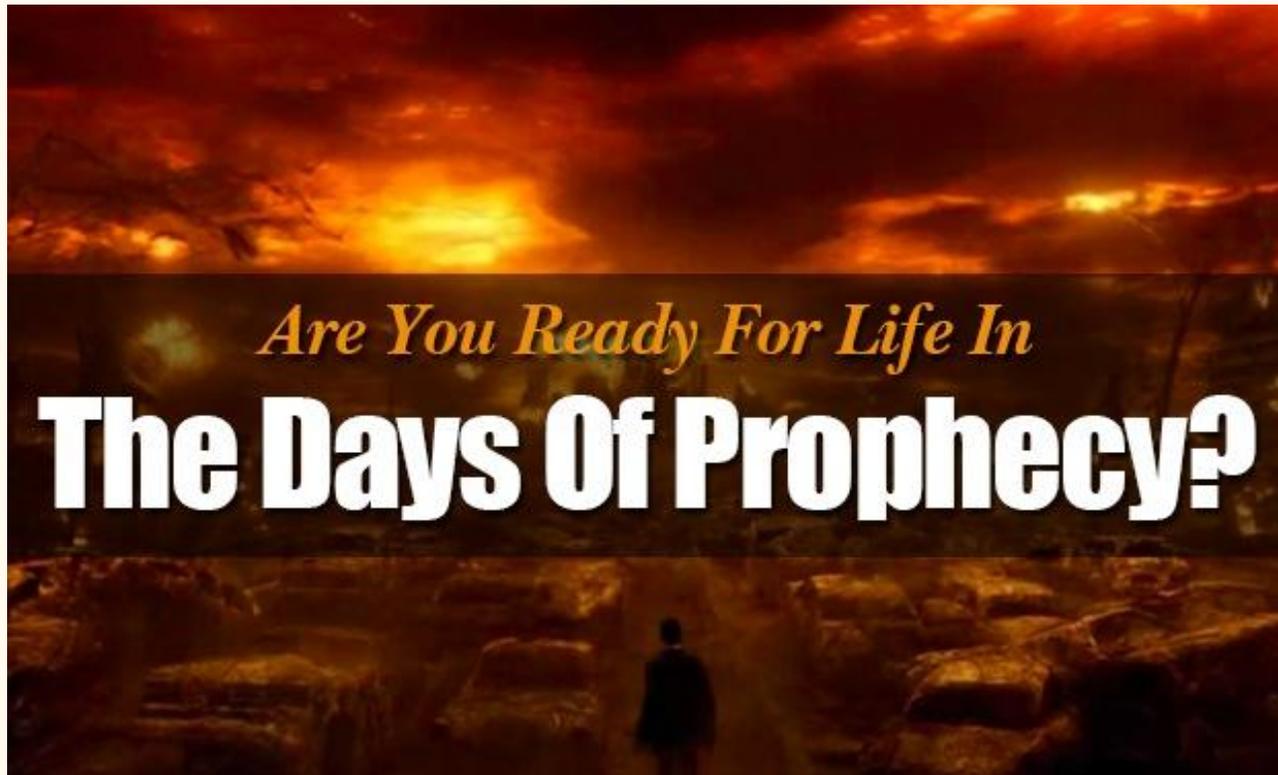


REMEMBER WHAT I TOLD YOU?



"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 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 the creation." (2nd Peter 3:3-4)

Peter begins his outline of the last days saying, "Knowing this first" – giving notice that what we are about to read is a principle point the Lord wants us to get.

"There shall come in the last days scoffers."

Literally, it reads, "in the last of days." The times referred to are those immediately preceding the Return of Christ, which also serves to introduce the fact that there is an age to come.

"Scoffers" (Gk.*empaiktes*) can also mean a false teacher or a mocker "walking after their own lusts." The reference to the scoffers 'walking after their own lusts' is more than simply a phrase.

All sinners walk after their own lusts. So the lustful life and the scoffing voice are not associated here without purpose.

These scoffers and false teachers *openly* stand in direct opposition to God's Word, but not as wolves in sheep's clothing, but walking openly as wolves. The masks are dropped – they don't even pretend anymore.

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

First off, note the question, "Where is?" – by implication the answer is "nowhere" – the Promise has, they imply, passed away and disappeared. The second thing to notice is the question itself. It shows how familiar the early Church was with the Promise of His return.

There are those that argue that the Rapture is of recent origin – something that was invented by J.N. Darby or Margaret MacDonald or C.I. Scofield. But as a doctrine, it was actually invented by [Jesus Christ](#) and propagated by the Apostles Peter and [Paul](#).

The scoffers here are referring to the promise given to “the fathers” before they ‘fell asleep’ or died. They were expecting the fulfillment of the promise given in the Gospels and especially that given by two angels to the Apostles and recorded in Acts 1:11:

“Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, *shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go* into heaven.”

The first generation of Christians believed the Lord could, and probably would, return for them in their lifetime – that’s what [2nd Thessalonians 2:1-12](#) is all about. The scoffers were mocking those believers that were still looking up.

The implication here is that the scoffers knew Christ had *not* come because they expected to know when He did. Peter notes in his rebuttal that the scoffers were *willingly ignorant* (that is to say, they *knew* the truth but *preferred* the lie), of the fact that the world that once was had perished in the flood. Therefore the statement that all things continued as they did from creation is not true.

Moreover, Peter says, the same Word of God that caused the world to overflow with water and perish is the Word that promises His return. Peter goes on to explain to the scoffers why the Lord has not yet returned. He is holding out until the very last convert.

“But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”

I’ve heard uncounted interpretations of the ‘day equals a thousand years’ reference. Peter is restating a fact from Psalms 90:4.

“For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.”

It could be interpreted as a reference to the eternal nature of God, Who exists outside of time and space in a state of ever-present ‘now’- and to Whom the passage of a thousand years is nothing.

Or it could be interpreted as a reference to the six days of Creation and the six thousand year reign of man. On the seventh day of Creation, God rested.

In this view, the Thousand Year Millennial Kingdom that follows the Tribulation begins with the dawn of the seven thousandth year since Creation. This view finds some support from the prophecy of Hosea 6:2; “After two days will He revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight.”

Israel was scattered into the Diaspora almost two thousand years ago (two ‘days’). It was restored physically in 1948 but has yet to be fully redeemed.

Zechariah [predicts](#) the national redemption of Israel at the Second Coming, Revelation promises a [thousand-year reign](#) of Israel’s Messiah.

Assessment:

The scoffers of whom Peter speaks are primarily believers. Peter speaks of their being “willingly ignorant.” They *prefer* the lie because they *fear* the truth.

The willing ignorance of the last days is amply demonstrated in those churches where Bible prophecy is categorized somewhere between exorcism and faith-healing in terms of doctrinal importance.

Part of the reason is because they don’t understand it. But the main reason, I believe, is because it scares them.

It's depressing. For many Christians, Bible prophecy is darkness and gloom and fear and catastrophe. Well, maybe. But so is our human existence.

Life isn't *all* darkness and gloom, of course, but neither is Bible prophecy. Rationally, there is no more reason to fear what will happen to the world at the end than there is to fear what will happen to me at *my* end.

After all, when I die, I will be as dead as I can get. I won't be any deader whether I go alone or if I go in a blinding nuclear flash. But according to the Scriptures, the moment that I die I will be [present with the Lord](#).

If the Rapture happens before I die, then I will get to skip the dying process and go straight into the Lord's presence, body *and* soul.

The Bible offers but two possible alternative fates for a Christian in the last days. Either I die and go to heaven. Or I just go straight to heaven.

There is no third option, so what is there about Bible prophecy that should be scary?

Unfolding Bible prophecy provides a glimpse into the mindset of the Apostle Paul as he awaited his execution in Rome.

"For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." (2 Timothy 2:1:12)

Paul *knew* what was coming *after* Nero's axe fell, so Paul had no fear of the axe itself.

Bible prophecy is like that. Watching Bible prophecy unfold with such precision and attention to detail reassures us that it isn't the axe that is important, but what comes afterwards.

Bible prophecy is instead hard evidence that the One 'Whom I have believed' remains as firmly in control of world events as He has proved to be in my personal life, "which I have committed unto Him against that day" and that, in Paul's words, "He is able to keep it . . . against that day."

Understanding the Big Picture opens the door to an entirely new outlook on unfolding Bible prophecy. Scoffers fear it because they don't understand it. Put into proper perspective, Bible prophecy is proof positive that the Lord remains just as firmly in control of world events as He is of whether or not you get a raise or a new job.

Bible prophecy is an antidote to depression and fear. It is an affirmation of faith *from* the One in Whom we have believed, are reminder of the Promise. It is why Jesus gave us prophecy. It isn't a parlor trick to use to amaze our friends.

It is a retainer on the Promise. In this generation, we live in an age of miracles. There appears that there is nothing that science won't be able to accomplish eventually, thanks to the advent of computers.

It is incontrovertible evidence that cannot be shaken by modern scientific 'miracles'. When the skeptic argues for evolution and random selection, trotting out fossils, skeletons and diagrams, it seems pretty convincing. Especially since modern science can replicate almost any miracle.

Except one.

Mankind cannot predict the future. It simply can't be done. No computer could calculate every detail of every life in advance, which is what would be necessary. Should one person do something unexpected then the whole course of future history would change.

The Bible gives a single explanation for a fluid, changeable series of events predicted to happen thousands of years in the future -- the events that define our present day.

The skeptic has multiple explanations for static events that have *already* happened. Which is more convincing? Bible prophecy proves Jesus was the Son of God, regardless of the latest scientific, archeological or historical discovery. No matter what else might be offered as 'evidence' to the contrary, there is no other explanation for Bible prophecy.

It is our generation's *unique* miracle.

Bible prophecy was given to the Church in the last days for the same reason that the Apostles were given miracles, signs and wonders following Pentecost.

To demonstrate the power of God. To establish the authority to forgive sins. To herald when the time of His soon return is near. To remind us of the Promise.

“But these things have I told you, that *when the time shall come*, ye may remember that I told you of them.” (John 16:4)

We remember, Lord.

at July 12, 2017