

PETER'S EPISTLES

2 Peter: Spiritually Maturing Opposite Apostasy VI. Prophecy Of False Teaching On Christ's Coming (2 Peter 3:1-7)

I. Introduction

- A. In A. D. 66, the year before his martyrdom, Peter desired that fellow believers might mature in the Christian faith in order to combat the rising opposition of heresies that the Church already faced. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, "Introduction to the Second Letter of Peter," p. 1765; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 862)
- B. Peter thus wrote this epistle to call believers to spiritual growth in view of increasing apostasy, and 2 Peter 3:1-7 predicted false teaching that would arise about Christ's return, so we do well to heed it (as follows):

II. Prophecy Of False Teaching On Christ's Coming, 2 Peter 3:1-7.

- A. According to Peter, this epistle was written to stimulate his Christian readers to exercise wholesome thinking by reminding them to heed the edifying words of the Old Testament prophets and the commands of Christ and His apostles, 2 Peter 3:1-2. (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 874-875).
- B. Peter's concern as noted in the context was for his readers to believe Old Testament Scripture and the words of Christ and His apostles that Christ would return, and Peter's reason for this concern came from his prophetic insight that false teachers would come in the latter days denying that Christ was coming back, 2 Peter 3:3-7:
 - 1. Peter predicted that scoffers would rise in the "last days," the whole "period of time between the Lord's First and Second Advents," and they would function by "evil desires," 2 Peter 3:3; Ibid., p. 875.
 - 2. These scoffers would ask, "Where is this 'coming' He promised?" (2 Peter 3:4a NIV), asserting that ever since the Old Testament patriarchs had died, and even going back as far as the start of creation, "everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation," 2 Peter 3:4b NIV.
 - 3. We now recognize this prediction foretold the rise of uniformitarianism, the ideology that James Hutton and Charles Lyell pushed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries respectively, and upon which Charles Darwin built his theory of evolution, "the view that the cosmic processes of the present and future can be understood solely on the basis of how the cosmos has operated in the past." (Ibid.; John C. Whitcomb, Jr. and Henry M. Morris, The Genesis Flood, 1978, p. 95-96, 200)
 - 4. Later, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, co-authors of The Communist Manifesto, hailed Darwin's view of evolution, holding that as evolution served to explain natural history, it also served to justify their view of communism as applied to society. (Bolton Davidheiser, Evolution and Christian Faith, 1976, p. 353)
 - 5. However, these scoffers would willingly ignore (2 Peter 3:5a; Ryrie St. Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to 2 Peter 3:5) the fact that by God's Word, the heavens existed on the second day of creation (Gen. 1:6-8) and the earth was formed out of water and with water, the land appearing apart from the water on the third day of creation (Gen. 1:9-10), 2 Peter 3:5; Ibid., Bib. Know. Com., N. T.) in great contrast to uniformitarianism!
 - 6. Similarly, as God's Word reports, the "world" in the sense of all of its inhabitants (*kosmos*, Ibid., p. 876) that then existed perished when it was "inundated, flooded" (*kataluzo*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., p. 412) with water, 2 Peter 3:6. Peter taught that the Genesis Flood was universal!
 - 7. Also, by the same Word of God, the current heavens and earth are reserved to be destroyed one day by fire, being kept for judgment and the destruction of ungodly men, 2 Peter 3:7 NIV.
- C. Peter then explained that Christ's seeming delay in returning as critiqued by scoffers did not mean He would not return, but that God was merciful, giving man ample time to repent and be saved, 2 Peter 3:8-9:
 - 1. Peter announced that God views time differently than man does, that God views one day like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day in the sense that what seems to be long to man is short to the Lord, so God is not slow in keeping His promises as though He might fail to keep them, 2 Peter 3:8-9a.
 - 2. Rather, God is patient in great mercy, not willing that anyone should perish, but that all men might have ample time to come to repentance, escaping eternal damnation and being saved, 2 Peter 3:9b.

Lesson: We must recall the truthfulness of Bible prophecy on the Second Coming of Christ to counter scoffers who have denied it via uniformitarian ideology that has spawned the errant views of evolution and Marxism. The seemingly long time for Christ to return is merely an act of great divine patience in God Who mercifully wants to give every human being maximum opportunity to repent and believe in Christ before His eternal judgment falls.

Application: May we hold to Scripture prophecy about Christ's Second Coming and disciple men to trust in Him.