“How to Be a Big Picture Christian”

2 Peter 3:1-7

What is true of this universe?

Is the natural cosmos all that there is and nothing more?

If that is true, then nothing supernatural can happen outside the laws of nature

This is what the vast majority of secular scientists believe

Time plus chance plus the laws of nature explains everything

However, one cannot believe this and what the Bible says at the same time

In fact, the very first verse of Scripture dispels this possibility

God is sovereign and therefore He can break supernaturally into the universe and world He has made at any time

His intention, when He makes the choice to do so, is absolutely unstoppable

This is what Peter emphasizes in chapter three of this epistle

He begins with a call to remembrance by stirring up his readers’ sincere minds

This was an affirmation from Peter that they were true believers

Sincerity has the idea of being free from contamination

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It was used in that time period with regard to figurines or sculptures

If they were crafted with sincerity, it meant the craftsperson did not try to cover obvious flaws in his craftsmanship with wax

The heat of the sun would uncover such flaws because the wax would melt and reveal the insincerity of his product

Why do genuine Christians require their sincere minds to have this continual stirring up?

We can still be easily lulled into spiritual complacency

Therefore, we often need a straightforward verbal or written challenge to awaken our senses, i.e. to lock into eternal, spiritual realities

Listening attentively to the Word of God causes us to remember the most important truths pertaining to life, especially as this applies not only now but also to future events

“The apostles of Christ filled the 260 chapters of the NT with about 300 references to the second coming. NT revelation about the Christ coming to gather His own, warnings about eschatological judgments, information about the establishment of His kingdom, and teaching concerning God’s bringing in eternal righteousness, are the irrefutable proof of the second coming of Christ and the judgement of the wicked.” (The MacArthur Study Bible, p. 1907)

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Thus, how much credence we give to the Word of God immediately also reveals the authenticity of our faith

Preaching has many purposes but one most certainly is course alignment

Will we humbly submit to the words of the Old Testament prophets, Christ and His divinely appointed apostles?

It’s another verification of the genuineness of our faith

Peter writes it is a first priority is to recognize the influential presence of scoffers

This refers to immature children who mock others in a callous way entirely without reservation or empathy

These scoffers are cynics who presume supernatural intervention in the world is ridiculous nonsense

Specifically, they’re mockingly opposing the possibility Jesus will ever return in judgment upon this present world

The last days comprise the time from Christ’s ascension to His second coming

This certainly holds true in our current society

Most people would sarcastically laugh at the notion of Christ’s second coming

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Peter writes how their mocking ways are really the expression of their sinful desires

“False teachers who know not the truth and know not God have nothing to restrain their lusts. They particularly mock the second coming of Jesus Christ because they want to pursue impure sexual pleasure without consequence, or without having to face divine retribution. They want an eschatology that fits their conduct.” (The MacArthur Study Bible, p. 1907)

But is there another significant reason why they insist on scoffing?

People want to dismiss the supernatural because this eliminates the future prospect of accountability before God

Therefore, one can live as they choose without ultimate, eternal consequences

Even if some will acknowledge God may exist, they conclude He’s not in any significant way relevant to or authoritative over people in this life or the next one if it exists

What is at the foundation of their scoffing rhetoric?

It is the principle of uniformitarianism

“This argument against the second coming of Christ is based on the theory of uniformitarianism, which says that all natural phenomena have operated uniformly since the beginning of the earth. The false teachers were also implying that God is absent

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from earth affairs, in effect, they were teaching that, ‘There will not be a great cataclysmic judgmental event at the end of history, because that is not how the universe works. There never has been such a judgment, so why should we expect one in the future?’ Instead, everything in the universe is stable, closed, fixed, and governed by never-varying patterns and principles of evolution. Nothing catastrophic has ever happened in the past, so nothing catastrophic ever will happen in the future. There will be no divine invasion, no supernatural judgment of mankind.” (The MacArthur Study Bible, p. 1908)

However, according to Peter their insistence on uniformitarian thinking is a deliberate oversight of irrefutable facts

He points to two noteworthy Old Testament examples of this from the book of Genesis

The creation of the universe and the worldwide flood of Noah’s time

These were unquestionably historical, supernatural events

The universe came into original existence through the spoken Word of God, c.f. Genesis 1; Psalm 33:6,9; John 1:1-3, Hebrews 11:3

The first eight chapters of Scripture declare God created every existing thing from nothing, Adam and Eve were real people, the fall of humanity from sinless perfection actually happened and the flood was God’s judgment over the entire earth

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Every one of these things was a supernatural occurrence

If one doubts these realities are true, how can one have confidence in the remainder of what the Bible claims to be supernatural events?

God used the vast amount of water when creating the earth as a built-in source for universal judgment

What He did with water He will do with fire in a final judgment from which escape will also be impossible

Again, it is so important to be on the side of God’s saving grace rather than His divine judgment

His eternal plan will continue to unfold without interference

What we believe about this will determine our eternal future

There’s only safety if one is in the family of God through truly trusting in Christ as one’s Savior