

2 Peter Outline

- I. Remember the Greatness of Salvation (1:1-11)
- II. Trust the Certainty of Scripture (1:12-21)
- III. Beware of Deceptive False Teachers (2:1-22)
- IV. Hope in the Promised Future (3:1-16)

2 Peter 3:1-18

3 *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.*

⁸ But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

¹¹ Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, ¹² waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! ¹³ But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. ¹⁵ And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, ¹⁶ as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. ¹⁷ You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. ¹⁸ But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

2 Peter 3:1-4

IV. Hope in the Promised Future (3:1-16)

A. Remember the Promised Hope (vs 1-2)

1. **Wake up to Wholesome Thinking (vs 1)**

2. Hope from the Past, Hope for the Future (vs 2)

B. Scoffers Attack our Hope (vs 3-4)

1This 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,

Simple point but still contested, if this is the 2nd letter, then 1 Peter is the 1st letter

“Beloved” - Gr. ἀγαπητός (*agapētos*) - loved one, dear friend

“Stirring Up” - Gr. διεγείρομαι (*diegeiromai*) - wake up, stimulate thinking,

- Refresh memory (2 Peter 1:13)
- Grow rough (Luke 8:24, John 6:18)

2 Peter 1:13

¹³ I think it right, as long as I am in this body, **to stir you up** (*diegeiromai*) by way of reminder

1 Peter 1:13

¹³ Therefore, **preparing your minds for action**, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

“Sincere” - Gr. εἰλικρινής (*eilikrinēs*). Pure, wholesome, without hidden motives

Formed from *heilē* (“warmth or light of the sun”) and *krinō* (“to test”), these words mean “tested by sunlight,” i.e., “pure,” and “purity.” In the NT (Phil. 1:10; 2 Pet. 3:1; 1 Cor. 5:8; 2 Cor. 1:12; 2:17) they refer to moral purity.

Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). [*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume*](#) (p. 206). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.

When you clean something - the house, the car - you don't do it in the dark or you won't do a very good job. If you need to dust, you draw the curtains back to let the light in. If you're repairing drywall before you paint, you run a light up and down the walls to find the imperfections. The light doesn't cause the dust, dirt, or defects, but it will certainly reveal them.

If you are in Christ, you have been redeemed, restored, and set free. Your carnal mind has been reborn to have the mind of Christ. You can see things now through the revelation of the light of Christ that you never saw before. The more you have the Word of God in your heart, the more it will give you laser sharp vision for the things of God.

However, when we take our eyes off the prize, let them wander into dark shadows that lay just off the path, we can get confused, disoriented, and lost. That's why Peter is stirring us up, giving us a good shaking to break us out of the fog. Get us back on higher ground, firm and able to see the road ahead. *Preparing your minds for action* (1 Peter 1:13) leads to...

1 Peter 1:13-16

¹³ Therefore, **preparing your minds for action**, and being sober-minded, **set your hope** fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the **revelation of Jesus Christ**. ¹⁴ As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, ¹⁵ but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ since it is written, **“You shall be holy, for I am holy.”**

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2 that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles

“That you should remember” - Gr. μὴνῆσκομαι (*mimnēskomai*) - recall, respond

“Holy Prophets” in contrast to the *“False Teachers”*

Exodus 15:18 (*Exclusive eternal reign of God*)

¹⁸ The Lord will reign forever and ever.”

Isaiah 9:6-7 (*Hope of future righteous world system*)

⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Zechariah 14:9 (*King over the earth*)

⁹ And **the Lord will be king over all the earth**. On that day the Lord will be one and his name one.

Isaiah 32:15-17 (*Abundance and Peace*)

¹⁵ until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest.

¹⁶ Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field.

¹⁷ And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever.

Isaiah 35:3-7 (*Salvation, Strength and Healing*)

³ Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴ Say to those who have an anxious heart, “Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.”

⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

⁶ then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert;

⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down, the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

“Day of the Lord” - Indomitable time of God’s world-wide judgment and vengeance on His enemies to save His people and establish the final kingdom of eternal rule

Ezekiel 30:3

³ For the day is near, the day of the Lord is near; it will be a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations.

Joel 2:30-31

³⁰ “And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. ³¹ The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.

Malachi 4:1-5

⁴ “For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch.

² But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.

³ And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the Lord of hosts.

⁴ “Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.

⁵ “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes

The “spirit of Elijah” came as John the Baptist and he preceded and recognized the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Jesus, the Incarnate Son, the coming King, the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Savior arrived. His first coming fulfilled hundreds of prophecies foretold in the OT. He healed the sick, he raised the dead. He spoke with the authority of a king, yet He was humble, common, and called out the sins of the Jews instead of giving them places of honor in the expected new Kingdom.

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey as the coming King at the exact time that Daniel prophesied over 500 years earlier (Daniel 9:24-27). But Israel rejected their King and killed Him as Isaiah prophesied over 700 years earlier (Isaiah 53). But according to the plan and foreknowledge of the Divine Godhead from eternity past, the Son in obedience to the Father endured the just wrath of God as a propitiation to redeem a people according to His great mercy. Therefore, the Apostles and all disciples were given the Great Commission to take the saving message of the gospel to the nations to save all of God’s elect from every fold in every corner of the globe.

Preached with this gospel is the message that Jesus is coming back! Jesus will return to fulfill the remaining promises and predictions from the OT prophets. 25 of 27 NT books refer explicitly or implicitly to Jesus’ Second Coming (parousia).

² that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and **the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles**

Titus 2:11-14 (*Jesus’ return is our blessed hope*)

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³ waiting for **our blessed hope**, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Romans 8:23 (*Hope of the Redemption of our Bodies*)

²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Matthew 25:31-34 (*Hope of Entrance into the Kingdom*)

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Ephesians 4:30 (*Hope for a Day of Redemption*)

³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Revelation 20:6 (*Hope of ruling with Christ in the Millennium*)

⁶ Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

Matthew 25:23 (*Hope of spiritual reward*)

²³ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master

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1. Wake up to Wholesome Thinking (vs 1)
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B. Scoffers Attack our Hope (vs 3-4)

1. By Mocking
2. Because of Sensual Pleasures
3. From Uniformity

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.”

B. Scoffers Attack our Hope (vs 3-4)

1. **By Mocking**
2. Because of Sensual Pleasures
3. From Uniformity

“*First of all*” - Gr. πρῶτον (*prōton*) - primary, of first importance, prominence

“*Scoffing*” - Gr. ἐμπαιγμονή (*empaigmonē*) - mocking, ridicule, to jest

- Used for childish behavior
- Lack of seriousness
- Thoughts of things that are frivolous or futile

Jude 18-19

¹⁸ They said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.”

¹⁹ It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.

“*Last Days*” - the NT time between the 1st & 2nd coming of Christ

2 Timothy 3:1

3 But understand this, that **in the last days** there will come times of difficulty.

2 Peter 3:1-4

Hebrews 1:2

² but **in these last days** he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

1 Peter 1:20

²⁰ He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest **in the last times** for the sake of you

1 John 2:18

¹⁸ Children, **it is the last hour**, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.

False Teachers & unbelievers will mock you for your hope. They will belittle you for believing in something that seems petty and unimaginable. They will come from a seemingly high position of intellectualism and elitism to scoff at your ignorance and entire belief system.

They are propping themselves up in their hopeless house of cards while trying to steal your joy and hope. Misery loves company. Don't fall for it, don't doubt, be strong and courageous.

Isaiah 5:18-19 (Mockers in the OT)

¹⁸ Woe to those who draw iniquity with cords of falsehood, who draw sin as with cart ropes,
¹⁹ who say: "Let him be quick, let him speed his work that we may see it;
let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near, and let it come, that we may know it!"

Jeremiah 17:15 (Mockers in the OT)

¹⁵ Behold, they say to me, "Where is the word of the Lord? Let it come!"

They are "storing up wrath" for themselves in the coming Day of the Lord (Romans 2:5)

B. Scoffers Attack our Hope (vs 3-4)

1. By Mocking
2. **Because of Sensual Pleasures**
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³ knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.

"Following" - Gr. πορεύομαι (*poreuomai*) - to go, to travel, behave or live in a certain way

"Sinful Desires" - Gr. ἐπιθυμία (*epithymia*) - deep desire, longing (positive sense), coveting, craving (negative)

- 2 Peter 1:4, 3:3 (desires), 1 Peter 1:14, 2:11, 4:2, 4:3, 2 Peter 2:18 (passions), 2 Peter 2:10 (lust), 2 Peter 3:3 (sinful desires)

Scoffers mock Christianity because of its "oppressive" rules while promising freedom and liberation. They **certainly** will mock the hope of future righteousness and judgment as being "out-of-touch" with reality.

To be clear, when unbelievers take offense to our points about the certainty of the Second Coming and the subsequent biblical events, it's NOT coming from better evidence or more sound intellectual arguments. Their opposition is steeped in their immorality and sensual pleasures so they can live anyway they want.

2 Peter 3:1-4

Quote from Aldous Huxley, grandson of Thomas Huxley (19th century British biologist and fierce advocate for Darwin's evolutionary thought)

"I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently assumed that it had none, and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption. The philosopher who finds no meaning in the world is not concerned exclusively with a problem in pure metaphysics. He is also concerned to prove that there is no valid reason why he should personally not do as he wants to do... For myself, as no doubt for most of my contemporaries, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation. The liberation we desired was simultaneously a liberation from a certain political and economic system, and a liberation from a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom."

B. Scoffers Attack our Hope (vs 3-4)

1. By Mocking
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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."

Even in the 1st Century, scoffers were questioning the return of Jesus. The early church had great expectation and anticipation that Jesus would return soon.

1 Thessalonians 4:15

¹⁵ For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that **we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord**, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

Within 30 years of the Ascension and no sign of Christ, the scoffers were already ridiculing Christians for their foolish hope in a final return. The argument here is that all things have always continued as from the beginning...this is called **Uniformitarianism**. This is a belief that we live in a naturalistic closed system, without any outside, certainly divine intervention. This is the thrust and strong pull of evolution. There is no purpose, no Divine plan, no meaning to the world around us.

It's really a ridiculous argument - Jesus isn't coming back because He never has. It's like saying, "I've never died because I never have". It's simply a means to placate their consciences as the road of freedom and indulgence that they're on is the highest goal for a satisfying life. Instead of the deeply seeded conviction that it's actually the wide road to destruction that they along with the consenting culture are on.

It was a dangerous scoff when they insinuated a doubt as to the last resurrection; for when that is taken away, there is no gospel any longer, the power of Christ is brought to nothing, the whole of religion is gone. Then Satan aims directly at the throat of the Church, when he destroys faith in the coming of Christ. For why did Christ die and rise again, except that He may some time gather to himself the redeemed from death, and give them eternal life? All religion is wholly subverted, except faith in the resurrection remains firm and immovable. Hence, on this point Satan assails us most fiercely.

Calvin, J., & Owen, J. (2010). [Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles](#) (p. 415). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

Additional Resources:

2 Peter 3:1

2 Timothy 4:7-8 (*Longing for the appearing of our Savior*)

⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

The hope of Christ's coming was of paramount importance for the early church. In fact, its certainty was so real that first-century believers would greet one another with the term "maranatha," meaning "Lord, come quickly." Instead of being frightened by the possibility, they clung to it as the culmination of everything they believed. Not surprisingly, the New Testament reflects this intense anticipation by referencing Jesus' return, whether directly or indirectly, in every New Testament book except Philemon and 3 John. (Nathan Busenitz, *Living a Life of Hope* [Ulrichsville, Ohio: Barbour Books, 2003], 122)

Of course, the devil also recognizes how important this doctrine is to the church. When Christians live in anticipation of Christ's promised return, they demonstrate spiritual zeal and enthusiasm, recognizing that they will soon give an account to their Master (Rom. 13:11; 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:5). As the apostle John wrote, it is a purifying hope (1 John 3:3). But, when believers forget about the second coming and begin focusing instead on the things of this world, they become absorbed in the temporal and grow apathetic and cold toward the eternal. Satan knows that if he can get the church to discount the importance of Christ's return, or even completely deny its reality, he can remove a very significant source of Christian hope and motivation. To that end the devil continually places skeptics and false teachers within the church, men who reject, minimize, or alter Jesus' promise. Such cynics who plague Christendom today were also around in Peter's time. (For a more detailed treatment of the Lord's coming and those who deny it, see John MacArthur, *The Second Coming* [Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1999].)

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2005). [2 Peter and Jude](#) (pp. 110–111). Chicago: Moody Publishers.

The phrase *eilikrinē dianoian* ("wholesome thinking") may also be rendered "sincere mind" or "pure disposition." (*Eilikrinēs* occurs elsewhere in the NT only in Phil. 1:10, where it is trans. "pure.") The English "sincere" is from the Latin words *sine cera*, "without wax." Some pottery salesmen would use wax to cover cracks and weak places in pottery. Such a cover-up could be detected only by holding the jug up to the sun to see if any weaknesses were visible. Such a vase was "sun-judged" (the lit. meaning of the Gr. *eilikrinēs*). God wants His people to have sun-judged minds, not those in which their sin spots have been covered over.

Gangel, K. O. (1985). [2 Peter](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 875). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

2 Peter 3:2

Isaiah 66:15-16 (*Coming Judgment*)

- ¹⁵ “For behold, the Lord will come in fire, and his chariots like the whirlwind, to render his anger in fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.
¹⁶ For by fire will the Lord enter into judgment, and by his sword, with all flesh; and those slain by the Lord shall be many.

Zephaniah 1:14-18 (*Day of the Lord*)

- ¹⁴ **The great day of the Lord** is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the Lord is bitter; the mighty man cries aloud there.
¹⁵ A day of wrath is that day, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness,
¹⁶ a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements.
¹⁷ I will bring distress on mankind, so that they shall walk like the blind, because they have sinned against the Lord; their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung.
¹⁸ Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them on the day of the wrath of the Lord. In the fire of his jealousy, all the earth shall be consumed; for a full and sudden end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

Zephaniah 3:8 (*Day of the Lord*)

- ⁸ “Therefore wait for me,” declares the Lord, “for **the day when I rise up** to seize the prey. For my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out upon them my indignation, all my burning anger; for in the fire of my jealousy all the earth shall be consumed.

The commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by the apostles refers to the New Testament (cf. a similar use of *entolē* [commandment] in 1 Tim. 6:14) and its subject, Jesus Christ. (Peter calls them **your apostles** in order to denote the special relationship they had with the church.) Twenty-three of the twenty-seven books in the New Testament explicitly refer to the Lord’s return. Of those four that do not (Galatians, Philemon, 2 John, and 3 John), Galatians 5:5 does allude to it: “For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.” And 2 John 8 speaks of the believer’s future reward, a doctrine that finds its ultimate fulfillment after the second coming. In reality, then, only Philemon and 3 John are completely silent on the subject. In the two hundred sixty chapters of the New Testament, there are about three hundred instances in which Christ’s apostles make reference to His second coming.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2005). [2 Peter and Jude](#) (p. 117). Chicago: Moody Publishers.

Luke 12:40

- ⁴⁰ You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

Acts 3:21

- ²¹ whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.

2 Peter 3:3

“Following” - Gr. πορεύομαι (*poreuomai*) - to go, to travel, behave or live in a certain way

Luke 1:6

⁶ And they were both righteous before God, **walking** blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord.

Acts 14:16

¹⁶ In past generations he allowed all the nations **to walk in their own ways.**

In the words of Michael Green:

Anthropocentric hedonism [man-centered pleasure-seeking] always mocks at the idea of ultimate standards and a final division between saved and lost. For men who live in the world of the relative, the claim that the relative will be ended by the absolute is nothing short of ludicrous. For men who nourish a belief in human self-determination and perfectibility, the very idea that we are accountable and dependent is a bitter pill to swallow. No wonder they mocked! (*The Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of James* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968], 127)

2 Peter 3:4

The taunting question “**Where is the promise of His coming?**” introduced a denial of the Lord’s return based on a revisionist view of history. To support their misguided view, the false teachers claimed that, “**ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.**” Although **the fathers** could refer to the fathers of the Christian faith or to first-generation believers who had died, neither one of those meanings is likely. Rather, in keeping with other New Testament references (e.g., Rom. 9:5; Heb. 1:1), it is probably a reference to the Old Testament patriarchs (cf. Gen. 25:8–10; 35:28–29; 49:33). Fell asleep is a New Testament euphemism for death (John 11:11, 13; 1 Cor. 11:30; 15:51).

The heretics’ argument was simple. If everything **continues just as it was from the beginning of creation** (meaning that the universe is a divinely created but closed, naturalistic system of cause and effect), then divine intervention—including the return of Christ—must be ruled out *a priori*. In modern times, that view is known as uniformitarianism. Contending that the present is the key to the past, uniformitarianism asserts that the only natural processes that have ever operated in the past are the same processes at work today. It categorically denies divine intervention throughout world history, most notably opposing both six-day creation and the global Flood.

The rise of modern uniformitarianism occurred largely because of the efforts of the nineteenth-century British lawyer and geologist Charles Lyell. His book *Principles of Geology* had a profound impact on the scientific community of his day. In fact, Lyell’s uniformitarianism was a primary pillar on which Charles Darwin established his theory of evolution. (Darwin took a copy of *Principles of Geology* with him during his famous voyage on the *Beagle* to the Galapagos and other islands off the Pacific coast of South America in 1831–32.) As a result of Lyell’s hypothesis, catastrophism—which had previously been the dominant view among geologists—was largely abandoned for more than a century.

In recent decades, however, there has been a resurgence of interest in catastrophism among secular geologists. It became apparent that there is far too much evidence of catastrophism in the earth’s geologic features to support Lyell’s tranquil, uniformitarian view. But instead of embracing the biblical account of a catastrophic six-day creation and another worldwide catastrophe—namely, Noah’s Flood—the “new catastrophists” opt for countless smaller catastrophes.

To be sure, there is an element of general uniformity in the universe; it is a manifestation of God’s providential care for His creation. After all, if the natural laws and universal processes did

2 Peter 3:1-4

not normally function in a consistent manner, chaos would ensue. A biblical view of the universe, then, sees creation as an *open* system—in which God has ordained a uniform operation of natural causes, but also a universe in which He has intervened and still does intervene. Those who go beyond this, advocating a uniformitarianism so rigid as to preclude God's involvement in history, have foolishly deceived themselves. Like the false teachers of Peter's day, they deny the promises of Scripture (including Christ's return) on the basis of their conveniently devised worldview.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2005). [2 Peter and Jude](#) (pp. 113–115). Chicago: Moody Publishers.