

7. Learning Why People Ignore the Coming of Christ

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand why false teachers try to deceive. We saw that they try to deceive others. In the process, many of them come to believe their own lies and deceive themselves. As a result, either way they depend on their own works for salvation instead of coming to Christ by repentance and faith. Today, we are going to see why many people ignore coming to Christ even though they hear the Gospel explained clearly.

In 2 Peter 3:1-4, we read, “Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in *both of* which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of creation.” In the previous chapter, Peter warned the Christians about false teachers. Here, we see that this chapter is written to those who are beloved or true Christians. Peter wanted to remind all true believers of certain things. Peter had done this in his first letter and now he reminded them again in his second letter. Because Peter was writing to true believers, he described their minds as pure minds.

Peter wanted to remind the Christians to recall the words spoken by the Old Testament prophets as well as the teachings of the commandments given by Christ to the apostles. Here, we see an important lesson for today. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, “All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” As we grow as Christians, we all need to become familiar with the entire Bible including all of the Old and New Testaments. This is important to help each Christian grow to spiritual maturity and become equipped for every good work. The Old Testament writers wrote both about the coming of the Lord as well as the coming of judgment to those who reject the Lord.

The word translated “scoffers” means *those who mock and scoff*. Here, it talks about false teachers and others who scoff about the coming of Christ for those who have placed their faith in Him and scoff about coming judgment. Jude 1:17-18 says, “But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts.” Peter gave us some key characteristics of these scoffers that we have today as the last days covers the period from the return of Christ to heaven until He comes again to take us to heaven.

First, we see that these scoffers walk according to their own lusts. Jude 1:16 says, “These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling *words*, flattering people to gain advantage.” Here, we see that those who walk after their own lusts do this by speaking with great and impressive words so that people think that they are great speakers. They flatter people so that they can take advantage of them. In actual fact, such false

teachers are only thinking about the things that will benefit themselves and help them get what they want.

Second, these false teachers bring confusion to people by saying things like, “Where is the promise of His coming?” False teachers usually try to get people to think about the present instead of looking to the future. Christ warned that such thinking is the thinking of fools. Luke 12:18-20 talks about the rich fool that had an abundance of crops. Those verses say, “So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, *and* be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’” Here, we see that the rich fool left God out of his thinking and did not plan for the future. False teachers try to get people to do the same.

Third, false teachers expect things to happen the way that they have happened in the past but they willfully ignore some of the things that the Old Testament mentions about the past. They think that nothing has changed since the creation and conveniently ignore the judgment that came at the time of the flood. In contrast, Christ warned about the future, in Matthew 24:37-39, “But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 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 of the Son of Man be.” False teachers are really like the people before the flood who did not prepare for the future.

2 Peter 3:5-6 says, “For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world *that* then existed perished, being flooded with water.” The word translated “willfully” means *to purpose or determine*. Here, we see that false teachers determine to forget and deny two events in the Old Testament. They willfully forget the creation when God created the heavens and the earth. The very first verse in the Bible, Genesis 1:1 says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” In our present day, false teachers have chosen to willfully forget that Christ spoke the word that brought the entire creation into existence. Instead, the world has accepted the ideas of false teachers who teach evolution, the big bang theory, or some other theory that denies that God created all things.

The fact that false teachers choose to willfully forget both the creation and the flood from the past show that they do not want to face the fact that judgment is certainly coming. 2 Peter 3:7-9 says, “But the heavens and the earth *which* are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” Christ is the One who spoke the heavens and the earth into existence. He is also the One who now holds all things together. Colossians 1:17 says, “And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.” The word

translated “consist” means *to hold together*.

Just as there was judgment in the time of the flood, there will be a future judgment. Here, we see that the future judgment will be by fire. In 2 Thessalonians 1:6-8, we see that Christ will bring this future judgment by fire upon the earth. Those verses say, “Since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us 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.” False teachers have certainly troubled Christians since the time of Christ. Here, we see that the false teachers will be among those who experience this eternal judgment by fire. The word translated “perdition” means *total destruction* and talks of the eternal judgment. Revelation 20:15 says, “And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” This judgment is eternal for all of the ungodly including all false teachers.

We also see that God looks at time in a different way than the people of the earth. As people on the earth, we think that a person has had a long life if a person reaches one hundred years of age. In contrast, God looks at time from the viewpoint of eternity. Even a thousand years is just a moment when compared to eternity. Psalm 90:4 says, “For a thousand years in Your sight *are* like yesterday when it is past, and *like* a watch in the night.” This verse reminds us about the way that God sees earthly time.

Since God looks at time from the viewpoint of eternity, He is very patient with sinful man because He gives people a long time to repent. 1 Peter 3:20 says, “Who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while *the* ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.” Here, we see that God showed His patience by waiting the entire time that it took Noah to build the ark before bringing judgment. The word translated “slack” means *to be slow or to wait a long time*. Just as God waited a long time to judge people in the time of the flood, God is also waiting a long time to bring the final judgment.

The reason why God is waiting a long time to bring the final judgment is due to His longsuffering. The word translated “longsuffering” can also be translated patient as it is three times in James 5:7-8, “Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.” We also see why God is patient as He waits to bring the final judgment. God is waiting for the final person He has chosen to come to repentance so that person can also have eternal life. This also means that false teachers are given a long time to repent, but they will not.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand why false teachers and many other people ignore the coming of Christ. Such individuals have chosen to continue in unbelief, instead of repenting of their sin of unbelief and showing their faith in Christ by asking Him to forgive them. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to understand why many

people ignore the coming of Christ.