

## *A Study of Second Peter*

### Avoiding Spiritual Amnesia (2 Peter 3:1-7)

*“Men today by scoffing at this doctrine [inerrancy of Scripture] are simply confirming the biblical prophecy.” ~ Martyn Lloyd-Jones*

#### **I. Introduction**

Those who claim to know Christ can quickly forget the fundamental truths learned during times of adversity and persecution. A poor memory, then in turn, leaves a believer vulnerable. Such is the scenario Peter is addressing in 3:1-7. Peter calls for the saints to remember what they had been taught and instructs them to understand these truths in light of the false teachers. In particular, the apostle reminds his readers that the Lord is intimately involved in this world. He created it. He sustains it. And He will judge it.

#### **II. Important Instruction in Light of the False Teachers (3:1-7)**

##### A. A Call to Remember (vv. 1-2)

v. 1 - This “second letter” is most likely referring to 1 Peter.

The call to remember is seen throughout Scripture as a catalyst for gratitude, worship, obedience, trust, and hope (see Jdgs 8:34; Ps 42:4, 6; Eccl 12:1; Isa 46:8-11; Jn 14:26; 2 Tim 2:8). Commenting on the importance of remembrance in the Bible, one biblical dictionary aptly observes, “Hence, all the church’s worship is and always has been historical, verbal, and personal, rather than nature-oriented, mystical, or dramatic” (*NIDNTTE*, 3:315).

Another scholar writes, “The memory motif is one of the primary emphases of the Bible as a whole. In the Bible, memory is rarely simply psychological recall. If one remembers in the biblical sense, the past is brought into the present with compelling power. Action in the present is conditioned by what is remembered” (E. P. Blair, “An Appeal to Remembrance,” *INT* 15.1 [1961], 43).

v. 2 - Recalling 1:16-21, Peter appeals to the importance of the prophets and apostles to address the two major problems with the false teachers—their denial of a future judgment and their endorsement of immoral behaviors.

The singular use of “command” in the Greek indicates that these moral norms are seen collectively and are incumbent upon all believers (see Green, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 371).

##### B. A Call to Understand (vv. 3-7)

v. 3 - Ironically, the mere rhetoric of the false teachers indicates the veracity of the prophetic message (Acts 20:29-30; Matt 24:3-4:11).

Observe that their heresy is not intellectual. Their heresy is not rooted in ignorance, having been misled, or from cultural shortcomings. Rather, their theology is a moral issue—one that is driven by their own personal desires and sinful behavior (2 Pet 2:10).

v. 4 - Their skepticism is based on the belief that the Lord has not intervened in this world. These false teachers argue that the so-called prophecies/teachings of the patriarchs died with them! For these heretics, “God has not intervened in human history; empirical evidence showing that all things continue without change. Since there have been no changes, no divine intervention in the past, no judgment, one should expect conditions as they are into the future. The promises of God have not come to pass in the past, nor will they come to pass in the future” (Green, *2 Peter*, 318).

Skepticism is certainly not foreign to the Scriptures. As often seen, the critic’s question is born, not out ignorance, but out of mockery and unbelief (see Jer 17:15; Mal 2:17).

*Peter provides the following three arguments that God is intimately involved in this world:*

*Argument #1:* Creation itself represents divine intervention (v. 5).

While the false teachers recognize creation, they failed to understand the Lord’s involvement (Col 1:17). The phrase “formed out of water” speaks to how water was collected so that dry ground could exist (Gen 1:9-10). The second phrase, “by means of water,” suggests that water served as an instrument in forming the world. Based upon the next verse, the rhetorical use of “water” should not be missed.

Note that, once again, Peter highlights these false teachers are far from innocent. They are willfully disobedient.

*Argument #2:* God has already judged this world via the Flood (v. 6).

The “these things” refers back to water and God’s word. The Great Flood was not a natural disaster that just happened to occur. Rather, it was God intimately involved with His creation (see 2:5 - “if He did not spare the ancient world . . . when God brought a flood on an ungodly world”). The same Word that created the world also judges the world.

*Argument #3:* God will intervene in the future with another judgment (v. 7).

Since water can no longer be used for judgment (Gen 9:11-17), God will employ fire for the final judgment. Throughout the Old Testament, fire was associated with judgment (see Deut 32:33; Ps 97:3; Isa 30:30; Ezek 38:22; Amos 7:4; Zeph 1:18; Mal 4:1). “The future destruction of the world was inseparable, in Peter’s mind, from judgment. The false teachers, unless they repented, would realize too late that the judgment was no myth and that God does intervene in the world” (Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 378).

### III. The Intersect

- A. The larger evolutionary world-view fails to account for God and His involvement in this world.

Psalm 33:6-9 -

- B. Our theology must be determined by Scripture, not by personal preferences, experiences, or feelings.

John 8:31-32 -

- C. The impending judgment is another reminder that we cannot compromise the truth for cultural acceptance, unity, or personal desires.

Proverbs 2:2-5 -

*"How quickly we forget God's great deliverances in our lives. How easily we take for granted the miracles he performed in our past." ~ David Wilkerson*

**For further thought . . .**

*Based upon our study this morning, I invite you to spend some additional time this week reflecting on the following:*

Throughout Scripture, those who live for the Lord will face ridicule. Observe how we are to respond to scoffers and skeptics in these following verses:

Matthew 5:10-12 -

Matthew 5:44 -

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 -

1 Peter 2:21-23 -

2 Corinthians 6:1-10 -

Romans 8:31-39 -

Is there anyone presently mocking your beliefs or your behavior? If so, spend some time praying for that individual.