

## SCOFFERS IN THE LAST DAYS

### **TEXT: II PETER 3:1-9**

1. Second Peter 3 continues the theme of chapter 2 -- apostasy (cf. 3:3).
2. Peter prefaces his warning of the scoffers who ridicule the doctrine of the second coming of Christ with a few affectionate words of concern (3:1, 2; cf. 1:12-16).
3. The recipients of Peter's epistle were "beloved" and had "pure minds" (3:1).
4. On the other hand, the apostates were "scoffers, walking after their own lusts" (3:3).

### **I. THEY SCOFF AT THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST (3:1-4).**

1. Second Peter 3:3 is similar to Jude 17, 18, "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts."
2. "But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts" (Jude 17, 18).
3. These Scriptures speak of men who ridicule the things of God, especially the doctrine of the second coming of Christ.
4. A number of years ago I watched a debate on television between Jerry Falwell and an unsaved liberal. The debate was held at Oxford University. The student moderator (who was supposed to be neutral) sarcastically mocked Pastor Falwell for his belief in the rapture, but of course he had no unkind words for the liberal.
5. Our Lord also warned about those who questioned His second coming. Our Lord said in Matthew 24:48, "that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming."
6. These mockers have contempt for the things of God, and therefore we should be careful to avoid them. Psalm 1:1 says, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."
7. We have seen this mocking, scornful attitude recently in the way the worldly crowd reacted to Harold Camping's foolish prophecies. Scoffers weren't just making fun of Mr. Camping's oddities, many of them were ridiculing the doctrine of the rapture.
8. "Walking after their own lusts" (II Peter 3:3b) reveals their licentious behaviour (cf. II Peter 2:14, 18).

9. Those who eagerly await the second coming of Christ seek after godliness and holiness (II Peter 3:11; cf. I John 3:2, 3).
10. On the other hand, those who scoff at the second coming of Christ despise godliness and holiness, because they are "walking after their own lusts" (II Peter 3:3b).

## **II. THEY ARE IGNORANT OF GOD'S PAST JUDGMENTS (3:4-6).**

1. At the site of the Dachau concentration camp near Munich, Germany, there are grim photographs of the horrors of the crimes of Nazi Germany, and alongside the sad relics and memorabilia is a sign by the door that reads, "Those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat its mistakes."
2. The apostle Paul referred to the sins, mistakes, and blunders of the Old Testament Israelites, and he concluded one passage by saying, "Now these things were our examples" (I Cor. 10:6), and, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (I Cor. 10:11).
3. Because of Peter's strong rebuke of apostasy, and his vigorous defense of the flood in Noah's day, and his warnings of the future judgment, liberals hate this epistle.
4. Liberals attack the epistle and even deny that Peter wrote it. However, Peter claimed to be the author (1:1; 3:1). Those who attack this epistle are attacking the very Word of God (3:1, 2).
5. Scoffers are all evolutionists. Many of these evolutionists hold to a theory called, "uniformitarianism," i.e., the belief that existing processes in nature have always acted in the same manner and with essentially the same intensity as at present, and that these processes are sufficient to account for all the changes that have taken place.
6. The theory of evolution is based upon the supposition that conditions have been uniform. However, if this earth has been wracked by cataclysms and catastrophes (i.e., a universal flood), then their case is significantly weakened.
7. Scoffers mock the second coming of Christ, and are "willingly ignorant" of the flood (3:3-6; cf. 2:5, 6; I Peter 3:20).
8. Our Lord said, "And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all" (Luke 17:26, 27).

9. From its inception, the earth was stored with the means of its own destruction. It had water in its subterranean depths, water in the vast seas and oceans, and water in the clouds above.
10. Genesis 7:11, 12 says, "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights."
11. When God released all that water, the land was inundated with water and our entire planet was submerged in water. All life on earth was destroyed except for those that got in the ark (II Peter 3:6).
12. Genesis 7:23 says, "And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark."
13. Native global flood stories are documented as history or legend in almost every region on earth. Missionaries have gone to evangelize tribes in remote jungle areas and have reported their amazement at finding these remote tribes already possessing legends with tremendous similarities to the Bible's accounts of the worldwide flood.
14. It has been estimated that there are over 500 Flood legends worldwide. Ancient civilizations such as China, Babylon, Persia, Sumatra (part of Indonesia), India, Russia, Hawaii, Polynesia, Scandinavia, England, Wales, Peru, and many other countries, all have their own versions of a giant flood.
15. These flood tales frequently parallel the Biblical account including the warning of the coming flood, the construction of a big boat in advance, the storage of animals, the inclusion of family members, and the release of birds to determine if the water level had subsided.
16. The overwhelming consistency among flood legends found in distant parts of the world indicates they were derived from the same origin (the Bible).
17. Undoubtedly, oral transcription has changed some of the details over time.
18. The second most important historical account (after the Bible) of a global flood can be found in the Babylonian flood story in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. When the Biblical account and the *Epic of Gilgamesh* are compared, a number of remarkable similarities are found that leave no doubt these stories are the same.

19. Nevertheless, despite all the evidence, despite all of the various traditions of ancient peoples, and most importantly, despite what the Bible says, scoffers refuse to believe God intervened with a worldwide flood.

### **III. THEY ARE RESERVED FOR GOD'S FUTURE JUDGMENT**

1. Just as God stored up enough water to drown the world, He also has enough fire to destroy the world (II Peter 3:7).
2. Matter is stored-up energy, and the splitting of an atomic nucleus results in the fiery release of enormous quantities of energy.
3. Therefore, all the matter in this great big world represents tremendous explosive potential.
4. Right now, our Lord is holding it all together. Colossians 1:17 says, "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."
5. When our Lord moves His hand in judgment, the elements shall melt with fervent heat (II Peter 3:7-10).
6. Revelation 5:5 says, "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof."
7. Soon our Lord will move in judgment. In the meantime, the Lord is patiently giving sinners time to repent (II Peter 3:8, 9).
8. Notice the words, "by the word of God" (3:5), and "by the same word" (3:7). This world came into being by divine fiat. Hebrews 11:3 says, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."
9. Genesis 1:3 says, "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." We see this over and over in Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, and 26.
10. "By the same word" (II Peter 3:7) means God is preserving this world until the coming consummation. God has His controlling hand on this world, and everything is moving along according to His schedule.

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. People are worried some maniacal dictator will trigger off a nuclear holocaust, but the Bible says it will be the Lord Himself who will set this world on fire.
2. Spurgeon said that to God, "earth is as a pile of wood and the torch-bearers stand ready to kindle it at any moment! There has always been

a cry of fire among men and the cry grows louder every century, for the burning is near."