

Jesus juva

Sunday, December 14, 2025 | Between Advents

Week 1 | 1 Peter 3:1-7 | “Perspective, Pt. 1”

READ: 2 Peter 3:1-7 (ESV)

¹ This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, ² that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, ³ knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. ⁴ They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.” ⁵ For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, ⁶ and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. ⁷ But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

Henry David Thoreau famously said, “It’s not what you *look* at that matters, it’s what you *see*.” The things we fixate on have an impact on how we perceive the world. Often, those with a positive outlook on the world aren’t ignoring the bad; they choose not to ignore the good. Fred Rogers, of *Mr. Rogers’ Neighborhood* fame, told a story about how the news often frightened him as a kid. To help him, his mother said, “Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.” Her point, of course, is that even in scenes of tragedy, there are always rays of hope. You see, one’s perspective can significantly shape one’s state of mind, depending on what we choose to see.

The Season of Advent is a tool designed to help us shape our perception of reality. Advent comes from the Latin *adventus*, meaning “arrival,” and in the weeks leading up to Christmas, Christians look *back* to Jesus’s *first* coming and *forward* to his *second*. This is important because, as the generation living between advents, we’re at risk of losing a proper perspective on the world. And should we lose sight of what’s important—should we begin focusing on the wrong things—we’ll not only be caught unawares when the Lord returns, but we’ll also live without purpose, drifting from one pointless distraction to another.

This passage is divided into *four* parts:

1.) Vs. 1-7 – The **Inviolability** of God's Word

Vs. 1 – The “**second letter**” Peter is referring to is, of course, *1 Peter*. Roughly 3 years passed between the two books.¹ Much like the first, this second letter was written to warn, encourage, and instruct churches facing severe persecution.² Peter himself was facing considerable hardship and would soon be martyred in Rome under Emperor Nero, likely in late A.D. 64 or 65.³ As such, we regard these words **as Peter's last will and testament**. The contents of this letter are those of a dying man who would soon step into eternity.

Peter says that in both letters he endeavored to stir up a “**sincere mind**.” A “**sincere mind**” is one “without hidden motives or pretense,”⁴ “having pure motivation,”⁵ an “unmixed”⁶ or “unsullied...soul.”⁷ It is the sort of mind that's fixated on the proper things. And Peter does this “**by way of reminder**.” Often, the mind gets overwhelmed by the things coming at it, and it loses sight of those that deserve its full attention.

Vs. 2 – What exactly did Peter want them to remember? Two things:

a.) The OT – “**The predictions of the holy prophets**.”

b.) The NT – “**The commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles**.”

We're not sure yet which predictions or commandments the apostle is referring to exactly. However, Peter is calling his readers to **meditate on the Scriptures**. A “**sincere mind**” is the sort that is founded on God's word. Peter is repeating the lesson of Psalm 1: “**Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law, he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper**” (Psa. 1:1-3).

Vs. 3 – Specifically, Peter reminds us “**that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing**.” A “**scoffer**” is “one who makes fun of by mocking.”⁸ This is not good-natured ribbing, as one might

¹ William Baker, *James, 1-2 Peter: Faith, Suffering, and Knowledge*, Twenty-First Century Biblical Commentary Series (AMG Publishers, 2004), [185](#).

² Moisés Silva and Merrill Chapin Tenney, in *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible, M-P* (Grand Rapids, MI: The Zondervan Corporation, 2009), [832](#).

³ Mark Allan Powell, “*Peter*,” in *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary (Revised and Updated)*, ed. Mark Allan Powell (New York: HarperCollins, 2011), [784](#).

⁴ DBAG (2000), 282.

⁵ Louw-Nida (1996), 746.

⁶ *The Lexham Analytical Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012).

⁷ Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1889), 175.

⁸ Louw-Nida (1996), 434.

do with a close friend. This is open ridicule and scorn. They consider the predictions in the OT and the Lord's commandment in the NT to be *ridiculous*. Jude talks about the same group, calling them "worldly people, devoid of the Spirit" that "cause divisions" (Jud 19). And considering they aren't ruled by the Spirit, Peter goes on to describe them, saying, "their own sinful desires." The flesh is their guide rather than the Spirit. Thus, one of the primary characteristics of the "last days" is the emergence of a worldly, unregenerated, and divisive people who totally disregard and blatantly mock the Scriptures.

Admittedly, given that Christianity is the predominant religion in the West, it makes sense that it would be satirized in pop culture, especially when church scandals become well-known. But this ignores the fact that, even when it *wasn't* the dominant religion, it was still openly mocked by the mainstream. Celsus, a second-century Greek philosopher, criticized Christianity for several reasons, prime amongst them is the value that Christians placed the lower-class. He said, "[Christians] show they want and are able to convince only the foolish, dishonorable, and stupid, only slaves, women, and little children" (*Cels.* 3.44). Lucian, a second-century satirist, in his play, *The Death of Peregrinus*, had Christian "widows and orphan children" bringing meals to the *con-artist* Peregrinus. This wasn't a flattering depiction of Christianity, as it made followers of Jesus seem *gullible* to the cultural elites of the day. Lastly, in 1857, archeologists working a dig in Rome unearthed over 300 pieces of second-century graffiti.⁹ One of them, called the "Alexamenos graffito," depicts a donkey-headed Christ on the cross with the inscription: "Alexamenos worship [his] god."¹⁰ Interestingly, a nearby inscription reads, "Alexamenos is faithful," possibly written by the man himself in his own defense.¹¹

As you can see, Christianity was ridiculed in academic circles, on the stage, and even at street level. From the highest strata of Roman society to its lowest rung, Jesus and his followers have been the blunt of innumerable jokes. Whether it was 2,000 years ago or today, it is the favored target for "scuffers." But this shouldn't surprise us; instead, it should remind us that we are living in the last days. Someday, rather than mock his name, "every tongue [will] confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:11).

⁹ Christopher Forbes, "The Palatine Graffito, Graf. Pal. 1.246, 'Alexamenos Worshiping His God,'" in *Inscriptions, Papyri, and Other Artifacts*, ed. James R. Harrison et al., Ancient Literature for New Testament Studies (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2024), [10:409](#).

¹⁰ Clive Anderson and Brian Edwards, *Evidence for the Bible* (Leominster: Day One, 2014), [139](#).

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Vs. 4 – Rather than mock Christianity generally, Peter says “the scoffers” single out a core belief of Christianity: *Christ’s advent*. The critics say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.” The term “fathers” refers to the OT patriarchs.¹² These critics were denying that Jesus’ coming had any *literal* impact on the world. According to them, Jesus came, and yet, things seemed to have stayed relatively the same since the times of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—a possible hyperbolic statement, but one which illustrates the seeming lack of evidence that Jesus rules in heaven (cf. Psa. 73). For them, at least, there was no visible or tangible proof that any of the promises that were supposed to be fulfilled at the Messiah’s coming had, indeed, been fulfilled.

Arguably, these “scoffers” had a point. Even after Jesus’s time on earth, things went on relatively unchanged until about 70AD, when, as the Lord predicted (cf. Lu 21:5-38), Jerusalem fell, and Israel ceased to be a state. (*Remember, Peter was writing about 5 or 6 years before.*) So, if one were looking for the sort of changes that could be empirically proven with one’s senses, then the evidence would appear scant, or even nonexistent.

But while these scoffers thought they were clever, in reality, they were pointing out nothing new. By and large, Christianity’s claims are mostly invisible at this time, and it makes no apology for this. The way the present life appears, Paul says, is like looking at a dim “mirror” (1 Cor. 13:12). The apostle John admitted that “it has not yet been revealed what we shall be” (1 Jn. 3:2). *But just because we cannot perceive a change doesn’t mean there isn’t a change.* This is why we must “walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7). Emotional truths like love and hate cannot be weighed. Intellectual truths like consciousness and being cannot be measured. And yet both are undeniably real. *Why should spiritual truths, which are likewise inherently immaterial, be any different?* Christ’s coming and the inbreaking of the Kingdom of God, though beyond the reach of empirical/physical assessment, stands as no less a reality than the feelings in our hearts and the thoughts in our heads.

Luke says the Pharisees once asked Jesus about when the kingdom of God would come, and he answered them, saying “The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ for behold, the kingdom of God is [already] in the midst of you” (Lu. 17:20–21). *Jesus standing before them was definitive proof that the kingdom of God had already come.* In Matthew 13:31-33, the Lord likened his kingdom to two things: a **small seed sown** in the ground and **some leaven sown** in a lump of flour. Just as the little mustard seed grows into a massive tree and a little leaven takes over the dough, so the

¹² Schreiner, Thomas R., *1 & 2 Peter AND Jude*, Christian Standard Commentary, (Holman, 2020), 446-447.

Kingdom of God, though imperceptible to the naked eye, is already in the soil and actively working to take over the world. So, just because all the promises attached to the Messiah's coming haven't been fully realized doesn't mean they wouldn't be fulfilled, nor that they haven't begun to be fulfilled.

Vs. 5-6 – But though the scoffers seemingly had a point that spiritual realities brought about by Christ had yet to become physical realities, they nevertheless made a critical oversight. Peter said, “For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God.” Contrary to the views of Greek philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, reality is not eternal. It had a beginning. And creation did not come about by physical means, but by verbal means. The heavens, the earth, and the waters on the planet—all that we see, feel, and know—were spoken into being “by the word of God.” God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. God said, “Let there be life,” and there was life. Peter's point is that the material does not verify the immaterial. That is not how reality works. It is the intangible—the *spoken word*—that brought the material world into existence. And so, the only truly real thing in existence is God's word.

Peter doubles down on this principle by moving from creation of the world to the destruction of the world—i.e., the flood. He says, “By means of these [the word of God] the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.” Contrary to other ancient flood narratives, such as the Epic of Gilgamesh (Mesopotamia), whose flood occurred because humanity was too noisy, the cause of the flood in the Bible was man's sin. This was not part of the cosmic cycle of destruction and renewal, as in the Story of Manu (Hindu), but part of God's judgment. And the flood wasn't brought about through the power of different gods, as in the Deucalion (Greek). God brought about the flood through no other means than the power of his word.

Vs. 7 – Peter then says that “by the same word” that created the world in Gen. 1-2 and then destroyed the world in Gen. 7, “the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.” The world persists because the Lord wills it. The writer of Hebrews says that Jesus Christ “upholds the universe by the word of his power” (Heb. 1:3). Gravity weighs us down, the Sun rises each morning, the seasons change from one to the next because he hasn't told them to stop. But someday, at his word, “the heavens and earth that now exist” will be destroyed. Reality as we know it is “being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.” Like a bundle of wood, it's already being “stored up for fire.” The first world was washed away by a flood, and, eventually, this one will be wiped out by flame.

Takeaway #1: The Scriptural defines the physical.

Reality is not mere physicality; there are multiple dimensions to it, from the emotional to the intellectual to the spiritual. But the final word on it all comes from God's word; **it is more reliable than reality** itself. Jesus said heaven and earth will pass away, but his word will never pass away (cf. Matt. 24:35); not even a minor stroke of the pen will be lost (cf. Matt. 5:18). **So let the scoffers scoff, the mockers mock, and the jokers joke. God will have the last laugh.**

Soli Deo Gloria

Video Description:

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