

The Promise of His Coming – Part 3

March 1, 2009

(Adapted from John Herbert's notes—read by Ralph Alley)

1). We're going to begin today by reading the Scripture passage which is the foundation for this message series—

2 Peter 3:1-4

Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), 2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, 3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."

2). Last week we saw that the message of the 'scoffers' who say, 'Where is the promise of His coming?' is a result of the leaven that a woman placed in three measures of meal at the beginning of the dispensation, until the whole became leavened.

- The leaven represents a corrupted teaching that was placed into the gospel message that distorted the gospel of grace and undermined the gospel of the glories of Christ, that which is called "the word of the Kingdom."
- We also learned that this was a work of the enemy, who worked through the apostates to introduce deception into the Church, that which scripture calls "the doctrines of demons"—

1 Timothy 4:1

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons...

3). We also learned that those who had apostasized from the faith had done so according to their own lusts, illustrated for us in their having gone 'in the way of Cain'.... 'run greedily after the error of Balaam for profit'..... and perished in the 'rebellion of Korah'.

- These apostates had, like Esau, despised their birthright. They considered the fulfillment of their carnal desires in the present more valuable than that promised birthright which still remained future (the birthright being their inheritance as a first born son).

4). So pervasive has the work of the leaven been, that the church of these last days (as a whole) is completely devoid of what is the central message of all of scripture – the coming seventh Day, the rest, the millennial kingdom.

- How could that which is central to God's revelation to man be so easily removed? Scripture tells us –

2Peter 3:5

For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, 6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. 7 But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

5). According to our scripture 'they willfully forget.' The King James Version says, 'they are willingly ignorant of'.

- The word translated ‘forget’ and ‘ignorant’ is the Greek word *lanthano*, which means to escape notice or be hidden.
- In other words, they have *willingly allowed* that which scripture has to say concerning its central message to escape their notice, to be hidden from them.
- The scoffers are in a position to understand the word of God because they have a redeemed spirit, which is able to receive spiritual truth. They also have the indwelling Holy Spirit who is able to guide them into all truth. But rather than following the leadership of the Spirit, they chose instead to follow the leading of their flesh. And as a result, they have *willingly allowed* a veil to be placed over their eyes.

2Corinthians 4:3-5

But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. 5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.

6). The essence of the ‘scoffers’ message is that there is no promise of His coming, primarily because the world from its creation onwards has continued in an uninterrupted way. Remember back in II Peter 3:4—

2 Peter 3:4

"Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."

- What the scoffers willfully forget is the clear evidence of Biblical history and Biblical prophecy that clearly teaches that there has been Divine intervention in the past, just as there will be Divine intervention in the future.

7). Let’s take a look at the first thing our 2 Peter scripture draws attention to that the scoffers have willfully forgotten—

2 Peter 3:5-6

...that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, 6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.

- This is a reference to the ruin of a perfect creation in eternity past, which led to the restoration of that creation we read in Genesis 1:2-2:3. This then marks the beginning point of time as we know it; time that exists within a very specific and clearly identified framework.
- So the heavens and the earth ‘of old’ is a reference to that found in the first verse of the Bible-
 Genesis 1:1
 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep.....

8). At an unspecified point in eternity past (called ‘in the beginning’ in Genesis, and called ‘of old’ in 2 Peter), God created the heavens and the earth. And this creation was perfect.

- Between what is recorded in Genesis 1:1 and what we read in Genesis 1:2, something happened that caused the earth to become “without form and void.”
- We know this to be true by comparing scripture with scripture—

Isaiah 45:18

For thus says the LORD, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it **in vain**, Who formed it to be inhabited: "I am the LORD, and there is no other.

- This passage in Isaiah provides God's own commentary on Genesis 1:1, and states categorically that God did not create the earth "in vain," which is the same Hebrew word translated as "void" in Genesis 1:2. .
- So in Genesis 1:1 we read that God created the heavens and the earth. At the beginning of verse 2 we read that the earth was 'tohu'.
- Now the Hebrew word for "was" can also be translated as "became" and it is so throughout the Scriptures. Unfortunately, however, it was wrongly translated here. Genesis 1:2 should literally read, "And the earth became formless and void." This would then bring the Isaiah passage in perfectly, for it reads that the earth was not created 'void.' Of course it wasn't created that way, it *became* that way.
- It is the clear evidence of scripture that some time in ages past God created a Divinely perfect heavens and earth. And then subsequent to that creation, something happened causing both the heavens and the earth to *become* 'without form and void.'

9). What the 'scoffers' willfully forget is that after the creation there was a subsequent Divine intervention by way of judgment in the affairs of the world. All things did not remain the same.

10). And this judgment, that the scoffers willfully forget about, affected both the heavens and the earth.

Jeremiah 4:23

I beheld the earth, and indeed it was without form, and void; And the heavens, they had no light.

- The Sun, Moon and stars of the original creation had been blotted out, leaving an all-enveloping blackness.
- And the earth itself was completely covered by a flood of raging waters (which is the meaning of the Hebrew word for "deep" found in Gen. 1:2, "and darkness was upon the face of the **deep.**")

11). Now because there are the scoffers that willfully forget about the event that transpired in the beginning of the revelation of God, let's spend a while reminding ourselves of what happened here, so that we don't forget as well.

12). The creation of the heavens and the earth in Genesis 1:1 was not an arbitrary event. As one of what we must assume to be many provinces in God's universal Kingdom, the earth was created to be administered by a being created for that purpose, under the authority of God. This created being would oversee an administration that would take place from the heavens connected with the earth. As seen recorded in the Book of Daniel—

Daniel 4:26

..... the heavens do rule.

- Rulership of the earth was not an afterthought.... it was the primary thought.

13). The one created for the purpose of rulership over the earth is the one we know as Satan, also known as Lucifer. Along with him were created an unspecified number of angels in subordinate positions under him.

Ezekiel 28:12

"You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. 13 You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. 14 "You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. 15 You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you.

- Here is the picture of a beautifully created angelic being. Notice where his location was – ‘in Eden the garden of God.’
- And we know we are not dealing with a man here because verse 13 speaks of ‘the day you were created’ – men since Adam have all been procreated. This passage also references him as the ‘anointed cherub’ (literally a messianic angel who was created to fence in and protect) and nowhere in Scripture is the word “cherub” ever used to denote anything other than an angel.
- In other words, Satan was created to have charge over a territory that included Eden, the garden of God
- And where do we find Satan?

Job 1:6

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. 7 And the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" So Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it."

- The phrase, “walking to and fro” is an action of jurisdiction.

15). Now let’s continue to read about Satan –

Ezekiel 28:16-19

"By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned; therefore I cast you as a profane thing Out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones. 17 "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, That they might gaze at you. 18 "You defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your trading; therefore I brought fire from your midst; it devoured you, and I turned you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all who saw you. 19 All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you; you have become a horror, and shall be no more forever."""

- We can see that the “covering cherub” sinned, and as a result Divine judgment came, leaving his sanctuaries (the places that had been consecrated for him to protect) in a defiled or polluted state. They became ruined – formless and void.
- Please note that according to our scripture *the sanctuaries were his* – they had been given into his charge.
- We also see in this scripture the consequences for Satan of his sin, all of which remain yet future.

16). To review, so that we do not forget, in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth in a perfect state and Satan was created as the ruler of this one province in God's universal kingdom, and he was given an unspecified number of angels to assist him in his task.

- Satan's sin brought Divine intervention in the form of judgment, resulting in the heavens and the earth becoming formless and void.

17). Knowing as we do the nature of God, we will realize that His plan for the earth to be administered by a created being was not going to change. Satan, the one originally created for this purpose was now disqualified, but as a prerequisite of Biblical rulership the one to replace the one disqualified must not only be present, but also be proved worthy to rule before the incumbent can be replaced.

- Saul and David is our picture for this, and we studied this a few weeks ago.

18). And so, within the history of the heavens and the earth we find another Divine intervention, subsequent to the judgment, that marks for us the starting point for time.

[Genesis 1:2b-5](#)

.... And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.

- Here, in the second half of the second verse of all of scripture, we see the restoration of the ruined creation.
- This process would require six days of work, followed by a seventh day of rest

[Genesis 2:1-3](#)

1 Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. 2 And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

- **Through this process God had set a Divinely perfect pattern for the restoration of a ruined creation.**
- This could in no way be improved upon, because God got it right the first time. Nor could it be circumvented, for exactly the same reason.

19). And this which is stated at the very beginning of all scripture is the very thing that the scoffers have willfully forgotten.

- It is not as simple as the words, 'where is the promise of His coming?' might suggest. What the scoffers have chosen to forget is **that which is the very foundation of scripture, that which provides the skeletal framework for God's revelation to man.**
- Remove the foundation and nothing can be properly built

[Psalms 11:3](#)

[If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?](#)

- I sure hope we understand the seriousness that surrounds the scoffers' message as it relates to that which is taught, *and that which is not taught*, in the church (in general) today.

20). For our own sake, and in way of preparation for next week, let's remember that God's intervention through the restoration of the ruined creation was for a very specific purpose.

21). Witness the events of the sixth day –

Genesis 1:26

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." 29 ¶ And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. 30 "Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food"; and it was so. 31 ¶ Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

- Man, a newly created being unlike any other, had been created for the specifically stated purpose of ruling over the restored creation. And this could only be in Satan's stead.
- But as we have seen, this could only occur once Man had been found worthy to take the scepter of rulership from the incumbent ruler.
- What we would also note about Adam is that, unlike Satan, he is made from the very substance of the material creation itself –

Genesis 2:7

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

- This is not an insignificant fact. As we have already seen, by a sovereign act of God the original material creation was able to be fully restored from a ruined condition.

22). We all know what happened next – the woman is deceived by Satan, who we find positioned on the earth, in the Garden, at the place of testing.... in his fallen state. He understands fully that if the Man can be disqualified to rule, he will retain his position.

- As a result of that deception, Adam eats from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, also, understanding exactly what he was doing. Adam represents here a type of Christ, who became sin for us, who of course understood exactly what He was doing. Both Adam and Christ understood that without a wife, Man is unable to rule, for they are one flesh and it is not good for man to be alone.

Genesis 2:23

And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

- The sin of the Man and the Woman had consequences that God had already specified, consequences that would affect all three parts of their being –

Genesis 2:17

"...but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

And-

Romans 6:23a

For the wages of sin is death...

- Their spirits died – became separated from God
- Their souls became corrupted – they now had a sin nature
- Their bodies began to decay – they would experience a physical death
- The material creation also comes under a curse—

Genesis 3:17

Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life.

- Both Mankind and the material creation are now in a ruined state.
- However, this ruin did not affect the heavens...
- And the earth, although cursed, remained inhabitable...
- And in Genesis 3:15, a Redeemer is promised who will provide the way and means for the fulfillment of God's purpose for creating Man—

Genesis 3:15

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."

23). Just as in Day 1 of the restoration, God acts sovereignly, providing a redemption for the Man and the Woman, from spiritual death to spiritual life--

Genesis 3:21

Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.

- And so begins a process of restoration that must ultimately find God's created being, Man, fulfilling the purpose for his creation and ruling over the earth in Satan's stead.
- And this process must follow the pattern set in Genesis 1 – six days of work, followed by a seventh day of rest.
- Not only do we see this process taking place over time after the pattern of Genesis, but the six days of the original restoration also correspond exactly with each individual's salvation experience – from the salvation of the spirit, to the salvation of the soul, leading into the **REST** of the Seventh Day.
- And again, this is what the scoffers have willfully forgotten at the foundation of scripture – the pattern which God has established - Creation, Ruin, Restoration, Rest – six days of work followed by a seventh day of rest.
- And if this process of restoration is forgotten, *the very foundation for all of Scripture* **FORGOTTEN**, then most surely no one would see the coming Seventh Day of Rest, and they would ask, "Where is the promise of His Coming?"—

Hebrews 4:9

There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.

24). We'll close with the admonition Peter gives to his readers –

2Peter 3:8

But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

