

## PETER'S EPISTLES: PREPARING FOR ETERNITY

### XXVII. Peter's Prediction Of Uniformitarianism

(2 Peter 3:1-6)

#### I. Introduction

- A. Before the Apostle Peter began to minister for the Lord in the Church, his outlook was impacted by Christ's prophecy in John 21:18-19 that he would be crucified for Christ. Eternity was thus often on Peter's mind.
- B. In accord with this theme, 2 Peter 3:1-6 presents Peter's prediction of uniformitarianism and its harmful effects so that believers after his passing might overcome such error (cf. 2 Peter 1:14-21).
- C. We view this passage for our insight, application and edification (as follows):

#### II. Peter's Prediction Of Uniformitarianism, 2 Peter 3:1-6.

- A. When the Apostle Peter wrote 2 Peter, he was concerned about the influence of false teachers who would privately bring in destructive heresies that denied the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, cf. 2 Peter 2:1. He was also concerned about the denial of the Second Coming of Christ as he testified back in 2 Peter 1:16.
- B. Accordingly, Peter wanted to remind his readers of the Old Testament prophecies coupled with the commands of Christ's apostles that predicted that Christ would return to establish His Messianic Kingdom, 2 Peter 3:1-2.
- C. What especially concerned Peter was the future arrival of scoffers who would come in the last days, walking after their own lusts, and mockingly ask, "Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation," 2 Peter 3:3-4.
- D. Thus, the rejection of God's promise through the Old Testament prophets and Christ and His apostles of His coming "rests on the principle of uniformitarianism. This is the view that the cosmic processes of the present and the future can be understood solely on the basis of how the cosmos has operated in the past." (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 875) This prophecy was fulfilled in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries:
  1. Georges Cuvier (1769-1832), founder of modern vertebrate paleontology, held to the Genesis Flood, but he also held to belief in a series of great, catastrophic floods separated by long ages of time that occurred long before the creation of man (John C. Whitcomb & Henry M. Morris, The Genesis Flood, 1978, p. 92).
  2. Professor of Geology William Buckland at Oxford University supported Cuvier's view (Ibid., p. 93-94).
  3. Charles Lyell (1797-1875) then came along, having adopted James Hutton's (1726-1797) idea that gradual geological changes, not catastrophic events, explained the geological record. (Ibid., p. 93). However, Lyell went further to state that "all geologic processes had been very gradual in the past," and he abhorred "anything suggestive of sudden catastrophes." (Ibid., p. 94-95)
  4. "Charles Darwin, a disciple of Lyell, built his theory of organic evolution upon the uniformitarian foundation which Lyell had laid," and Darwin even acknowledged "his debt of gratitude to Lyell . . . in" Darwin's famous work, "*The Origin of Species*." (Ibid., p. 96)
  5. Thus, **what began as an acceptance of the Biblical Genesis Flood mixed with the human view that many catastrophic floods separated by long ages of time occurred long before the creation of man** opened the door for Charles Lyell's denial of catastrophism in his uniformitarianism belief upon which Darwin's theory of evolution was based!
- E. Peter added that such mockers would be willingly ignorant of the fact that by the word of God, at creation, the world was catastrophically formed out of water and with water, 2 Peter 3:5 NIV (B. K. C., N. T., loc. cit.) They would also be willingly ignorant of the fact that the world that existed after creation was then destroyed by the overflowing waters of the Genesis Flood, 2 Peter 3:6 (Ibid.). John C. Whitcomb and Henry M. Morris testified in their landmark book, The Genesis Flood, that led to the current Creationist movement that "the evidence of the reality of these great events, the Creation and the Deluge, is so powerful and clear that it is only 'willing ignorance' which is blind to it, according to Scripture!" (Whitcomb and Morris, op. cit., p. 453)

***Lesson:*** Peter predicted the arrival of uniformitarianism that would oppose belief in Christ's Second miraculous Coming by its presupposition 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 in slow, methodical processes of gradual change. This belief arose by mixing Scripture with human thinking that led to replacing Scripture truth with human error.

***Application:*** (1) May we believe in the miraculous Second Coming of Christ to the earth to establish His Kingdom. (2) May we oppose uniformitarianism that is the foundation for Darwin's false theory of evolution. (3) May we learn from history not to mix Bible truth with human thinking lest we open the door for erroneous beliefs.