

PETER'S EPISTLES: PREPARING FOR ETERNITY
XXVIII. Peter's Prediction Of The End Of The Universe
(2 Peter 3:7-13)

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 3:7-13 presents Peter's prediction of the catastrophic, supernatural end of the universe in countering the future false teachers who would teach uniformitarianism, a denial of all catastrophism in favor of the idea that current functions in the universe are always constant (cf. 2 Peter 3:3-6).
- C. We view this passage for our insight, application and edification (as follows):

II. Peter's Prediction Of The End Of The Universe, 2 Peter 3:7-13.

- A. Peter's prophecy in 2 Peter 3:3-6 countered the theory of uniformitarianism, "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 theory was also the view upon which Charles Darwin built his theory of evolution. Peter claimed that the supernatural events of Creation and the Genesis Flood would be intentionally overlooked and denied by such false teachers to come, what has proved to be true.
- B. However, Peter went further to declare that the current universe will be destroyed by fire by the same Word of God that spoke all it into existence, 2 Peter 3:5, 7.
- C. Peter implied that the false teachers to come after him would deny this prediction, for they would deny the Bible's prediction of Christ's Second Coming based on their uniformitarian belief about the universe, 2 Peter 3:4. Thus, to counter the false teachers by explaining why the universe has not yet passed away by fire, Peter wrote that God is not slow in keeping His promise of Christ's return as the false teachers view slowness, for what is a long time to scoffers is a short time to God Who is eternal, 2 Peter 3:8. Rather, what appears to be slowness on God's part is actually His great longsuffering, for He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, 2 Peter 3:9.
- D. Nevertheless, "the day of the Lord," a phrase that "describes end-time events that begin after the Rapture and culminate with the commencement of eternity" (Ibid., p. 876-877), at the end of the Millennial Kingdom will come with the sudden, catastrophic fire in which the heavens will pass away with a loud noise and the material with which the universe is made will be destroyed by fire, 2 Peter 3:10a,b. The earth and the human works in it will thus "be laid bare" (*eurethesetai*, Ibid., p. 877), that is, be exposed for what they are, 2 Peter 3:10c.
- E. Peter viewed this prophecy about the end of the universe as a strong motivation for believers to live holy and godly lives in preparation for their eternal existence in a new universe, 2 Peter 3:11.
- F. Such living should be done with one's waiting for and "speeding" the coming of the "day of the Lord," 2 Peter 3:12a; Ibid. We believers really cannot move up the schedule of God, for He sets the times and the seasons according to His will (cf. Acts 1:7), but Peter here uses a figure of speech known as a hendiadys where the verbs "looking for" and "hastening" refer to the same thing to convey the thought of "to be eager or earnest for a thing" (E. W. Bullinger, Figures of Speech Used in the Bible, 1968, p. 672).
- G. This high level of motivation of being eager or earnest for the destruction of the present universe where sin has had such a great and destructive influence is to be associated with the fact that God will set on fire and dissolve the present universe and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn with intense heat, 2 Peter 3:12b.
- H. We believers are to look beyond the destruction of this current universe to God's creation of the new universe to come where righteousness dwells, 2 Peter 3:13. Since we will eventually end up in a universe where only righteousness dwells, it is only fitting that we prepare for that destiny by living righteously today!

Lesson: *Just as God supernaturally spoke the present universe into existence, and then supernaturally and catastrophically destroyed the world with the Genesis Flood opposite what Peter predicted the false teachers would claim had occurred, God will destroy the present universe with a catastrophic fire that will destroy the human works in it, exposing them for what they are. Thus, we should be motivated to live godly lives as we earnestly long for the end of this sin-polluted universe and the creation of a new universe in which righteousness dwells.*

Application: *In contrast to the false claims of uniformitarianism, may we believe in God's supernatural creation of the first universe, His catastrophic destruction of the world by the Genesis Flood and the future catastrophic replacement of the current universe with God's new universe of righteousness that we might live righteously today.*