

Creation, the Flood, and Coming Judgment Pt. 1

2 Peter 3:3-7 (08/17/14)

Ernie Godshall
Faith Bible Church
Evansville, Indiana

Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, 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." 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 with water. 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 3:3-7)

Two current issues illustrate our passage this morning. The Freedom From Religion Foundation, led by ex-pastor Dan Barker, has insisted the Navy pull Bibles out of their guest houses around the world. They claim the Navy is showing preference for Christianity. Someone in the Naval chain of command caved to the pressure and ordered them pulled. But now higher ups have said, "Put em back," at least for the time being. Dan Barker is the same character who a couple years ago described a nativity scene in a little town in Texas as "an insult to human nature."

And the American Humanist Association is accusing a school in Gainesville, Georgia, of unconstitutional behavior by allowing Scripture quotations on school banners and, horrors, of allowing coaches and teachers to actually pray with the students. The AHA calls it "the unconstitutional infusion of religion into the high school football program." An AHA spokesperson said, "There's no defense for doing this.... And we have reason to believe it's not an isolated event!"

Ladies and gentlemen, we are in a war over the faith! This is called secularization, the effort to scrub God out of the public domain. But this should be no surprise. God told us over and over this world would mock Christianity. The nations mocked Israel and her God in the Old Testament. In Psalm 115:2 they taunted, "Where is your God?" Answer: "Our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases." They mocked Jesus when He was here. The soldiers mocked and spit on Him before His crucifixion. The religious leaders and the people mocked Him as He hung on the cross! They mocked and sneered at Him! Sneering has the idea of turning up the nose. What a spectacle that was! Human beings mocking and sneering and wagging their heads at their Creator and One who, with just a word, could wipe them out. How patient our God is. The two thieves also hurled abuse at Him until God convicted the one! And in the epistles, Peter and Jude both assure us, we Christians will be mocked.

BE READY TO BE MOCKED – vs. 3

Have you ever been mocked for your faith? It happens in classrooms, with friends, on the professional level, even in families, which is one of the hardest. There's a lot of silent mocking going on, too. "I don't believe you actually believe all that stuff about Jesus!" But hey, I was there and apart from the grace of God, I'd be a mocker today. I tried to be a flat out atheist one time, but I wasn't comfortable with actually believing in no God. With my church background, I did have a fear of dying and facing God in my sin.

So Peter says, be ready. Know this first of all, keep on high alert that your Christian faith is in the crosshairs of those who deny Christ. Everything you believe will be mocked and attacked. So don't be surprised. Don't be pushed around about it. We are fully aware that the world is at enmity with God. We know the fool in Psalm 14:1 says in his heart, "There is no God," which basically means, "Though I'm afraid there is one, I'm hoping big time that there isn't a real God." So be firm in your faith. And, be wise in responding to mockers and all lost people. Don't mock back in like fashion. 1 Peter 3:15 urges you to set apart Christ as Lord in your heart and be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you for a reason of the hope that is in you, with gentleness and reverence. Never forget, we wrestle not against flesh and blood. Mockers are deceived by Satan, so we really should feel pity and sorrow for them.

MOCKING WILL INCREASE IN THE LAST DAYS – vs. 3

We've been in the last days ever since Jesus came, died, rose again, and ascended into heaven. These are the last days. But obviously, we're closer to Christ's return now than 2000 years ago. And Scripture indicates a growing mocking and rejection of God's truth as history heads closer and closer to the second coming. 1 Timothy 4:2 says in later times some will fall away from the faith. In 2 Timothy 3:1 Paul assures us that in the last days difficult times will come. And in 1 John 2:18, John says we know it's the last hour, since many antichrists have appeared.

So as time moves on, there is a growth of mockery of all we hold precious! Mockers will come in their mocking! Peter is emphasizing that there will be an overwhelming flood of mockery, especially about the second coming, but that includes everything else about the Christian faith.

We have certainly seen a tsunami of mockery and official unbelief over the last several centuries. The Enlightenment of the 1700s said man can reason his way to truth without divine revelation and the mockery began. You have Darwin and his offspring in the 1800s assuring us everything came about through billions, millions, and hundreds of thousands of years, and out of this poisonous fountain came naturalism, materialism, humanism, relativism, secularism, and popular atheism. Our entire educational and scientific establishment in America is based on the assumption that evolution is a fact, even though no one has proved it!

And when we are cut loose from any notion of God, the mockery just increases. Mockers mock God, the Bible, and the whole truth of the gospel as unnecessary. They mock the biblical view of man as an eternal soul, made in God's image. They mock the horrible thought that there is an objective right and wrong, that there is a moral code imposed from outside ourselves. And so mockers parade throughout the earth, through the streets, in the classrooms and studies, in the media, among the celebrities, in movies and sitcoms, and even in some podiums. Liberal ministers are liberal because they mock the great doctrines of the faith, and this apostasy will increase into the future.

So mockers will increase in the last days. Martyn Lloyd-Jones wrote that the whole idea that the world will get better is nonsense. "The Bible nowhere says the world is going to get better and better. The Gospel predicts that the last times will be perilous, there will be scoffers, the world will ridicule the Gospel." So don't be surprised. Rather be prepared, not only to be firm in your own faith, but also to be prepared to give an answer and to be compassionate to mockers. Jesus was mocked and insulted and reviled, and He reviled not in return! He knew they were deceived by Satan. Instead of lashing out, He prayed, "Father, for given them. They don't know what they are doing!"

MOCKERS ARE DRIVEN BY THEIR OWN GODLESS LUSTS – V. 3

What drives people to mock so viciously? Why do people reject Christ when the gospel is clearly presented to them? You can show them straight from the Bible, the evidence of Christianity is plain, the tomb is empty, for 2000 plus years the gospel has gone out, the Bible has been preserved, it all makes sense, Jesus left and said He's coming again, and if He ascended, then He's out there and will come back as He promised! Plus you have God's court set up in every heart where there's that element of guilt, of sin, of coming death, and that unknown darkness beyond the grave. Only Christ answers! The Bible makes sense to a heart bowed to God. It all makes total sense. And yet people will mock and reject it and replace it with lies.

Why? Their lusts. Their self-honoring desires. Jude describes them as "ungodly lusts." People don't submit to Christ as Savior and Lord because they just don't want God raining on their parade. There have been honest evolutionists who freely acknowledge this. There isn't any way to prove evolution; a lot of it doesn't make sense. Nobody plus nothing equals everything is illogical, but the only alternative is a God who created this whole thing. And if there is a God, then I'm accountable to Him, and that's the last thing I want! One commentator quotes a professor at New York University, "I want atheism to be true.... It isn't just that I don't believe in God...it's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want a universe to be like that." Aldous Huxley, author of *Brave New World*, said, "I had motives for not wanting the universe to have meaning."

Look briefly at Ephesians 4:17-19 for a description of man in his natural condition without God. There are six characteristics of lost man here.

1. They walk in the futility of their minds. They may be brilliant, but they don't connect the facts back to the Fact Giver, God! I heard Stephen Jay Gould, well-known professor from Harvard, back in 1997 at USI. He praised the purposelessness of evolution, assuring us we are just a complete chance branch on the evolutionary tree, a random development, and if it happened all over, it would probably not have gone the way it has a second time. He said we have to get over the idea that life has some transcendent purpose.
2. Their understanding is darkened. They may be brilliant, but they'll look at an eye or ear and talk about the millions of years it took to develop into this marvel of evolution.
3. They don't know God. This is perhaps the saddest of all. They live in God's world, breathe God's air, are provided by God with daily sustenance, but they don't know him.
4. Their heart is hardened. They really don't want to know God. Do you remember being like that? There was a time I didn't want to know God. I wanted my own desires.
5. They are calloused to any sensitivity to God. There is no fear of God in their hearts. They don't even think of what happens after you die or when death comes close to them, they'll assure themselves that their family and friends, when they die, go to a better place.
6. They live according to their feelings, trying to find stuff to do that pleases them, that makes them feel good. They are in love with themselves, with their desires, and hope there is no final judgment so they can sin more securely. But, in their rear view mirrors they dread God's red and blue flashing lights.

So, these mockers are moving through life driven and motivated by their own selfish lusts. "It's my life and I'll do what I want." These are the people who rule this world, the movers and shakers, the media, scientific, academic, entertainment crowds we hear from every day!

MOCKERS DO NOT WANT TO BELIEVE IN THE SECOND COMING – vv. 4-5

When they ridicule our hope in the second coming, you've got to see this is a mockery of everything the Bible teaches, from creation to the flood to the second coming.

"Where is the promise of His coming?" Now this is a difficult doctrine to swallow, and unless God gives you the faith to believe this, you will really wonder. Plus there are Christians who make us really look silly about the second coming. They set dates and talk about four blood moons and try to read the tea leaves. The world sees us like Heaven's Gate, remember them? These were those techy guys following Marshall Applewhite in the 90s who wore Nike shoes and committed mass suicide in 1997 hoping to jump on a space ship in the wake of the Hale-Bop comet. And to the mockers, what we believe looks almost as ridiculous as the Heaven's Gate people.

I mean, the whole idea of the rapture, if you think about it, is pretty bizarre. To believe that at some point in time all these people who believe in Christ will fly out into space to meet their Lord in the air is quite extraordinary. We accept this teaching by faith, not by reason or by sight. However, it does make sense IF you believe in the resurrection of Christ. Then you can easily believe in the second coming of Christ since He is alive. He ascended and said He's coming back!

Calvin is classic here. He says that first Satan attacked the resurrection. And true, if Christ is not raised, our faith is useless; but He is raised. Calvin continues, "Then Satan aims directly at the throat of the Church, when he destroys faith in the coming of Christ."

But listen, just like in Noah's day, they sneered and mocked for 120 years, but then one day animals began showing up parading up that gangplank. Then Noah and his family got in there and closed the door. Tweets flew about Noah, the fool. Experts assured everyone Noah had mental issues, that all this would pass, the whole notion of a flood was a delusion. Until day seven, when drops of water increased to a global tsunami, water surged from the earth and the sky, sweeping away all in its path, cutting huge ravines throughout the earth, destroying all air-breathing life and dumping them in what we know now as fossil beds around the world! More on the flood next week.

"All things remain as they were." This is what is known today as uniformitarianism, popularized by Charles Lyell in 1830. Everything has remained the same from as far back as we can go. All natural laws and processes have been the same always and everywhere. There have been no global catastrophes. This has been accepted geology for the past 150 years. History is on our side, they say. All educated, intelligent people of the 21st century know this. Life is just this big circle; it isn't going anywhere on purpose. There is no Being out there who intervenes. Carl Sagan famously asserted, "The cosmos is all that is or was or ever will be!"

Look at verse 5. The NASB got this way wrong. The ESV is good here: "They deliberately overlook this fact!" What do they overlook? *"That by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water."* They willingly close their eyes to it. The water here is probably looking back to Genesis 1:3, when God had created the universe and the earth was covered with water, and then divided the water, so that there was a water canopy around the earth, which was the source of much of the water for the flood, as the floodgates of heaven opened up! Remember, 70% of the surface of the earth is water! There are about 330 million cubic miles of water on the planet. Water is life to this planet. No water, no life. Try to live without water. We should drink more water; less Dr. Pepper, amen?

Ray Comfort has a great video, Noah and the Last Times. Check it out as he interviews a professor of geology from California State University. You'll find it between 13:20 and 16:30 here on Youtube - <http://youtu.be/A7bPCYizcFM>

Some of you will face heavy indoctrination that is part of this mockery. Whom will you believe? We live in a philosophical, theological, scientific, and academic culture that turns its nose up at all of this. In whom will you put your trust, mere man, or the enduring, eternal Word of the Living God? Will you follow God's truth, or your own self-serving desires?