

The Promise of His Coming –Part 4

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Adapted from John Herbert's notes, read by Jeanne Alley

1).

II Peter 3:1-9

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."

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. 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."

2). We have seen in past weeks that the erroneous message of the scoffers concerning the promise of the Lord's return is a result of the corruption of the word of the Kingdom, pictured for us by the woman who placed leaven in three measures of meal in the parable in Matthew 13:33. This is a deliberate attack on the central message of scripture and strikes at the very heart of God's foundational revelation to Man.

3). As we saw last week the scoffers message (which began in the first century, continued thereafter, and was predicted by Peter here to come about in the "last days") is a result of willfully forgetting about God's intervention in a time past when sin entered into a perfect creation. You'll remember, the heavens and the earth were created perfectly (Genesis 1:1) and as a result of Satan's rebellion, the heavens and the earth *became* formless and void (recorded in Genesis 1:2a). This ruin was then followed by a restoration process that lasted for six days, followed by a seventh day of rest.

- This forms an unalterable pattern of: creation / ruin / restoration / rest – six days of work / a seventh day of rest.
- If this pattern is not understood, which it isn't in most of Christianity today, then the promise concerning Christ's return gets altered (and all that has to do with Christ's return), and people end up either being confused or disbelieving, or worse, *scoffing* at the truth.

4). We also saw last week that God restored the earth for a specific purpose – so that His new creation, Man, would rule over it in Satan's stead.

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."

- Man, however, was disqualified to rule before ever taking the scepter of rulership, leaving the incumbent, Satan, as the 'ruler of this world'.

5). Everything mentioned here, though, has been willfully forgotten by the scoffers--

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.

- They have chosen to willfully forget God's intervention that brought judgment on Satan's sin... resulting in a ruined creation.
- They have chosen to willfully forget God's intervention through the process of restoration of that which was ruined.
- Claiming instead that 'all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.' In other words, the lie that the scoffers tell is that there is no gap of time between that which is recorded in Genesis 1:1 and that which we see in Genesis 1:2.
- But all things have clearly not continued as they were...nor will they continue on as they are.
- You can hear in the message of the scoffers the echo of the age-old deception –

Genesis 3:1

.....Has God indeed said,.....

6). The scoffers have willfully forgotten that God has set about a process of restoring His ruined creation, Man – a process that must follow the pattern of six days of work followed by a seventh day of rest. *This structure of 7 days is crucial to understanding the Scriptures. (If you are still at all hazy about this, please ask the questions!)*

7). There is however, something here that Peter warns his readers to stop overlooking, and that we obviously must be careful not to overlook also.

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.

- There will be six thousand years of work, bringing about the restoration of that which was ruined in Genesis 3 (mankind). This restoration will be followed by a seventh day of rest – that which we know as the Millennial Kingdom of Christ (again, if you don't know how these two terms can be seen as synonymous, ask the questions!)

Hebrews 4:1. 9

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. ...9 There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.

8). Biblical prophecy also takes us beyond the seventh day, showing an intervention by God that has consequences that parallel the events of what we see in the beginning. Let's see the connection--

Genesis 1:2

The earth ~~was~~ became without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Compared with—

1Corinthians 15:24-26

Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

- At the conclusion of the Seventh Day, God the Son will deliver the Kingdom to God the Father, having put an end to all rule and all authority and power –

Psalms 2:9

You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel."

- At this point *death itself* is destroyed –

Revelation 20:14

Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire.

- Death is always the consequence of sin – (Romans 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death*) and the destruction of death denotes the eradication of sin.
- In other words, when God intervenes, like He did when Satan sinned, God will start over. And, when God intervenes again directly concerning the heavens and the earth (which are cursed and need restoring), He will start over. That is why we read the following from Peter—

II Peter 3:7

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.

- The heavens and the earth that are now (those, which have come out of the restoration begun in Genesis 1:2b) are reserved for fire at the end of the 7th day.

2Peter 3:10-12

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. 11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

- This destruction at the conclusion of the Millennial Kingdom affects both the heavens and the earth, just as we saw in the account in Genesis 1:2a. And just as there was a new beginning in Genesis 1:2b, so at this point there will be a new beginning marking the start of ‘the day of God’ – the first of the endless ages of eternity.

2Peter 3:13

Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Isaiah 65:17

"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.

Revelation 21:1

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

- Not only do the scoffers willfully forget Biblical history in relation to the heavens and earth ‘of old’, but they also willfully forget Biblical prophecy concerning ‘the heavens and the earth which are now’.
- Both Biblical history and Biblical prophecy are absolutely certain.

9). So why is the present world destined for fire and not flood as we saw in Genesis?

- The simple answer is because of the covenant God made with Noah –

Genesis 9:8-13

Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: 9 "And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, 10 "and with every living creature that is with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth. 11 "Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." 12 ¶ And God said: "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: 13 "I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth.

- Which brings us nicely to another significant section of Biblical history and prophecy which our scoffers willingly forget.

10). *Genesis 5:1-3*

This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. 2 He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in

the day they were created. 3 And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.

- The fifth chapter of Genesis begins with a genealogy covering ten generations from Adam (through the lineage of Seth).
- And within this genealogy, only two persons are distinguished from the rest by an additional commentary.

Genesis 5:21

Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah. 22 After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters. 23 So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. 24 And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

- The name Enoch in Hebrew is the word *Chanowk*, which means ‘initiated.’ It comes from the Hebrew word *Chanah*, which means ‘to discipline, train up.’

- And then we see in the tenth generation from Adam—

Genesis 5:28

Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and had a son. 29 And he called his name Noah, saying, "This one will comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD has cursed."

- The Hebrew name Noah means ‘rest.’

11). It is not an insignificant fact that Enoch was the seventh from Adam and Noah the tenth, and 7 and 10 are numbers of completion.

- So what does this teach us? After a complete period of time, one man, Enoch, is removed from the earth alive and taken into heaven.
- And after another complete period of time one man and his family, remaining on the earth, are kept safely through a time of world-wide destruction caused by a flood similar to that of Genesis 1:2.

12). Now in the Gospel of Luke we read this-

Luke 17:26

"And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man:

- As it was in the days of Noah, preceding the flood, where one man is taken alive into heaven, so it will also be in the days of the Son of Man, preceding the great tribulation, where one man – the one new man in Christ, will be taken alive into heaven.
- As it was in the days of Noah, where one man and his family were preserved safely through a time of world-wide destruction by Divine intervention, so it will also be in the days of the Son of Man, where the new creation in Jacob and his family – the nation of Israel - will be preserved safely through the great tribulation as a result of Divine intervention.

- It is after 6 generations, corresponding to the 6 days of work, that we see the foundational type for the Church, in Enoch, being raptured—
...24 And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

And it is after 600 years, corresponding to the 6000 years of Man's Day that we see the foundational type for Israel, in Noah, passing through the great tribulation—

Genesis 7:6

Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters were on the earth.

- All of this of course corresponds exactly with the six days of work and the seventh day of rest presented in Genesis 1. The foundational framework on which all of scripture rests. *The very thing that the scoffers willfully forget.*

13). And it is interesting to note that there is only one prophecy recorded for Enoch, and we find it in the Book of Jude. And what is really interesting is that Enoch, the one removed into heaven, typifying the removal of the Church into heaven, prophesies concerning those scoffers who would deny this very event—

Jude 1:14

Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, 15 to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."

- We would do well to note that the 'ungodly' are not the unsaved, but contextually they would have to be the scoffers (and therefore eternally saved Christians) who adhere to a false message. And this would not just be those we might consider as cults, but mainstream Christians – the very ones we find in the Book of Revelation who claim (3:17)...*'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing.'*

14). Not only does scripture give us a genealogy through the Godly line of Seth, but also a genealogy through the Godless line of Cain, recorded in Genesis 4.

- These two genealogies move in tandem together through six generations, but in the seventh generation things change. This points directly to the events that will take place at the conclusion of Man's Day, after six days, after six thousand years.
- In the seventh generation through Seth, Enoch, as we have noted, *walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.* Pointing to the removal of the Church from the earth. In the seventh generation through Cain, however, we find the genealogy *terminated.* This is pointing to the present world system being brought to an end with the coming of the Millennial Kingdom of Christ.

15). There is one other thing we should note in scripture with regards to Enoch –

Hebrews 11:5

By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. 6 But

without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

- We can see here that Enoch exercised faith, which pleased God. And the faith he exercised was believing that God was and that He was a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Ask yourself, do you believe in rewards? And then ask yourself *why*.)

16). What we see in Enoch being 'taken' before the worldwide flood of Noah's day is the foundational type for the rapture of the Church.

- And by comparing scripture with scripture – here a little, there a little – we can build a complete picture.
- Let's look at the picture presented by Joseph, who had his name changed—

Genesis 41:45

And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-Paaneah (savior of the world). And he gave him as a wife Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On.

- Joseph was married to a Gentile bride before the years of famine and before his dealings with his brothers.
- Let's also look at the picture presented with Moses, who having been rejected by his brethren, marries a Gentile bride before being sent back to be Israel's deliverer.
- Isaac marries Rebekah before Abraham marries Keturah and becomes fruitful.
- Lot escapes by the skin of his teeth (so to speak) before the destruction of the cities of the plain.
- And Ruth's intention to be Boaz's wife is made known on his threshing floor before Boaz redeems the inheritance.
- And in the Book of Revelation, the Bride of Christ is revealed before the scroll is opened, which begins the Great Tribulation.

17). All of these Scripture word-pictures present the same picture of the timing of the promise of His Coming. *And our scoffers have willfully forgotten all of this.*

18). Similarly, Noah and his family passing safely through a world-wide flood is the foundational type for Israel being delivered from the hands of Antichrist through the Great tribulation.

- Just as Joseph's brothers are delivered from the famine...
- Israel is delivered from the brickyards of Egypt...
- And Jonah, following repentance is delivered from the sea.

19). Not only do we have the preceding clear pictures, but we will remember that Israel had a very clear command to keep this 7 day structure (God's timetable) at the forefront of their minds—

Exodus 31:13

"Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you. 14 'You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone

who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. 15 'Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. 16 'Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. 17 'It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.'"

- The Sabbath was a 'sign' established between God and the Children of Israel forever. It was a sign which drew from the day of rest in Genesis 2 and pointed forward to the day of rest yet future.
- Every time Israel kept the Sabbath they were acknowledging God's established pattern for restoring a ruined creation – six days of work followed by a seventh day of rest – the pattern established in Genesis 1 and 2 and now applied to God's present restoration work and future rest.
- Their failure to keep the Sabbath was looked upon as a rejection of this truth, with dire consequences for those who did so. Anyone who rejected this truth with their actions of disobedience would be 'cut off from among his people'.
- And of course the present day equivalent of Israel failing to keep the Sabbath, and thereby rejecting that which God has said concerning the six days of work followed by the seventh day of rest...those who ask mockingly, 'Where is the promise of His coming?' These would be our scoffers and more specifically, those who adhere to the 'amillennialist' doctrine that they profess in all its various facets.

20). We should know with **absolute certainty** that the present six days of work will be concluded and that they will be followed by a seventh day of rest. A day when the promises made to Abraham, who was the tenth generation from Noah through the line of Shem, will be realized in their entirety – pictured in Noah and his family's new beginning on leaving the Ark.

- And we may also be certain of an absolute 'new beginning', signified by the eighth day, when there will be a new heaven and a new earth.

Revelation 21:1

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. 2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." 5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

21). In our scripture from 2 Peter 3, Peter asks the question in relation to what we have been studying... *Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness?*

- And it is the question I leave us with this morning – considering what we have learned over the last four weeks - *what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,*
- Or do our actions suggest we have already begun to forget the promise of His coming?