Where is He?

2 Peter 3:1-9
5/3/09

Introduction: vv.1-4 – The Scoffers say: "Where is He?"

- ***Christ's apparent delay does not nullify His promise to return for Judgment!***

I. God judged the world in the Past; He'll do it again (v.5-7)
(His consistency guarantees the Future Judgment)

II. God is not Time-bound nor is He under Time Constraints (v.8)
(His timetable anticipates the Future Judgment)

III. God's apparent delay gives Sinners Time to Repent (v.9)
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v. 1
"This second letter" - a follow-up to 1 Peter.

"I stir up" – to awaken as you would shake someone who is sleeping to awaken them

"Your pure minds" - unmixed. Peter is speaking to the minds of God's people, because God's principles are for God's people.

"By way of remembrance" – Why repeat?

1) Many truths are so important that they need repeating

2) Our minds are prone toward forgetfulness

   See Peter's reminders in 2 Peter 1:12-15

"This second epistle. . . I stir up. . . remembrance" – Remembrance about what? The Lord's return

In Peter's previous epistle he had taught God's people to live honorable lives so that God would be glorified on the day of His "visitation" –

1 Peter 2:12
Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

He also had offered encouragement to suffering saints based on Christ's return, when His "glory shall be revealed" (1 Pet. 4:13).

To pastors, Peter spoke of the chief Shepherd's appearing, at which time His rewards (crowns) would be given out (1 Peter 5:4).

The word "rapture" is a derivative of the Latin word "*rapere*" (meaning rapid). This word occurs in the Latin translation of I Thessalonians 4:7, which translates the Greek expression "caught up."

Although the Bible contains many references to the Rapture, there are four key passages which describe this momentous event.

1) **Matthew 24:22, 31, 40-42** - The Rapture is a time when Christ will **REMOVE** His elect saints *(The Rapture = **Deliverance** from divine wrath)*

2) **John 14:1-3** - The Rapture is a time when Christ will **RECEIVE** His Elect saints *(The Rapture = **Reception** into Christ's arms)*

3) **I Corinthians 15:50-58** - The Rapture is a time when Christ will **RENEW** (resurrect) His elect saints *(The Rapture = **Transformation** from corruptible mortality)*

4) **I Thessalonians 4:13-18** - The rapture is a time when Christ will **REUNITE** His elect saints *(The Rapture = **Reunion** with the dead in Christ)*

After the rapture, God's wrath!

SEE: Isaiah 2:10-12, 17-21; 13:6-13; Amos 5:18-20.
Every reference to the Day of the Lord describes unparalleled terror and judgment, not congruous with a major portion of the early stages of the 7-year Tribulation.

The Day of the Lord will be:

1) A day when only the Lord will be exalted (not the Antichrist) (Is. 2:17)
2) A day of desperation (Is. 2:19)
3) A day when God shakes the earth (Is. 2:21)
4) A day of fainting hands and melting hearts (Is. 13:7)
5) A day of shocking pain (Is. 13:8)
6) A day of signs in the sky (Is. 13:10)
7) A day of no deliverance (Ezek. 7:19)
8) A day of destruction (Joel 1:15)
9) A day of torment (Joel 2:1-6)
10) A day of no escape (Amos 5:18-19)
11) A day of darkness (Amos 5:20)
12) A day of judgment on the heathen (Gentiles) (Obad. 15)
13) A day of wrath (Zeph. 1:15)
14) A day of no hope (Zeph. 1:17)
15) A day of cosmic disturbances (Zech. 14:6-7)

V. 2

"The holy prophets and . . . us the apostles" – Both the Old & New Testament recipients of divine revelation were to be heeded.

Our authority is also God's Word, as given by His prophets and apostles.

v. 3

"In the last days" - one of the signs of the last days will be the existence of abundant scoffers (mockers) regarding the Lord's return. In an attempt to discourage thoughts regarding Christ's return, Satan will energize and motivate those who belong to him so that they will spread a propaganda to discourage the faith of others. These false teachers will literally deny the Lord who bought them (2:1). And more specifically, they will deny His impending return.

What is a "scoffer"? He is one who mocks or makes fun of someone or something. In this case, they will ridicule rapture teaching and they will poke fun at the Scripture's teaching regarding the Day of the Lord judgment.

Why will scoffers scoff or mockers mock the concept of the Lord's return for judgment? Answer: Such a concept gets in the way of **"their own lusts."** They want to live with the goal of gratifying their own selfish, lustful appetites. Therefore they deny truth and ignore Scriptural teaching to the point of attempting to make it look ridiculous so that such teaching does not become a threat to satisfying their perverted lusts and worldly desires.

Jude also warned of End Time scoffers –

Jude 1:17-19
But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

--Expect opposition to eschatological teaching

--Expect numerous denials of Rapture & Wrath teaching

--Expect people to laugh at the concept of the second coming of Christ

v. 4

What is the specific content of the scoffer?

"Where is the promise of His coming?" – What has become of His so-called promise to return?

With skepticism they will ask: "Do you really believe that stuff about Christ coming in the clouds, removing His people from the earth, and then destroying the earth by fire?"

"Since the fathers fell asleep" - What fathers? The Jewish patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the prophets.

This appeal to the patriarchs seems to imply that the scoffers will be aware of the Old Testament. Also, their appeal to "creation" (*ktisis*) indicates that they at least profess to believe in Intelligent Design and a form of theism.

Could these scoffers be Jewish, Muslim, or professing Christians? Whoever they are, they at least had a belief in creationism. Perhaps they grew up in a Christian home, but rejected Biblical End-Times teaching.

"All things continue" - all things remain on a natural, constant unbroken consistency. "All things continue as they have" . . . "They maintain that god's promise is unreliable and God's universe a stable, unchanging system where events like the *parousia* just do not happen" (Green, cited by Rogers, p. 588).

- ***Christ's apparent delay does not nullify His promise to return for Judgment!***

I. God judged the world in the Past; He'll do it again (v.5-7)
(His consistency guarantees the Future Judgment)

v. 5

"They willingly are ignorant of" – they volitionally choose to ignore certain historical reality that demonstrates God's judgment in the past.

Willful ignorance is a sad reminder of man's depravity and of his desire to stick his head in the sand and to ignore certain facts that fly in the face of his pursuit of the selfish gratification of lusts.

"Men love darkness rather than light…"

To ignore a fact does not alter that fact!

They deliberately shut their eyes to the Scriptural evidence of the Noaic flood. They also deliberately remain blind to the geological evidence of a past catastrophic universal deluge by water.

"By the Word of God" – God created by His powerful Word. When He created the earth He did so with a vapor canopy which surrounded the earth, producing a green house effect. This water canopy was then broken up by God, producing the flood of Noah's day.

To deny that the flood occurred is to deny one of the clearest, most well-documented declarations of Scripture.

To deny it is to deny the validity of the host of other Scriptures which refer to it (Job 12:15, 22:16; Ps. 29:10, 104:6-9; Is. 54:9), including the Words of Jesus Christ (Mt. 24:37-39; Lk. 17:26-27) and several other New Testament writers (Heb . 11:7; I Pet. 3:20; II Pet. 2:5, 3:5-6).

(There are over 270 flood stories told in cultures all over the earth. [MacArthur note])

Genesis 7:11
The flood waters would come from two directions: underneath and above.

"The fountains (springs) **of the great deep" –** All of the subterranean waters would be brought up by global quakes.

The sequence of this verse indicates that the earth's crust breaks up first, then the heavens drop their water. This is interesting because the volcanic explosions due to the fractured earth would have sent magma and dust into the atmosphere, along with gigantic sprays of water, gas, and air – all penetrating the canopy and triggering its downpour (MacArthur note).

"The windows of heaven" – God here paints a picture of the sky being, as it were, closed up in a vast store of moisture and now (for the first time in history), the canopy unleashes its H20 as the windows open up and the rain comes pouring through.

Dr. Joseph Dillow has calculated how much water vapor it would be physically possible to suspend above the atmosphere as a blanket around the earth. He has suggested that it would be the water vapor equivalent of about 12 meters (40 feet) thickness of liquid water. He calculated that such a quantity of water would be sufficient to generate 40 days and 40 nights of torrential rainfall; whereas if these waters above had been clouds, then the moisture in the current atmosphere, if precipitated to earth as rainfall, would be only the equivalent of less than five centimeters (two inches) thickness of liquid water hardly enough to sustain 40 days and 40 nights of rainfall at the time of the Flood.

Therefore, it seems clear that the reference in Genesis 7:11 to the "windows of heaven being opened" is a reference to the collapse of this water vapor canopy, which somehow became unstable and fell as rain, the eyewitnesses describing the event as the "windows of heaven being opened". Some have suggested that when the fountains of the great deep broke open, presumably as volcanic eruptions, the dust generated by these eruptions would have spread up into the water vapor canopy, causing the water vapor to nucleate with dust particles and form water droplets that then fell as rain.

Excerpt from The Answers Book, Revised Edition, by Ken Ham, Andrew Snelling and Carl Wieland, published by Master Books, 1992.
Supplied by Answers in Genesis

v. 6
The first time God judged the world was by water; the next time will be by fire! (v. 7)

God always removes and protects His people first!

Luke 17:26-30
And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed *them* all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

v. 7
"By the same word" – The same powerful Word of God that created all things is sustaining all things (providing a consistency and order). But God will one day give the word, and the present order will be interrupted as God intervenes for judgment.

"Kept in store" – Things have been saved and spared God's supernatural intervention but are pre-destined for the outpouring of God's wrath.

"Reserved unto fire" – See verse 10.

Zephaniah 1:18
Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD'S wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.

Revelation 18:8
Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

Just like O.T. Babylon was proud and judged for it, so will eschatalogical Babylon be (SEE: Jeremiah 50:29-34).

"...In one day" - the destruction of material Babylon will <u>not</u> be a process but she will be destroyed like Sodom and Gomorreh (Is. 13:19ff).

In one day, Material Babylon will be stripped of those things she boasted in (namely, life, happiness, and food).

"Death" - corresponds to "I am no widow" (v. 7)
"Mourning" - corresponds to "shall see no sorrow"
"Famine" - corresponds to "lived deliciously"

"Burned with <u>fire</u>" - when God judged the earth the first time, it was with <u>water</u> (the flood); when God judges the second time, it will be by <u>fire</u>.

II. God is not Time-bound nor is He under Time Constraints (v.8)
(His timetable anticipates the Future Judgment)

Notice that Peter does not say that one day equal a thousand years nor that a thousand years equals one day (some have used this thinking to substantiate the day-0age theory of creation, or the amillennialist's interpretation of the reference to the thousand year reign of Christ.

Rather, Peter draws a comparison, using the adverb "as" showing that with God, a thousand years are like a day and vice-versa.

The Lord's apparent delay does not nullify His promise to return for judgment. He is not in Heaven looking at His watch or clock, wondering when He should finally judge the earth. The time table has already been pre-determined.

You see, what seems like a long time to us is not a long time to God.

God is Eternal *(The Timelessness of God)*

1) "Eternal" refers to the fact that God exists endlessly. He is without beginning or end; ut has existed in eternity past and will exist in eternity future.

2) The attribute of "eternity" is closely associated with God's attribute of "self-existence." "If God exists endlessly, then He never came into existence nor was He ever caused to come into existence. He had no starting point and will have no ending point.

God is called…

1) *El Olam* (the everlasting God) (Gen. 21:33)

2) *Alpha and Omega* (Rev. 1:11; 21:6; 22:13)

3) *I AM* (Exod. 3:14)

4) *The Ancient of Days* (Dan. 7:9, 13, 22)
(Note: God is viewed with white hair, depicting His ancientness)

Scriptural Statements of God's Eternal Nature

1) *"From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God"* (Ps. 90:2)

2) *"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy. . ."* (Is. 57:15)

3) *"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms"* (Deut. 33:27)

4) Creation manifests God's *"eternal power and Godhead"* (Rom. 1:20)

5) *"Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."* (I Tim. 1:17)

6) *"The everlasting God"* (Gen. 21:33)

7) *"Thy throne is established of old: Thou art from everlasting"*
(Ps. 93:2)

8) *"Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding."*

9) *"Art Thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One?"* (Hab. 1:12)

10) *". . . According to the commandment of the everlasting God"* (Rom. 16:26)

Special Features of God's Eternal Nature

1) God is in no way bound or limited by time.

"One day is with the Lord as [just like] a thousand years and a thousand years as one day" (II Pet. 3:8).

2) God's existence cannot be measured by time. He always was and He always will be. He exists independently of time.

Before God created the sun, moon, and the orbit of the earth (features by which we measure time), He existed; and after *"time shall be no more"* and the constellations no more give us time measurements (since they will be done away with - Is. 60:19), He will exist as eternity goes on.

God is the Author of time; His existence cannot be measured by time.

III. God's apparent delay gives Sinners Time to Repent (v.9)
(His mercy waits for the Future Judgment)

"The Lord is not slow to full his promise as some count slowness" (ESV)

God does not measure speed the way we do.

He could say, "Behold I come quickly" or "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" and then wait 2,000 years!

Do not view his delay in coming as if He was powerless to come or as if He was unwilling to come.

His apparent delay reflects His patient and merciful heart, which desires that none perish but that all come to repentance and salvation (SEE v. 15).

He is perhaps waiting for YOU to repent and put your faith in Christ. Had He come prior to today, some in this audience would have missed the rapture and would have been engulfed in God's wrath.

If He has delayed His coming, it could be for you!