

Lesson 11
2 Peter 3
Be Diligent and Not Be Complacent!

Memory verse: “but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom also He made the universe.” (Hebrews 1:2 NIV)

Everybody is ignorant,” said Will Rogers, “only on different subjects.”

How true, and yet that is not the whole story because there is more than one kind of ignorance. Some people are ignorant because of lack of opportunity to learn, or perhaps lack of ability to learn; others are (to use Peter’s phrase in 2 Peter 3:5) “willingly ...ignorant.” “Not ignorance, but ignorance of ignorance, is the death of knowledge,” said a famous philosopher, and he is right.

Peter has dealt with the character and conduct of the apostates in 2 Peter 2, and now he deals with their false teaching. Peter affirmed the certainty of Christ’s coming in glory (2 Peter 1:16ff.), a truth that the apostates questioned and denied. In fact, they were scoffing at the very idea of the return of the Lord, the judgment of the world, and the establishment of a glorious kingdom.

How important it is for us as Christians to understand God’s truth! Today we are surrounded by scoffers, people who refuse to take the Bible seriously when it speaks about Christ’s return and the certainty of judgment.

We are also reminded that it is possible to have a pure and sincere mind and yet have a bad memory! Peter wrote this second letter primarily to awaken and arouse his readers (2 Peter 1:12–15). It is easy for Christians to “get accustomed to God’s truth.” Eutychus went to sleep listening to Paul preach (Acts 20:7–10)! Our heavenly Father sacrificed so that we might have the truth of the Word and the freedom to practice it, but too often we take this for granted and become complacent. The church needs to be aroused regularly lest the enemy find us asleep and take advantage of our spiritual lethargy.

The purpose of prophetic truth is not speculation but motivation; thus Peter concluded his letter with the kind of practical admonitions that all of us must heed. It is unfortunate when people run from one prophetic conference to another, filling their notebooks, marking their Bibles, drawing their charts, and yet not living their lives to the glory of God. In fact, some of the saints battle each other more over prophetic interpretation than perhaps any other subject.

All true Christians believe that Jesus Christ is coming again. They may differ in their views of when certain promised events will occur, but they all agree that He is returning as He promised. Furthermore, all Christians agree that this faith in future glory ought to motivate the church. This does not mean that we should stop studying prophecy, or that every opposing viewpoint is correct, which is an impossibility. But it does mean that, whatever views we hold, they ought to make a difference in our lives.

“Be diligent!” is the admonition that best summarizes what Peter wrote in this closing paragraph. He used this word before in 2 Peter 1: “Giving all diligence, add to your faith” (2 Peter 1:5); “Give diligence to make your calling and election sure” (2 Peter 1:10); “Moreover I will endeavour [be diligent] that ye may be able” (2 Peter 1:15). If we are going to be successful Christians, we must learn to be diligent.

To learn in this lesson: 1) Scoffers and their message 2) God and Jesus’ Second Coming 3) Christian diligence

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) Who are called scoffers in this passage and are there any today? (10 minutes)

2. How did Peter use the facts about God and the promise of Christ’s coming in verses 1 to 10 to refute scoffers and also need all readers to understand? (15 minutes)

3. As we come to the end of the study of this epistle, what Christian diligence in the light of the Lord’s return are emphasised by Peter’s admonitions in verses 11 to 18 and why is it important? (20 minutes)