, to a close, calling that time “the last days”, in that message, telling of the gracious promises that He has in store for those

who have given their lives to Him, but also making it clear that an ominous future lay in store for those who have not received Him as Savior and Lord. Listen to these words describing “The Last days” given in Acts 2. Peter tells us,

¹⁶ . . . this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ “And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; ¹⁸ even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. ¹⁹ And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; ²⁰ the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. ²¹ And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ (Acts 2:16-21 (ESV))

May I ask you, how does your heart and mind respond to these words. Do you believe them? Do you believe that we are, right now, living in the final days of life on this earth? I ask because sadly, it is clear that most Christians do not take these words to be true, at least not for right now, perhaps for a hundred years from now, but not now! And by choosing not to believe, Christians unwittingly become no different than these “scoffers” spoken about here, by default, agreeing with those who “scoff” and say, “well, people have been saying those things for 2000 years, and nothing has happened yet, so it probably won’t happen anytime soon. So let’s not bother thinking about such things. Let’s continue to eat, drink and be merry!”

But folks, I plead with you and me. We must not join in the chorus with those “scoffers”. These really are the “last days” and you and I ought to be looking forward, with great anticipation for Jesus to return.

And remember, for those of us who are saved, Jesus’ return will be a joyous gathering, joyous beyond our imagination. And that joyous anticipation is the very thing that satan and His crew of scoffers are trying to cheat us from enjoying. And we must not allow that to take place.

And though we know that Jesus has said that we can’t know the exact day or the hour of His return, He did instruct us to always be watchful to recognize the “signs” of when He will return.

What are those “signs”? May we take just a moment and read about them in Luke 21. There Jesus first gave the “parable of the fig tree”. And then, take note of these

warnings given beginning in verse 10. And as you read and listen, ask yourself, do these not sound very much like things that are taking place in the world today? Listen!

¹⁰ Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. ¹¹ There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. ¹² But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. ¹³ This will be your opportunity to bear witness. ¹⁴ Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, ¹⁵ for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. ¹⁶ You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. ¹⁷ You will be hated by all for my name's sake. ¹⁸ But not a hair of your head will perish. ¹⁹ By your endurance you will gain your lives. (Luke 21:10-19 (ESV))

Again, do these words not perfectly fit many of the events that are taking place all around our world today. So many catastrophic natural disasters have, and are, taking place all around the world, a tsunami killing over 200,000 people in southeast Asia, an earthquake in Haiti killing over 200,000 people, and on and on. And also, the nations of the world are rising against each other as never before, nation against nation, especially in the Mideast, Israel, Iran, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Russia, and on and on, ISIS turning brother against brother, slaughtering whole families.

All of these events are "signs of the times", clearly echoing the warnings given by the Apostle Peter and by the Prophet Joel! Surely the "Last days" are here and are edging closer and closer to the very "last days", that glorious and awe-filled, and "fear-filled" moment when Jesus will suddenly burst through the clouds and call all of life as we know it to a close, to an end!

And as Peter is telling us here in verses 1 and 2, he wants to keep our minds continually "stirred" into remembrance of these warnings, that yes, as part of the "signs" of the last days, "false teachers" will worm their way into our churches and also into our homes by way of the media, spreading false teachings, some of which we really do want to believe, but we dare not! We must not! We must recognize the "false teachers" for who they are, liars and deceivers, agents of the devil, ever seeking to lead those who are unsaved even deeper into their depravity, and also tempting unstable Christians into confusion and "back-sliding".

And please also, we must be sure to understand that satan, the arch-enemy of man and of God, the one who is the "power" and the "voice" behind the "false teachers" and the

“scoffers”, does not want you and me, and all the other people, to think about such things. He would have us instead to live our daily existence in a stupor, not considering that one day is any different from another, until suddenly, without warning, the²⁰ the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood. (Acts 2:20 (ESV))

Satan is hoping that then it will be too late for us and we will simply slide unknowingly into the burning pit of hell with him.

May I pause here for a moment and add a personal side note. It would seem that if satan is so smart (and he really is), that surely knowing how all of this is going to end, because he has no doubt read the Book of Revelations a thousand times over, and sees where God is telling about his destruction in the burning pit of hell, that satan would be doing all that he could to save himself from that burning pit. But not so! He instead seems content to simply take as many men and women as he can with him into that pit.

And to those of us who believe, that makes no sense at all. But sadly, such is the way of the “unsaved” heart and mind.

My thoughts go to the ordinary circumstances of daily life as one friend comes to another and begins to complain about some perceived mistreatment that is taking place in their life. Instead of the friend offering “uplifting” and “Godly” answers and counsel, the friend often just joins in with the “grousing” and their conversation settles into nothing more than a “gripe session”, bespeaking the old saying that “misery loves company”.

And on the national scene, in matters such as abortion and homosexual behavior, no Godly answers and counsel are to be found, especially as portrayed in our national media. The only voices we hear are those that are demanding and facilitating people’s rights to take part in those horrible sins.

But folks, again, such things are the way of the devil. He and his “scoffers” and “false teachers” just want to bring you and me down with them into the pit of hell. But it should never be that way for us Christians. We are different and we must behave differently. When we were “born again” from above, a renewing of our minds took place and now we do not think at all like we used to think.

With all of that being said, let’s turn back to our text and again look at God’s warnings about how satan is going about his task in these “last days”. Remember that it is his quest to lead anyone he can further and further astray, believers and unbelievers alike.

And here in our text, we see that he has his regular “work crews” out working feverishly to help him accomplish his task.

Folks, the battle lines are everywhere and Satan is clever to know where to send each of his workers. Here in these words, we see that he has sent out the “scoffers”, those silver-tongued spokespersons, those “diplomats of destruction”, whose job it is to tell us how utterly silly we are to think that the “end” is near. Listen again!

³ knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. 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.” (2nd Peter 3:3-4)

May I remind us that today’s “scoffers” may not actually say these exact words. Some do, but many of them just simply use their “silver-tongues” to divert our attention away from God and over to things that they tell us are far more important.

Currently, it is the election process. And it is easy to see that our nation is totally consumed with the furor of all that is taking place, so consumed that it does not occur to people to be looking for Jesus to return. Our thoughts are instead consumed with who will make the best president for our personal needs.

And a good example of the cleverness of that diversion by Satan and his “scoffers” is revealed in a recent poll that was taken concerning what evangelical Christians thought were the most important issues in this upcoming election. And highest on the list of priorities was the economy. Those evangelical Christians wanted a president who would improve their personal finances. And sadly, far, far down the list of priorities were issues such as “moral and Christian” principles.

Satan is clever. And so are his “scoffers”. They don’t have to openly deny that these are the “last days” and that Christ is coming back real soon. They accomplish their task simply by keeping our minds consumed with matters of self, and diverted away from that sudden and awful moment when the misery starts. And again, according to these words, it begins with people like the “false teachers”, and especially the “scoffers”. They are the first line of attack. Verse 3,

³ knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. ⁴ They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? (2nd Peter 3:3-4)

And these “scoffers” will convince many to not even think about the soon coming of the Lord.

Before we close, may I ask again, do you believe that this will actually take place, that as Acts 2:20 tells us,

²⁰ the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. (Acts 2:20 (ESV))

May I warn us! Whether we believe that this will actually take place, or when it will or will not take place is irrelevant. No matter what we “choose” to believe, this absolutely will take place! God is God and His word is true! This will take place.

The good thing for all of us is that we still have time to turn our hearts to Christ and believe in His saving power. And we must! And if we do, then these other words of Acts 2 will be ever so pleasant to us. Listen!

²¹ And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ (Acts 2:21 (ESV))