

The second epistle of Peter is written to arouse our minds by way of remembrance regarding that which was written already in the Old and New Testaments.

II Peter 3:1 and 2

This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in *both* which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:

The holy prophets wrote the books contained in the Old Testament, and the Apostles wrote the New. The subject matter of this final chapter of Peter is regarding the return of the Lord and Saviour, Jesus the Messiah. The events that will happen at the end of this current age and the beginning of the next age can only be understood by bringing to remembrance the whole Word of God.

The last days of this age began on Pentecost as Peter taught in Acts 2. (Hopefully we are in the last days of the last days.) Since Pentecost, there have been scoffers questioning his coming.

Verses 3 and 4

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, 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.

Responding to the mocker's false accusations about how nothing has changed, God points to the most grandiose change of the past and the future.

Verse 5

For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

This verse refers to the original creation of heaven and earth recorded in Genesis chapter one. When the earth was described as being without form and void (nothingness), God moved upon the face of the waters. Therefore, before He created heaven and earth, there was water. After light was created, God divided the water from the water causing an expanse which is called heaven.

Genesis 1:6-8

And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which *were* under the firmament from the waters which *were* above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

Once heaven was established, God spoke the earth into being.

Verses 9 and 10

And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry *land* appear: and it was so. And God called the dry *land* Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that *it was* good.

On the sixth day of creation, God made man who dwelled in this beautiful heaven and earth. The record shows that Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and subsequently all things began to change for the worse. They were expelled from Eden, and the land was cursed. Approximately 1600 years later, man was behaving so poorly that Genesis 6:5 says, "the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually." The earth also was corrupt because of man's poor stewardship and evil influence. God passed judgment and decided to destroy mankind with the earth, hence the flood.

II Peter 3:6

Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

Everyone was destroyed save Noah and his family, eight souls in all. As we consider the rapid manner in which man reproduces, the longevity of life then, no

wars, plagues, etc., we see that there may have been more people at the time of the flood than are now.

The destruction of the earth did not eliminate the earth, although it completely affected the entire earth and heaven.

Genesis 7:11

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

"The great deep" refers to the deep of the sea, not the deep in the sky. Two things are spoken of: "the windows of heaven," which could be the water outside the expanse, and the waters that are under the earth being the great deep. Waters from within the earth gushed out, causing the surface of the earth to change drastically. Perhaps this is when the mountains, valleys, deserts, wilderness, other uninhabitable surfaces, fault lines, etc. developed. To have so much water enter into the earth's atmosphere, when there had been none before, must have radically changed the weather patterns. Before the flood it had never rained! The flood water covered the entire surface of the earth for one year.

After the waters finally abated, a world entirely different from the first was left. Before the flood, both man and animals were vegetarians and able to coexist peacefully as they did on the ark for over a year. After the flood, the relationship of the animal kingdom and mankind completely changed. The animals became fearful of man and meat for him to eat. Many animals became carnivorous, hence began the death-dealing struggles for them.

The heaven and earth described once as Eden was destroyed. The end of the first marked the beginning of the second — that which we now know. As the evolution of the first led to God's judgment and destruction, so is it true of the second.

II Peter 3:7

But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

God made a covenant with Noah that "the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh" (Genesis 9:15). The next world-cataclysmic judgment will be by fire. It also will be marked with violent, overwhelming upheaval and demolition. In view of these shocking realities, the scoffer's hideous accusations are insane. "...All things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation" Yeah, right!

God's perspective of time is entirely different from ours.

Verses 8 and 9

But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

One thing we all can be absolutely sure of is that God keeps His Word. Numerous times in His Word, we are given testimony of His faithfulness to do exactly what He says He will do. The delay of our Lord's return is due to God's longsuffering and loving desire for all men to be saved.

In the time of Noah, the flood came as a surprise to humanity. As a thief in the night is unexpected and sudden, the flood was also, and so the Day of the Lord will be.

Verse 10

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

In order to understand properly what the Day of the Lord is, we must study the Old Testament prophets for all of them speak concerning these matters. Read Isaiah 13:6-13; Ezekiel 32:7-10; and Joel 2:30-32. We must also study the New Testament records such as Revelation 6:12-17 and 8:1-10:11.

There are many similarities between the judgment in the time of Noah and that which is yet to come. The flood affected both heaven and earth. The judgment

by fire will impact both also. The earth was not completely destroyed, but greatly altered by the flood, and so will it be in the end. Noah's family was spared. Those who endure until the end and call upon the Lord will be saved. In Noah's time, devils were placed in prison. In the Day of the Lord, there will be a war in heaven which will result in the devil being locked in chains for a thousand years. After this he will be freed for a short time and then completely destroyed (Revelation 12).

Jesus speaks of this time when responding to questions about the end.

Matthew 24:29-31

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

When all the records are compared, we can conclude that II Peter 3:10 is referring to the end of this current age and the beginning of the next when Christ will reign on earth for a 1,000 years. The judgment by fire will have a two-fold impact on the earth. It will eliminate all the destructive pollutants caused by man, and, at the same time, begin the restoration process.

While Jesus the Messiah reigns on earth for the millennium, the earth will change radically. Valleys shall be exalted, every mountain and hill shall be made low (Isaiah 40:4). Deserts and wilderness shall flourish with water and vegetation (Isaiah 35:7; 41:18-19; 43:19; 48:21).

Weapons of war will be molded into tools of agriculture (Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3). The animals will once again live peaceably with each other and mankind. They will all become vegetarians again (Isaiah 11:6-8; 65:25). The devastating effects of the flood and man's poor stewardship since will all be reversed when Christ reigns on earth.

Considering this revelation about God's final judgment, what kind of people should we be now?

II Peter 3:11 and 12

*Seeing* then *that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

The four substances which make up the elements are air, water, fire, and earth. The elements shall melt, which means liquify. The Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom, Gomorrah, and their neighboring cities. The effects of this were so devastating that nothing remained. Earthquakes cause the earth to liquify and powerfully impact the air and water. The exact way in which God will carry this out is not

stated but is not hard to imagine.

Verse 13

Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

From Adam to Noah (the first heaven and earth), there was a negative evolution where mankind and the earth were corrupted. From Noah until the final judgment (the second heaven and earth), there has been and will continue to be a negative progression. From Christ's return until the new Eden (the third heaven and earth), there will be a very positive evolution for mankind and the earth.

After the 1,000 year reign of Christ, all evil, sin, and unrighteousness will be completely eliminated forever, and the earth will once again be as God originally intended in Paradise.

Verse 14

Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for

such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.