

Final Reminders from the Apostle Peter

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Guest Speaker

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The passage I want to share with you, actually, is very personal. It's a passage that I've spoken on before because of its very personal application. For the benefit of those who might not know me and for those on the live stream who are not familiar with me, let me give you briefly some of my background so you'll understand why this passage is meaningful to me tonight and also for us. First of all, it's a prophecy that was given nearly 2,000 years ago and it's been fulfilled for over 200 years and yet the church largely is unaware of that fulfillment. You see, I've been involved now for over 30 years in ministry on the origins issue, the creation/evolution issue. I'm a geologist by training and it's easy to be faced with the issue. You know, when I get this often when I'm talking with other scholars and Christian leaders particularly, men who are in seminaries, men who are in the pulpit who are puzzled, "How could it be that the majority of scientists can be wrong?" Now, how can I as a trained geologist go against the tide of the monolithic opinion of the scientific enterprise today when I can stand here and declare to you again tonight that God's word plainly teaches that he created the earth some 6,000 years ago in six literal days, and judged the world at the time of Noah by a cataclysmic global flood and yet the scientific world doesn't recognize any of that. So they say, "But the world looks old, doesn't it?" Why can I stand here and deny that tonight?

Well, it's simply because God's word very plainly teaches us and we're being warned that this would happen, that this monolithic opinion about the age of the earth, rejection of the flood, we were warned by the Apostle Peter in his second letter, chapter 3, if you want to turn with me there tonight, 2 Peter 3. Peter wrote this epistle, by the way we're told, when he was in prison in Rome. He knew he was about to die and there are hints of this in this very epistle and, in fact, being his second epistle, this is the second of his two epistles, it is, in effect, his last word and testament to the church and these are his final words and he says this, I'm reading 2 Peter 3, commencing at verse 1 and reading through to verse 14.

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. 8 But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. 11 Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, 12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! 13 But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. 14 Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

You see, friends, as I said a moment ago, this is a prophecy that Peter makes here in this third chapter of his second epistle and, as I said, the church is unaware that these scoffers are even in the midst of the church, having compromised God's word and even undermining God's word amongst the very elect.

I want to share with you tonight as we go through this passage four headings. So if you're taking notes, I want to start with the importance of remembering. Point 1: the importance of remembering, because this is what we're told in verses 1 and 2. I'll read it to you again. "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, that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles." So he uses this word "by way of reminder or you should remember" in verses 1 and 2. You know, it's important that we remember history. It's been said that people who forget their history are doomed to repeat it.

I laughed a day or two ago when one of the news items that crossed my desk was about a study that was going to take place where academics were going to record history so that they could prepare us for the future. I wonder if they remember what happened at the time of Whitefield and Wesley when there was a revolution going on in France. England could have easily gone the same way but what saved England from going down the same road? The preaching of the Gospel.

This week is the 50th anniversary of a mining accident in Wales when a spoil heap spilled down a hillside at Aberfan and buried 116 children in a school, and yet what we see in Wales today is a far cry than what it was at the turn into the 19th century. Revival broke out. The police were out of a job because the miners weren't in the pubs drinking, they were singing hymns. That's the history we need to remember.

But Peter here and the theme of his epistles, in fact, if we go back to chapter 1 of 2 Peter, we read in verses 12 through 15, Peter sets out in this first chapter, "Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things." He was emphasizing the important of remembering. Why? Because Peter had learned himself from his own personal bitter experience the consequence of forgetting.

Remember what happened when they were in the Upper Room, in fact, this event is recorded for us in all four Gospels, and in Matthew 26, we read what happened. Jesus, of course, was preparing the disciples for what was going to happen in the hours to follow and Jesus made this comment in Matthew 26:31-35. He said to them all, "Then Jesus said to them, 'You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered." But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.' Peter answered him, 'Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.' Jesus said to him, 'Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.' Peter said to him, 'Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!' And all the disciples said the same." What happened only a few hours later? We all know what happened. Peter denied his Lord three times. He went out weeping, bitter, bitterly weeping. We read that at the end of that chapter, "And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, 'Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.' And he went out and wept bitterly." He was a broken man, why? Because he had failed to remember the warning that Jesus had given him.

I'm also reminded of what happened back in the book of Joshua. You remember the children of Israel under Joshua's leadership had come to the Jordan River and what stood before them was a flooded Jordan River and God did a miracle that day, didn't he? How do I know that? It wasn't some accident that the Jordan River was damned up. Sure, God may have used "natural" circumstances at his control, but how do I know ultimately it was a miracle? Because they didn't have to walk over muddy ground. Twice we're told in Joshua 4 that they walked over on dry ground. It was a miracle because the Jordan River had been in flood. What happens to a muddy river when the water falls, the level falls? It's muddy on the bottom. No, it was a miracle. They walked over on dry ground and we're told that in Joshua 3:17. It's actually repeated twice, "dry ground."

So, you see, God wanted them to remember that so we read in chapter 4 God commanded Joshua to erect a memorial at Gilgal. Why? We read in chapter 4, verse 4, "Then Joshua called the twelve men from the people of Israel, whom he had appointed, a man from

each tribe. And Joshua said to them, 'Pass on before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of the Jordan, and take up each of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel.' And why? "That this may be a sign among you. When your children ask in time to come, 'What do those stones mean to you?' then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it passed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the people of Israel a memorial forever." You see, God has given us reminders in his word and that's the importance of us always being in God's word, to be reminded of what God has done in the past so that we're ready to face what will come in the future and that's why Peter gave us this warning here in chapter 3 of 2 Peter.

By the way, I often get people who say to me, you know, there were the children of Israel. Think about it: we go back a generation, the children of Israel came out of Egypt, God did a mighty miracle in parting the Red Sea so they walked through the Red Sea and the Egyptians got destroyed when God closed the waters, yet three days later they were grumbling and rebelling at Moses. Three days later. And 45 days after they left Egypt, they were complaining to Moses that they wanted to go back to Egypt. Why? Because they had forgotten who was in charge of what was going before them. God sovereignly and miraculously had brought them out of Egypt, they had seen his mighty miracles, they had seen him deliver them from the Egyptians, they had seen him deliver them through the Red Sea, they had seen him provide water from a rock three days after the crossing of the Red Sea, and we say, "What terrible people. How easily they forgot." I think we should take a reality check on ourselves, shouldn't we? Because we are prone to forget. The circumstances of life around us seem to overwhelm us at times and we take our eyes off the Lord just like Peter took his eyes off Jesus when he stepped out of the boat to walk on water out to Jesus. So that's why Peter says, "I want to remind you." Remind you, what? "Of," he says in verse 2, "the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles."

Now, what could be more important than those two things? Why? Because the prophets represented a major division of the Old Testament Scriptures and, of course, the commandments of the Lord and Savior through the apostles were going to become the New Testament Scriptures. So, in one sense, Peter is saying, "I want to stir you up to remember what God's word says from beginning to end."

So how is it that Peter should come to verse 3 and say these words, "knowing this first of all," which brings me to this second point: the warning of the scoffers. The warning about these scoffers. Now, having reminded us to observe and remember what the apostles were saying as Jesus' commandments, but also harking back to the fulfillment in Jesus' life and death of what the prophets had predicted, this is his parting word. Having already reminded us of that, he's saying, in effect, "There's one last thing I want to tell you." In the King James version it says, "First of all." It's almost an imperative. "Wake up! Listen! I'm warning you! There is something of prime importance that you need to heed. You could remember everything that Jesus said, you could remember the fulfilled prophecies,

but there's one more thing you need to grasp." And what is it? "That in the last days, there will come scoffers." There will come scoffers.

Now, Peter knows he's about to die. He said that in chapter 1, verse 14, as we just read. He was well aware that this was his last words in his last chapter, the last part of his second letter. So let's think about it. What did he mean about "the last days"? Well, in one sense, we've always been in the last days because no man knows the day or the hour when Jesus will come again, and it's true in Peter's day, the church was being warned to prepare. The disciples were asking Jesus even before he left, "When is it you're going to come and establish your kingdom?" And yet time has gone on and it's all too easy for the church to be lulled into the ways of the world and to settle down into a nice peaceful existence and forget that at any moment Jesus may come again, and yet the fact that we have a prophecy here about these scoffers that has been fulfilled, as I will show you in a moment, really emphasizes that we are, indeed, today in the last days. Now, that's not to say I'm predicting that Jesus may come tomorrow or next week or next month. We don't know how long he will tarry but one thing is clear from this passage, there's a reason why God is tarrying and we'll come to that shortly but because this prophecy is fulfilled, we know that we are in those last days that Peter said here.

So who are these scoffers? Well, we're given characteristics of what they do and what they say that help us to clearly identify who they are. We are told in verse 3 that they will come "scoffing, following their own sinful desires." So, first of all, they will be marked by sinful desires. They will express an immorality, a throwing off of restraint, a throwing off of God's law in the sense of God's warning people to follow upright living as Jesus also emphasized, a life of holiness, a life of peaceableness, but these scoffers will openly follow their own sinful desires.

How can they do that? Well, the logic flows very clearly here. What does it say? Because these scoffers will be marked by three things that they will also say and believe. Verse 4 tells us, "They will say, 'Where is the promise of his coming?'" So, first of all, they will scoff as the warning that Jesus will come again. And why will they scoff? How is it that they can argue that? Well, they say, "For ever since the fathers fell asleep," verse 4, "all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."

Going on, we're told, verse 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, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished." Not only will they be sinful in their expression of their desires, but they will scoff at Jesus' second coming, they will use the justification that all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation since the father's fell asleep, and they will deliberately overlook, deliberately reject, deliberately forget, or as the King James says, they will be willingly ignorant that – mark it well – the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God.

What is he referring to here? Well, if you go back to Genesis 1, we're told that when God created the earth, it was covered in water. By the way, the scoffers tells us that the earth

came out of the sun as a hot molten blob. I can tell you categorically tonight, they're wrong. Why? Because God was there, they weren't, and he doesn't tell lie and he told us when he made the earth it was covered in water. And guess what? He didn't make the sun until three days later on day four. So they're wrong. And then we're told that on the second day God separated some of those waters to put them above an expanse that he created. And then we're told on day three he made the dry land appear. And by the way, we're repeatedly told in Genesis 1 that God spoke and it happened. God spoke and it happened. Peter says here that this all happened by the word of God. Exactly. And who is that Word of God? Jesus, John 1:1.

Now, when Jesus was confronted with a storm on the Sea of Galilee, as the Creator he stood up and with a word there was instantly a great calm. You see, that's why I don't have a problem as a scientist accepting what Jesus did in Genesis 1 because if he stilled the storm instantly, a raging storm instantly in front of witnesses, why should I doubt it when he tells me that with a word everything came into existence?

And what do we read on day three? Well, he made the dry land. The earth had been covered in water so what Peter describes here is, effectively if you do a more literal translation, when it says here that the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, it literally means was compacted out of the water and made to stand up above the water. A very apt description of what God did on the third day of creation. He formed the dry land. He compacted material elements somehow together and raised it up to make the dry land on which he put soil and he put plants, all within a 24 hour period.

So Peter here is saying that these scoffers will deliberately reject the evidence that God created. He's using that picture of God forming the land, the first land surface out of the water, compacted out of the water, made to stand up above the water by his word here in 2 Peter 3:5. So it's a summary statement that, first of all, these scoffers will deliberately reject the evidence that God created.

Then we read in verse 6, "and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished." Now, the Greek word here for "deluge" is the word "kataklysmos." Now, forgive me, I'm not a Greek scholar and I may have pronounced that incorrectly, but you'll recognize it, it's the root from which we get our English word "cataclysm." And Peter here is saying here the world that then existed after God created it subsequently suffered from a watery cataclysm. So the second piece of evidence that these scoffers will deliberately reject will be that God judged the world at the time of Noah in the flood.

How do I know that Peter is also referring to Noah here? Well, if you go back in his first epistle in chapter 3, verse 20, he talks about Noah, "because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water." And then over in 2 Peter 2:5, Peter also refers to Noah, "if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the

world of the ungodly," in the midst of a passage where he's warning people of the consequences of disobedience to God.

So Peter fully accepted that Genesis was literally referring to a literal real man called Noah who built a literal ark for the salvation of his family when God came to judge the world by a global cataclysmic flood. After all, that's what Jesus taught. If you go back to Matthew 24, you'll find that Jesus was referring to the time of his second coming. He was talking about the signs of the coming of the Son of Man. And in Matthew 24, if you'll turn there, in verse 36, we read these words that Jesus said and it's relevant to what I just said a moment ago about no man knowing the time when he will come again because Jesus says that right here. "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only." So stop speculating about when Jesus will come again. Anyone who wants to speculate and make a prophecy is falling short of Jesus' warning here. And what did Jesus say? Verse 37, "as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away," not some, all, "so will be the coming of the Son of Man."

Do we believe that Jesus will come in a global event? Jesus is here comparing what happened in Noah's day to the time when he will come again. And yet, only last Friday I recorded an interview, actually it turned out to be a debate. I wasn't told it was going to be a debate until I was actually talking to the moderator on Moody Radio. And opposite me was one of these old earth Christian geologists and he denies that there was a global flood. I pointed out to him these words of Jesus. No response. How can they respond? Peter was there when Jesus made those comments.

What does Peter say here in this epistle? He goes on in verse 7, "by the same word," that is, the word of God that created, the word of God that sent the flood, "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." Peter is again contrasting the judgment to come, which will be global, with the creation, which had to be global, with the flood in between. How could it be a local flood when both Jesus and Peter are contrasting it with the coming judgment that will be universal, global, all-encompassing?

You see, friends, Peter chose his word carefully here under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He said, "Remember, for they deliberately overlook this fact." As I said, the King James version says, the translators translate it, "they are willingly ignorant." Very strong words. What does it mean? It means they deliberately ignore the evidence. You see, the evidence is there so that they are without excuse.

In fact, we read about that in Romans 1. Turn with me to Romans 1. Paul makes it very clear and there is a parallel comment here that I think is very apt when we consider the strength of what Peter is saying here. Verse 18 of chapter 1 of Romans, Paul says this, excuse my Australian pronunciation, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness

suppress the truth." Very strong words. Men of unrighteousness will suppress the truth. That's exactly what they're doing today. And what truth will they suppress? Verse 19, "For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse."

You see, Richard Dawkins won't have any excuse on judgment day. Why? Have you ever wondered why Richard Dawkins and other vocal atheists of his ilk, ever wonder why they so oppose someone who they do not believe exists? No, Richard Dawkins knows there's a God. He is suppressing the truth. He's willingly ignorant.

You see, friends, you need to recognize that this debate about creation/evolution, this debate about the age of the earth, isn't ultimately about the evidence. It's not. Yeah, we constantly get people who write to us and they want that magic silver bullet, "Just give me that one piece of evidence that I can use to demolish the arguments of the atheists and we'll win!" No, Peter warns us, they deliberately reject the evidence. They have a spiritual issue. The wickedness of the human heart has deceived them. They are self-deceived. They suppress the truth in unrighteousness and no matter what evidence you give them, they won't believe. That's why the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. That's why we have to point men to the Gospel because it is only the Gospel that will deal with their spiritual issue, that will then by the Holy Spirit open their eyes so they will see the evidence with fresh eyes, a fresh heart, and therefore a fresh mind.

Do you know what amazes me, though? We with our arguments will never convince anyone. Of course, it will only ever be a work of the Holy Spirit and I think we need to always do what we do in witnessing with humility because we don't have clever arguments. All we can do is testify to what we believe and why we believe with a passion and an honesty and integrity with grace, but it will be a work of the Holy Spirit because they have a spiritual issue. And that's reassuring, isn't it? It means that we don't have to get all tense and nervous because it's God's work to call those he is choosing to come to repentance.

But here is something you may not have grasped from this passage already: what ultimately is the justification of these scoffers that identifies who they are specifically? And this is where it gets personal, to me at least, because we're told something very specific that will help us to identify when these scoffers first arose on the world stage, and it is this: they will say, verse 4, "For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."

What is Peter saying there? Well, back to the beginning of creation, when was that? The fathers fell asleep, that goes back to Adam. What are they saying? "For ever since Adam fell asleep," well, since man began, "everything has been going on and on and on and on the same way it's been in the past so it's going to go on and on and on and on again into the future, so why are you people talking about Jesus coming again? Why are you talking about a flood? We've never experienced a global flood. Things are just going to continue

on and on and on and on the way they've always gone on ever since the father's fell sleep. All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

Wind back the clock 300 years. There were always those who scoffed the Scriptures but some of the early men of science were often clergymen, actually, who on their days off roamed the hills and started looking at rocks and fossils. Actually, one of the principles in modern geology was first established by a Danish clergyman who was a bishop in Italy, Nicolaus Steno, and Leonardo da Vinci. Most guys thought when they picked up a fossil, you know what a fossil is, it's a dead plant or animal that's buried and preserved in the rocks, that these were the creatures that were buried in Noah's flood. After all, if all the high hills under the whole of heaven were covered and all the animals and plants and everything that weren't on the ark perished, wouldn't we expect to find billions of dead things buried in rock layers laid down by water all over the earth? And that's exactly what we find: billions of dead things called fossils buried in rock layers laid down by water all over the earth.

So they believed that and when they saw the fossils, they accepted that as testimony to Noah's flood, but then in 1785, a book was written, a paper actually first of all presented, at the Royal Society of Edinburgh. It was authored by a medical doctor turned geologist by the name of James Hutton. It was the time of the Scottish Enlightenment and James Hutton was a Deist of sorts. You know, he believed that there was a being out there that may have started everything and he just left everything to go on and on and on and on. And he looked at the rocks and decided that we see rivers going slowly today, okay, how long does it take for the Mississippi River to build up a layer of sand and mud down at its mouth one foot thick? Well, we could do an experiment. It might take 100 years to build up a layer of sand down there at the mouth of the Mississippi River. Well, if we go out in the hills and we see a layer of sandstone, sand turned to stone, and it's 100 feet thick, if everything goes on at the same rate we see it happening today, if it takes 100 years to make one foot, how long did it take to make 100 feet? 10,000 years.

So the idea of countless ages was well-established already by this thinking. James Hutton's ideas were taken up by a lawyer turned geologist, Charles Lyell, in London in the early decades of the 1800s and he wrote a book in three volumes, "Principles of Geology," in which he cleverly espoused these ideas. In fact, in his written letters, personal letters, his whole objective was to rid the science of geology from Moses. These men deliberately set out to suppress the truth about what Moses wrote about the flood. By the way, which book did Charles Darwin have on the Beagle when he sailed around the world? Charles Lyell's book. You see, without the millions of years of geological time, there was no time for Darwin's biological evolution. The whole issue about the origin of species, so-called, hinges on the millions of years.

And so, we recognize that these scoffers that Peter is identifying here are, in fact, the geologists of our day. That's why it gets personal. That's why it saddens me. As I said, I was in that interview with that debate that went on air on Saturday on Moody Radio and I was pitted against a so-called old earth Christian geologist.

Friends, these scoffers are in the church. These scoffers are subverting the truth of God's word. As I said, I meet Christian leaders and seminary professors who are intimidated. When you've got geologists at Wheaton College, you've got Old Testament professors at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School agreeing with these old earth Christian geologists that we can't trust what is written there in Genesis, you start to tremble at what's happening inside the church that is supposedly evangelical. So Peter warns us about these scoffers and the tragedy is, as I said before, most Christians and most churches are unaware that these scoffers are in our midst and have subverted the truth of God's word in the opening chapters of the book of Genesis.

This leads me to my third point as we hasten on. 3. The consequences of forgetting because, you see, ideas have consequences. God will not be mocked. We read in verse 8, "But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed." You see, there is no doubt about it. As sure as tomorrow the sun will rise, God will come in judgment.

You know, these scoffers will have their day but God will have the final word, and that's why we should not be worried about these scoffers. Our responsibility is to do business, the King's business, until he comes. We have to contend for the truth. We have to know what we believe and be able to defend it as Peter also says in 1 Peter 3:15, to be ready to give an account, to be ready to stand up and to give a defense for what we believe and why we believe it.

By the way, you ever get people who point to verse 8 here and say, "Ah, but you see, it says that one day equals a thousand years and so those days back in Genesis must have been thousands of years long." Is that what it's saying? I deliberately carefully read it. It says, "as a thousand years." It doesn't say equals a thousand years. And by the way, it says a thousand years equals a day so that cancels that one out, doesn't it? It's actually a cross-reference to Psalm 90:4 and what is it saying? It's saying that with God time is irrelevant. Time is irrelevant. Why? Because God has always dwelt in eternity. He made time for us to live in. We are the ones bound by time.

Let me give you an illustration. It's a poor analogy but I think it's helpful. It helps us understand how God can know the beginning from the end. Why? Well, have you ever been in a parade? You're in the middle of a parade, you can't see the beginning, who's at the front and what they're doing and you can't see who's down the end of the line and what's happening at the back. You're stuck in the middle. You're bound by where you are in that parade but the television reporter, he's not in that parade, he's up in a helicopter, he's outside of that parade and he can see the beginning of the parade, he can see you, and he can see the end of the parade. As I said, it's a poor analogy but God is there in eternity. He's outside time. He's not bound by time because he made time and, therefore, time is

irrelevant to him. He knows the future. He knows the past. He knows exactly everything. He's totally in control because he made it all and controls it all. He is sovereign.

And by the way, those who want to equate those days with ages forget the clear teaching of Exodus 20:11. You see, do you know what problem Calvin and Luther had in their days? Trying to convince people God took as long as six days. Isn't that true? You know, if Jesus can turn water into wine instantly and break bread, five loaves and two fishes instantly to feed 4,000 people, men plus women and children, then making everything in a split second is no problem to him. He could have brought everything.

By the way, I love it in the fourth day, the passage in Genesis 1 on the fourth day. You know, God tells us about making the moon, the sun and the moon, the lesser light and the greater light to rule the day and the night, and then there is this parenthetical statement, "Oh, the stars also," as if it was an afterthought. Think about the stars that God created, the trillions of galaxies with trillions of stars in them. It was just, "Oh yeah."

With God nothing is impossible and yet why did he take as long as six days? We're told in Exodus 20:11, "For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and therefore you will work for six days and rest for one." If the children of Israel thought he was talking about millions of years, they'd be working for millions of years before they got a day off.

And just so that we don't miss it, it's repeated for us in Exodus 31:16-18. Write that down and look it up when you go home. We're told that, again, you will work for six days because God worked for six days, and then we're told that God wrote those words with his finger on tablets of stone. There are other parts of Scripture we're told that were inspired by God directing man by his Spirit to write his words for him, but in this instance, God literally wrote with his own finger on those tables of stone in six days. So if God can't be trusted to write exactly what he means, how can we trust anything that he tells us in the rest of the Scriptures?

But what is the consequence? I love this verse 9. Actually, the King James uses a colloquialism that we use in Australia, actually. The King James says, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promises, as some men count slackness." An Australian idiom, that's slang for being lazy; slow; procrastinator. No, Peter warns it's not that God is slow to fulfill his promise at all. God is actually patient. Why? "That all should reach repentance." That's right. God wants as many to be called out and chosen as he has chosen and until the last of the elect are chosen.

How do I know that he's not talking here about "all" meaning universal salvation? Well, Go into the context of his two epistles. He's not talking about all people including all these scoffers. No. He's talking about the elect. For example, over in 2 Peter 1:2, "May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence." So there's a contrast there between the saved and the unsaved, those that have been called. In 1 Peter 1:1, he

opens his first epistle speaking to the elect. And in chapter 2, verses 4 and 5 and in verse 9, he refers to the chosen. Verse 4, "but in the sight of God chosen and precious."

So Peter is not talking about all coming to repentance in the sense of men everywhere, he's talking about those whom God chooses; those who he calls. And so God is patient not willing that any should perish before they respond to his call; the ones who before the world began he had already ordained and prepared.

Then we read another one of these "buts." Verse 10, "But the day of the Lord will come." As I said before, there is no doubt that as the Greek says here, everything is going to be burned up. It's going to be exposed, the works that they have done, the works that we have done. It's all going to be exposed on that judgment day when "the Lord will come like a thief," suddenly, when we least expect it. You know, the thief doesn't sort of always knock on the door and come through the front door, he doesn't come in the middle of the day when it's bright and sunshine, he comes when you least expect it.

"But don't be fooled," Peter says, "be warned the consequences of forgetting the warnings, the consequences of forgetting the call of God is going to be sure and swift final judgment, eternal fire," which brings us to our last point, point 4: the antidote is personal accountability. Peter draws it back to us. Remember, he's writing this letter to you and to me. Yes, the church in his day that would open this letter but churches and congregations all down through history to the present day.

He doesn't want to just leave it there with a comment about judgment, he wants to say, "Well, you know these things. I've made you aware of who these scoffers are. They're in your midst. They're willingly denying the evidence that God spoke and brought everything into existence. So," he says, "since all these things are thus to be dissolved," what? The earth, the heavens and the earth are going to be burned up. They're going to be dissolved. Peter says, "Since that's what's going to happen, what sort of people ought you to be?" He says, "You've got to take a reality check."

And what is that antidote to that judgment to come? It's "living lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells."

You know, I love that passage that I read a few Sunday mornings ago in the book of Hebrews where we read about Abraham being called out by God. He didn't know where he was going but what do we read? "He was looking forward to a city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God," Hebrews 11:10. And going on in that passage, "These all died in faith." They went on, "they were strangers and exiles on the earth." Do you realize that this is not our final home? Do you get restless from time to time about the things of this world? Do you recognize that we're just pilgrims and sojourners on a journey towards a heavenly home as God tarries? And we read in verse

16 of Hebrews 11, "they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city."

You know, Jesus warned in Matthew 6, in fact, pastor will eventually come to this passage in the Sermon on the Mount. After the other things that he says, we get to chapter 6, verse 19 and we read these words, if you turn there, chapter 6, verse 19, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Friends, you know as well as I do the constant battle that we have. We live in a land of plenty. It's so easy to think that we're storing up treasures here on earth, you know, for our retirement, for a better day, but don't be fooled. Peter warns us and Jesus warns here, "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Are you and I living for those treasures here on earth or, as Peter warns us here, are we living lives of holiness and godliness?

Are we storing up treasure in heaven? Why? Well, we're also warned there will be a day of reckoning. Jesus warned us about that in Matthew 25. Remember, he spoke of the servants and the talents. Matthew 25, verse 14 and onwards. The master went on a long journey and he left these servants with talents and when he returned, they had to give an account of how they used those talents, and the slothful servant that had buried his talent got punished for doing so.

Now, Paul warns us in Romans 14:10 that we all must stand before the judgment seat of Christ. In fact, he repeats that in 2 Corinthians 5:10, a very sober warning. "One day," Paul says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil."

And that's what Peter is warning us here. Seeing that you know these things are going to come to pass, that at any moment God will come as a thief in the night and will judge this world and burn all things up, only those treasures laid up in heaven will you be able to show on that judgment day when we each have to give an account for all that we've done, what will we have to show? Will we have lives of holiness and godliness? Or as Peter says here in verse 14, "beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace."

Very piercing words, aren't they? And as I close tonight, I think I need to remind you once again any of you here tonight either here or on the live stream: you've heard these things, you've been warned about these scoffers that are with us, you've been warned about their fate, Peter has reminded us, Jesus warns us that a judgment day will come and that we will all have to give an account, are you ready? Are you ready? I pray that you are. Before this night is over, be assured of where you stand before God, our Creator, and soon coming Redeemer.

Let's pray.

Our loving heavenly Father, we thank you tonight for your word, again, which lays our souls bare before you. Thank you, Father, that you don't leave us without a warning, you don't leave us without knowledge that we need to have to be prepared. Thank you that Peter warned us about these scoffers. Thank you that Peter warned us as to who they are, but he also, Father, reminded us that God will surely judge and we need to be ready to stand before him. Father, may we each have lives with short accounts with you where, Father, we endeavor to live holy and blameless before you so that on that day when we stand before you, Father, we can look forward to those comforting words, "Well done, though good and faithful servant." May it be so with us all this night, Father, and yet, Father, any who know you not, we pray that your Spirit will do his work in their hearts and lives to draw them to you. May all this be to the praise and glory of our wonderful Lord and Savior in whose name we pray. Amen.

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