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# Stirring Up Our Sincere Minds

## 2 PETER 3:1-9

### Introduction

1. Do you have someone you consider a dear friend, someone with whom you are extremely close, someone about whom you care very deeply.
3. This is the way Peter felt about the Christians to whom He wrote the letters we know as 1 & 2 Peter.
4. Four times in this last chapter of his second letter, he calls them “beloved,” “dear friends” (vv. 1, 8, 14, 17).
5. His goal is to “stir up” their “sincere mind by way of reminder” (v. 1).
  - a. “Stir up” (διεγείρω) — to arouse, to wake up
  - b. “Sincere” (εὐλικριν) — honest, straightforward
6. Throughout these two letters, Peter has been working to remind these disciples of the things he considered vital to their faith:
  - a. “I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you” (2 Peter 1:12).
  - b. “I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder” (2 Peter 1:13).
  - c. “I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind” (2 Peter 1:14).
7. If we go back to his first letter, we find in the very first chapter several things Peter considered important for them to remember:

- a. God “has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” so that we might “obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:3,4).
  - b. We “are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:5).
  - c. We were redeemed, “not with perishable things like silver or gold,” but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:18,19).
8. Here, in the beginning of his second letter, Peter reminds them, and us as well, that God’s “divine power has granted us everything pertaining to life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3).
  9. God has also given us “His precious and magnificent promises” so that you and I may “become partakers of the divine nature” (NASB95) and “escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires” (NIV84).
  10. All of this is important because as Peter pointed out, and as we saw over the last two weeks there are those who will continually seek to destroy our faith.
  11. Now you and I, along with the believers to whom Peter wrote, are called upon to remember what God has spoken through the prophets of old, through His Son and through the apostles.

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### **I. The Scoffers Who Scoff**

#### **A. THEY WILL COME IN THE LAST DAYS**

“Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts,” (2 Peter 3:3, NASB95)

1. What are the last days? When are they?
2. “The last days” is a reference to the entire time between Christ’s first and

second coming (cf. 2 Timothy 3:1; Hebrews 1:1-2).

3. You and I are presently living in “the last days” as we await our Lord’s return.
4. Living, as Christians, in the last days adds . . .
  - a. Urgency to our mission

“Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest.” (John 4:35, NASB95)

- b. Anticipation to our ministry

“For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.” (Matthew 24:44, NASB95)

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## B. THEIR TOPIC OF RIDICULE: THE SECOND COMING OF OUR LORD

“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.”” (2 Peter 3:4, NASB95)

1. They mock the Christians and ask them “Where is the promise of His [Christ’s] coming?”
2. They pointed to the obvious: “ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.”
  - a. The seasons come and go just as they always have.
  - b. A new generation is born and an old one passes away.
    - ❑ If anything, this all points to an endless cycle of life!
3. This is one of the major differences between believers and non-believers:
  - a. The believer is confident that the world is going somewhere, that it is moving toward an end.
  - b. The non-believer, on the other hand, argues that . . .

- 1) The world is going nowhere,
- 2) There is no ultimate purpose to life
- 3) Everything that happens is the result of chance and circumstance.
4. In other words, the mockers were saying, "There isn't going to be any return of the Lord."
5. For you and I to say that Jesus will return is to say that . . .
  - a. history is going somewhere
  - b. what people believe and how they behave does matter.
    - ❑ It matters because God is moving the world toward a day of ultimate accountability.
6. This is what the Scriptures teach:
  - a. Jesus said there would be a time when He returns "in His glory, and all the angels with Him," a time when "all the nations will be gathered before Him" (Matthew 25:31-33).
  - b. Paul said there will be a time when "every knee will bow" and "every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10).
  - c. These "last days" will culminate in a last day, "the day of the Lord" (2 Peter 3:10).

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## II. What They Choose To Ignore

### A. GOD'S PAST ACTIVITY THROUGH HIS WORD

"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, through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded by water" (2 Peter 3:5-6, NASB95)

1. Those who say that “all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation” fail to recognize two events which took place because God spoke.

2. The first event was creation itself: “by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water” (v. 5).

a. There are those who would argue that we are all here by chance.

b. However, the intricate design we see all around us argues for a designer.

c. Consider the car in which you drove here this morning and this comfortable building in which you are now worshipping. Did either of these happen by chance? No, both had designers and builders.

d. In Genesis 1:6-8a we learn about the separation of the waters:

“Then God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so. God called the expanse heaven.”  
(Genesis 1:6–8a, NASB95)

e. In Genesis 1:9-10, we read of the gathering of the waters and the appearance of dry land:

“Then God said, “Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear”; and it was so. God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters He called seas; and God saw that it was good.” (Genesis 1:9–10, NASB95)

3. The second event involving the “word of God” and “water” was the flood:

“by the word of God . . . the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water” (2 Peter 3:5,6).

a. This is the third time that Peter draws our minds to the flood in these two letters (cf. 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5; 3:6).

b. Each time it serves as a reminder of the judgment which God brought on

the world of Noah's day.

- c. Peter's point: God interrupted the status quo to bring judgment upon His creation because of its sin.

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### B. GOD'S FUTURE ACTIVITY THROUGH HIS WORD

"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." (2 Peter 3:7, NASB95)

1. If God's word came to fulfillment in the past, it will also come to fulfillment in the future.
2. It was by God's word that the "heavens and the earth" were created, and it was also by His word that "the world at that time was destroyed" through the flood.
3. It is also "by His word" that "the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept", as Peter says, "for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men" (v. 7).
4. What God brought into being, He can certainly bring to an end.
5. All creation is subject to the judgment of God (cf. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8)

"... the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8, NASB95).

6. The same day which will result in the destruction of the ungodly will be a day of deliverance and salvation for the righteous.

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## III. To What Must We Pay Attention

### A. GOD'S VIEW OF TIME

"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.” (2 Peter 3:8, NASB95)

1. God does not see time as we see it.
2. Peter drew from a statement which Moses made in Psalm 90 when he penned these words.

“For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it passes by, or as a watch in the night.” (Psalm 90:4, NASB95)

3. What we regard as a long time is like a mere day in God’s reckoning of time.

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4. There are two things we should consider about God and His view of time:
  - a. God sees time with a *perspective* we lack.
    - 1) Even the delay of a thousand years may seem like a day against the backdrop of eternity.
    - 2) Example: The planetarium show (Created Cosmos) at the Creation Museum which demonstrated the immensity of the universe and the power of the One who created it.

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- b. God sees time with an *intensity* we lack.
    - 1) One day with the Lord is like a thousand years.
    - 2) He is able to take that day and examine it down to the minutest increment of time.
5. Time is significant to God, it holds great value to Him.
6. We know this because He chose to come to this Earth and lived among us thus immersing Himself in our lives.

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### **B. GOD’S OWN CHARACTER**

“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.” (2 Peter 3:9, NASB95)

1. It isn't that God is "slow in keeping His promise" or that He is "slack (not diligent) concerning His promise" that He delays in bringing history to its final consummation.
2. No, it is because He continues to hold the door open for those who might repent.
3. Our God is a merciful god. Mercy is the reason for His delay.
4. Through His prophet Ezekiel, God said, "Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord God, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?" (Ezekiel 18:23, ESV)
5. As Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 2:4, God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (NASB95, ESV).

## **Conclusion**

1. Many things are uncertain in this world in which we live (i.e., our health, our financial security, what tomorrow holds for us).
2. One thing is certain all of history as we know it is moving toward a final day, a "last day" as Jesus called it.
3. Jesus told the crowd gathered around Him in Jerusalem on the day before His crucifixion, "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day." (John 12:48, NASB95).
4. If the Lord were to return right now, can you say without a doubt that you would go with Him to heaven?
5. If you cannot answer this question in the affirmative, will you not come to Him today, turning away from your sins, confessing His name as your Lord and Savior, and washing away your sins in the waters of baptism?