

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The End of the Universe, Part 1

Scripture: 2 Peter 3

Code: 90-360

It was a couple of weeks ago that I gave a message on the theology of creation and I told you that I was intending to give you two messages, one on the beginning and another one on the end. The theology, if you will, of creation and the theology of uncreation, a message on the beginning of the universe and then a message on the end of the universe, how it all began and how it will all end.

It is God alone who knows how it all began because He alone was there when it was created. It is God alone who knows how it will all end because only God knows the future and not only does God know the future but God determines the future as He has determined the past, is determining the present.

And so, in order for us to understand origins, beginnings, and for us to understand endings, for us to understand creation or consummation, we have to turn to the revelation that God has given to us. All we know about creation is what God has told us. And all we know about consummation is all that God has told us.

As you know, He has given us an explicit account of the creation of the universe in Genesis chapters 1 and 2. He has also given us explicit accounts of the destruction of this universe. There are a number of passages in which reference is made to the destruction of the universe in which we live, but one of them is most notable and most detailed. It is in the second epistle of Peter chapter 3. So, open your Bible, if you will, to 2 Peter chapter 3 and follow along as I read down through verse 13.

Second Peter 3:1 through 13:

“This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I’m stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment spoken by the Lord and Savior spoken by Your Apostles. Know this, first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.’ For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the Word of God the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and by water through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. But the present heavens and earth by His Word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for

all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise, we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.”

And so, in very clear, unmistakable, unambiguous language, the Spirit of God inspires Peter to give us a record of the end of this creation.

Now to give you a little bit of a warm up to get to chapter 3, just let me remind you that Peter’s epistle is designed to warn about false teachers. In fact, chapter 2 is a general denunciation of false teachers from beginning to end. It is directly parallel to the epistle written by Jude. It says essentially the same thing, the difference being in the tense of the verbs. Peter says the false teachers are coming, and this is what they’ll be like. Jude says they’re here and this is what they’re like. But chapter 2 is a detailed warning concerning false teachers.

When you come in to chapter 3 then, Peter addresses one of their favorite areas of attack. That is, they attack the biblical truth that this world, this universe is coming to an end and it will be destroyed by the return of Jesus Christ. What I read you is unmistakably clear, it’s unmistakably clear by the way about the beginning. It says that creation came by the Word of God, that He spoke it into existence. And it’s also clear about the end, the end will also come by the Word of God. God spoke it into existence. He will speak it out of existence.

As I have often said to you, this is a disposable planet. More than that, this is a disposable universe. It has been around for about six thousand years and relative to eternity, it has a very, very short life. This planet is useful to God only for purposes of accomplishing His redemption and then it will cease to exist.

But Peter knows there are false teachers who attack this notion, who don’t want to believe that there is a God who is judge, a God who is by nature holy, and therefore hates sin and punishes sinners. Obviously, people who are content with their sin don’t want to believe that. So Peter presents the divinely inspired arguments against the skeptics who deny the future judgment that God will bring to this world through the judge whom He has ordained, namely the Lord Jesus Christ.

And as we look then at this chapter, we’re going to engage ourselves in the discussion, if you will, that Peter has with the mockers and the scoffers and the deniers of the return of Christ and the judgment of this universe. But Peter begins, and this is where we’ll begin, with the arguments of the scoffers. What are the arguments that this world is going to continue the way it always has? What are the arguments that there is no coming judgment, no coming destruction?

Well, there are just a few arguments and let's look at them, three of them to be exact. First of all, go down to verses 3 and 4. "Knowing this first of all that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts and saying, 'Where's the promise of His coming, for ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation?'"

The first argument that surfaces there is what you would call an *ad hominem* argument which is an assault on the individual rather than a reasonable approach to the issue. We would say this is argument by ridicule, this is argument by ridicule, intimidation by scorn, emotional and not rational, playing on people's unrealized hopes and unrealized expectations. And what we read, first of all, then in verse 3 that is the last days mockers will come with their mocking. This is just plain ridicule. Many, of course, in the early church were expecting the Lord Jesus to come very soon. Certainly the Apostles assumed He would come in their lifetime instead of His Kingdom. Paul talks about "we who are alive and remain" referring to the Rapture, will be caught up in the air to meet the Lord. And so he himself no doubt hoped and anticipated that Christ might come in his lifetime.

Jesus had said to them, "It's not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father has put in His own power, and yet they had anticipation of it. Now Peter knew that he would not live to see the return of Christ because in John 21 Jesus told Peter that he would die, that he would be arrested and that he would be taken and killed. That specifically was told to him by our Lord, so he knew that he would not live until the return of the Lord.

But most Christians had this expectation. Those who read the New Testament epistles in the early church were waiting for the moment, the twinkling of an eye when they would be changed, they were waiting for the moment when the voice of the archangel and the trump of God would be heard and the Rapture of the church would take place. They were looking for the glorious appearing of our God and Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, living with what Paul told Titus was the blessed hope.

But at the same time, believers like Peter were dying. Some were dying as martyrs, some were dying in illnesses, some were dying from accidents. Some were dying of natural causes and there was a growing sense that they were missing out on this wonderful future Kingdom. And so the Apostle Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 4:13 to 17, "Don't worry about those who die, they'll be raised first and caught up in the air to meet the Lord in the air to ever be with the Lord." They're not going to miss the Lord. They're not going to miss the Kingdom. They're not going to miss the glories of the future.

But when Jesus didn't come and establish His Kingdom and years went by and more years went by, believers who were becoming wearied under the pressure of persecution, under the disappointments of difficulties in life were easy prey to false teachers who would come along and say, "So where is this Jesus that you're waiting for who is going to come and bring this great Kingdom and gather you together and fulfill all His promises?"

So, Peter says, "First of all...first of all...priority is you must understand how these scoffers operate. They prey on your vulnerability." Here we are two thousand years later, two thousand years later and the skeptics can prey on us. And they can do it very effectively, so effectively, seemingly in this

period of the church's history, that Christians have virtually lost all interest in the return of Christ.

This is nothing new. "In the last days..." What is that? A common New Testament term meaning the age since Christ came, the time between the two comings, now having reached two thousand years. "In these last days," His first coming inaugurated the last days. And through this age there will be saboteurs of sound doctrine, saboteurs of the Second Coming hope, mockers will come, future tense. Jude says, "They have come and they will come with their mocking, attacking the reality of the return of Jesus Christ, preying on the disappointments and the impatience of believers by sheer ridicule.

There's a second argument that they use, we'll call it the argument from immorality. They're driven by ridicule and mockery but they're also driven by immorality. Verse 3 says, at the end of the verse, "Following after their own lusts."

Now let's understand this word, *epithumia*, meaning evil desire. What motivates them? Scholarship? No. What motivates them is lust. There's no lack of definition for this word. Going back in to chapter 2, let me introduce you to the false teachers. They, in verse 2, are sensual. In verse 10, they indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority, anyone who would try to stop them from that full indulgence. They are daring and self-willed. Verse 12 describes their lust in this way, "They're like unreasoning animals born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed." Verse 13, "They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes reveling in their deceptions as they carouse with you, having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, a cursed children," end of verse 15, "who love the wages of unrighteousness." Verse 18, "They speak arrogant words of vanity. They entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality." Verse 19, "They are slaves of corruption." ... "They are dogs that return to their vomit and sows after being washed to return to the mire."

Pretty graphic stuff. Mark it down, folks. People don't deny the Second Coming because of some scholastic interpretation of Scripture. They don't deny the Second Coming because they find it impossible to believe it. They deny the Second Coming because it fits their immorality. They don't want an accountable day. They don't want a judge. They don't want divine wrath. They don't want the vengeance of God. Bottom line, biblical eschatology doesn't fit their life style.

If in your journey through western civilization history you have yet to read Paul Johnson's book *The Intellectuals*, I would commend it to you. Paul Johnson, perhaps the finest current historian of western culture and history, has written a book in which he devotes a chapter to all of the philosophical architects of western civilization, a chapter for each of them. And as you read one after another, after another, after another whether you're reading Rousseau, or Haeckel, or Kant, or whoever you're reading, what is stunning to you is that their lives were so filthy and corrupt and vile, they would make a black mark on a piece of coal. You see, the same reason they deny creation is the same reason they deny consummation. For if there is indeed a Creator God, then there is a God to whom they are ultimately accountable. Man-centered heathenism mocks divine judgment.

To put this in a very specific form, evolutionist Aldous Huxley, grandson of Thomas Huxley, Aldous Huxley wrote a document called *Confessions of a Professed Atheist*. He was very honest. Here's

what he said. "I had motives for not wanting the world to have meaning. Consequently assumed it had none and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption. The philosopher who finds no meaning in the world is not concerned exclusively with a problem in pure metaphysics. He's also concerned to prove that there's no valid reason why he should personally not do just what he wants to do. For myself, as no doubt for most of my contemporaries, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation. The liberation we desired was simultaneously a liberation from a person political and economic system and a liberation from a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom," end quote.

Don't give too much credit to philosophers...please. Don't think of them as pure intellect. Hedonistic, naturalistic, atheistic God-denying philosophers are driven by their passions. There's the real reason right there for believing in atheism and evolution and liberal theology. The Bible if taken seriously interferes with your sexual freedom. That's what Paul Johnson makes so vividly clear in *The Intellectuals*. They must deny that God...the God who judges sin and sinners exists in order to free themselves up to their lusts without restraint and without guilt. So underneath the denial is the motive of ridicule and the motive of immorality.

There's one other argument that they make that Peter identifies, the argument from ridicule, the argument from immorality, and thirdly, the argument from uniformity...the argument from uniformity. Verse 4, they say this, "Where's the promise of His coming?" What do you mean by that? Huh, where is He? He's not here. Most believers, as I said, thought He would come in their life time. He didn't come. He still hasn't come. The false teachers capitalize on this, not only emotionally by ridicule, intellectually they attempt to, I guess maybe, elevate themselves above their admitted immorality by saying it's a bad kind of historical deal. It's a bad historical perspective. It's a bad philosophy of history because look, everything continues as the same...everything continues exactly the same as it's always been. "Where is the promise of His coming for ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation?" That is definitely a revisionistic history view. Ever since the fathers fell asleep...meaning the Old Testament patriarchs, the people in the very, very beginning, the first people all continues just as it was from the beginning.

Really? This you would...I would call it immutable uniformitarianism...immutable uniformitarianism, unchanging uniformity. This comes from Thomas Huxley, this comes from Darwin, this comes from the Huxleys...father and brothers. But it didn't originate with them. It originated with Satan. The satanic lie is that there will not be a future catastrophic judgment. The satanic lie is that divine intervention will not come into the created order, it never has come. All is always continuing exactly the same. Everything moves at the same uniform natural pace, always has, always will. This is like saying, "I've never died, so I never will." Really? I've never been sick, so I never will. I've never had cancer, so I never will have cancer. What kind of an argument is that? This denies miracles. This denies the Old Testament history of what I call judgment miracles, for the acts of God in the Old Testament that were judgments of God that brought about death and disaster were miraculous interventions by God. Supernatural judgments. Most miracles before Christ got here, the vast majority of miracles in the Old Testament were miracles by which people died, not by which people were healed. The skeptics want this evolved universe, this evolved planet, this closed system of natural, inviolable, fixed laws to

be impersonal and ongoing with no moral law and no moral lawgiver in charge of anything. Sensual sinners find their only hope for guilt-free sinning in the fable that everything continues the same, judgment never comes.

It might be hard to convince a quarter of a million people in Indonesia after the tsunami hits that all things continue the same way. It might be hard to convince the hundred thousand people or so that died in a recent earthquake that all things continue the same way.

I read a book this summer, fascinating book. Once I started it, I couldn't put it down. The title of it is *The Great Influenza*. I don't normally read a book on the flu, never read a book on the flu in my life. And when I started to read the book I was afraid I was going to get caught up in graphs and charts and clinical jargon that I couldn't even comprehend. But it is a brilliant book. A best seller on the New York Times Best Sellers List, written by John Barry who is extremely gifted as a researcher and a writer. It is magisterial, it is monumental in what it accomplishes as a book, as an active research and presentation, it's one of the tops that I've ever read in my entire life. It's the story of the flu, the flu like you've never known the flu but like some of your parents knew the flu.

Go back to the year 1918, the year of the great war, the First World War. There's some pigs in western Kansas. These pigs have somehow contracted a virus from birds, all flu viruses originate with birds. These pigs managed to pass this virus on to some young men. Those young men are conscripted into the Army because America is amassing troops to fight in World War I. They're sent to camp in the eastern part of Kansas. They go to the camp. There's as many as forty thousand men jammed in there and the flu that they have infects the men that are there.

Now remember, this is 1918. There's never been an actual cure of a disease in the history of the world until 1885. You understand that? They didn't even understand the pathology of disease. Nobody ever cured anybody of anything. So the medical art is deadly, not life giving. They don't know what to do. They don't understand quarantine, they don't understand isolation. They don't even understand the virus. They don't even know what a virus is and what it does. They don't know that a virus is not a living creature like a bacteria, it's a half-living thing that attaches itself to the DNA of a living cell, encodes that cell with its own DNA and then it spreads through the cell system. There are so many different kinds of viruses, this just happens to be the most virulent one in human history. And before it was done running its course in twenty-four months, are you ready for this? A hundred million people were dead...one hundred million around the world

Some of your parents lived through that, that's why you're here. Horrendous. Medical people didn't know what to do about it. It's probably the greatest moment in American Medical history because in the horror of those hours and those days and those months, all the great medical institutions of our country were founded. The greatest research in medical history in America was done as they tried to solve the problem. They never solved it, thirty years later they couldn't solve it. They never believed it was a virus, they thought it was the bacteria. Bacteria...the virus managed to mutate up to that level of virulence and since that time it has mutated downward to a much less virulent form which we usually experience during the flu season.

There's no reason to explain why it became so virulent then, and why it's less now. But it could happen again. The point being, all things don't continue the same way. That little half creature that exists in a fallen world killed a hundred million people. How fragile is life? Who are you kidding?

Evolution is simply a tool, atheism is simply a tool, agnosticism is simply a tool to free up the sinner to indulge his lusts. Those are the arguments...ridicule, immorality, uniformity, everything continues the same way. That's revisionistic history. We know better.

By the way, the Great Influenza of that twenty-four month period killed ten times the number who died in Europe in the Black Death, the Bubonic Plague. As far as we know, it was the greatest killer in human history.

On the other hand, you have the argument of the saints. Those are the arguments of the scoffers, let's go back to the text. What about the arguments of the saints? How is Peter going to help us? How is he going to equip us not to fall victim to these things, to ridicule, to uniformity, immorality?

So Peter sets forth some arguments. Arguments from the mockers, arguments for the saints. First, from Scripture...from Scripture, verse 1, "This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I'm stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder."

I love that phrase, "Your sincere mind...your unpolluted mind...your mind without wax...your true understanding." I am stirring up your pure faculty for spiritual discernment. First of all, folks, we find our answer to the critics in the Scripture and we go to the Scripture with a mind that has been transformed. We have the mind of Christ, 1 Corinthians 2. Romans 12, "We have had the renewing of our minds that we may know what is the good and perfect will of God."

So Peter recognizes that as believers, contrary to false teachers, verse 12 of chapter 12, who are like unreasoning, irrational, instinctive animals to be captured and killed, or verse 17, springs without water, mists driven by a storm, or verse 22, dogs going back to their vomit or pigs wallowing in the mire, we have according to verse 1 been given a pure mind that can be stirred. And what is it that stirs that pure mind? Verse 2, "I want to stir up your pure mind by way of reminder...what is that?...remember...what?...the Word spoken before hand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your Apostles." This is Peter's reference to Scripture, Old Testament and New Testament. And Peter has already said, back in chapter 1 verse 19, "We have the prophetic word made more sure by which you do well to pay attention to a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. Know this first of all, no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, or origination. No prophecy was ever made by an act of human will but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God," that's the Scripture.

So, we have an inspired Scripture. We take our purified minds that have been made pure by the work of regeneration. We go back to the words spoken before hand by the holy prophets, referring to the Old Testament, and the commandment of the Lord and Savior that came through the Apostles, that's the New Testament. Where do we go to rebut the skeptics? We go to the Word of God.

You can go back to the Old Testament, you will read much about judgment. Psalm 2, Isaiah 13, Isaiah 24, Isaiah 34, Isaiah 51, many of the minor prophets, Zephaniah, Malachi, all kinds of places in the Old Testament where the holy prophets of old spoke concerning final judgment. There are prophecies in Isaiah about the end of this world as we know it and the creation of a new heaven and a new earth. And also, the commandment of the Lord, the *entole*, literally the law of the Lord that was spoken and written by the Apostles meaning the New Testament...the New Testament, 23 of 27 books written by the Apostles themselves. And they tell us a lot about divine judgment. They tell us a lot, including Peter, about the end of the age, words like the words of the Apostle Paul, "It is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, to give relief to those who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus and these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power," promises like that, found in the Old Testament and found in the New Testament as well.

So, we argue against the skeptics from Scripture. Old Testament Scripture, New Testament Scripture gives us clear revelation concerning the coming judgment which will be brought on men at the exploding final wrath of God mediated through the one He has appointed judge, Jesus Christ.

Then Peter moves to an argument from history...an argument from history. Verse 5, "When they maintain this," meaning all things continue from the beginning as they were, immutable uniformitarianism, when they maintain that everything goes along the same way, he says in a sarcastic fashion, "It escapes their notice....it escapes their notice that by the Word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water."

Oh, minor detail. They overlook the fact of the Flood. It escapes their notice that you can go to the top of the flat cliffs in the Grand Canyon and find seashells and they're not just found by Christians. I have one on my desk that was found about a mile from my house. "It escapes their notice," literally in the Greek is they shut their eyes to the facts, or in the Authorized Version, the King James, they are willingly ignorant of. Here's the path of deliberate ignorance, convenient ignorance. They seek evil. They seek sin. They seek freedom to be immoral and that colors everything. They ply their deceptive lies in the church. Romans 1 says they consider themselves to be wise and in reality they are fools, deliberately, willingly ignorant.

I'm never surprised when a Christian believes the Bible can shut down the arguments of an atheistic evolutionist. That doesn't surprise me because their arguments are not reasonable or intellectual. They willfully refuse to recognize this massive historic event that undermines the whole concept of uniformity, namely the Flood, the universal world-wide Flood by which God destroyed the entire wicked world except eight people. How many people did He destroy? I don't know that we can come up with a number, millions...millions.

And Peter's description of the Flood is remarkable. Look at it. Verse 5, "It escapes their notice that

by the Word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.” He goes all the way back to creation. “By the Word of God...by the Word of God everything was created, and by the Word of God everything was destroyed in the Flood.” By His Word, the world was made and everything in it. By His Word the world was destroyed and everything in it except for eight souls and the animals gathered into the ark. God spoke it into existence and He spoke it into destruction.

This is diametrically opposed to the idea of uniformity and evolution, everything goes on in the same process. Peter says there is God, God spoke the heavens and earth into existence, and God stepped into the heavens and the earth and altered them dramatically causing the death of every inhabitant on the earth except one family.

Now let me go back and take that apart a little bit because it's very, very important. “It escapes their notice that by the Word of God the heavens existed long ago.” This speaks of creation...this speaks of creation. The heavens existed long ago. The Hebrew word for heavens is always plural, so Peter uses a Greek plural form. And by that word, heavens, Peter means all the creation because the earth is part of what is suspended in the heavens. “Long ago by God's Word, not natural causes, not a piece of protoplasm floating in some primordial muck but by the Word of God the universe was spoken into existence. And the earth then was formed out of water and by water.” That's a very interesting statement...very interesting.

This means that when the earth was formed it was formed from a condition of a kind of formless mass of H₂O in some form, mist, water, we don't know. Formed is a perfect participle of *sunistemi*, it describes the main thought. God brought it into existence and by bringing it into existence, He formed the earth out of water, out of a watery mass.

To understand this, go back to Genesis 1. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” Now listen to this, verse 2, “And the earth was formless and void, *tohu and bohu* in the Hebrew. It was a formless mass. But there's more. “There was no light so darkness was over the surface of the deep.” It is a deep...it is a thick formless void, there's more... “And the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the...what?...waters.”

The original act of God was to speak into existence H₂O in some form, in complete...complete darkness without form, totally without shape...an uncontrolled, as it were, mass of watery substance in the darkness. It is formless. The first three days then of creation form it into the earth, and the second three days of creation populate it with plants and animals and people. The first three days, God gave form to the earth. The second three days, He filled it.

Verse 2 says, “The Spirit of God is hovering over, literally hovering over the surface of the waters.” So it has a surface. The Holy Spirit then moves this surface, pulling it together into a sphere in the first three days by creating gravity which makes the water molecules cling to each other to form first the surface and then a sphere.

God then creates light without objects to attach the light to...which is not a problem. What is light?

It's the spectrum of waves and rays and all that is light. And then after creating light, somebody might say "to see what He was doing," He shapes the earth. Verse 6, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters. Let it separate the waters from the waters." God made the expanse, separated the waters which below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse and it was so. God called the expanse heaven. God pulled some waters up, pulled some waters down. The waters that went up provided a watery canopy over the earth. This defines the heavens that were long ago that Peter talked about, and it's called heaven, called the expanse heaven. The water above and water below on the earth. So that the heavens had this watery content.

Verse 9, "God said, 'Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place.'" The waters that were above created a canopy literally around the whole earth. The waters below were then collected into one place and then the dry land was created. And God called the dry land earth and the gathering of the waters He called seas. And God saw that it was good.

Perfect environment, by the way. That's why people lived to be 900 years old. The ultraviolet rays of the sun couldn't penetrate the misty canopy. Everything flourished. The Garden of Eden, we can't even conceive of what that would be like, everything growing perfectly and man living to 900 years.

But then, something catastrophic hit the world. Genesis chapter 6, it's the Flood, let's go back to what Peter wrote now. Peter, who has the exact right view of creation, says, "God by His Word created the heavens that existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water." What is most distinctive about the original creation was how much of it was water. At first it was all water. And then there was water above, and water below. And the water below then seceded, as it were, into the oceans and the seas as the land came forward. "Through which," what does that mean? What's the antecedent? Water. "Through which the world at that time was destroyed being flooded with water."

Bottom line, God built in to His original creation the agency by which He would destroy it. From the beginning, God built in to His original creation the very means by which He would destroy that creation. He formed the earth out of water and destroyed it with water.

The destruction of the Flood did not put the earth out of existence. It did not put the heavens out of existence. It just changed the old order. And that is why Peter's language is very careful in verse 6, "Through which...not the earth was destroyed...but through which the world was destroyed," the *kosmos*, the system, the order, being flooded with water. The Greek word for flooded with water, *kataklyzo*, from which we get the English word cataclysm.

You can go back and read Genesis 6 and Genesis 7, read the description of the Flood. God broke up the water above, suspended over the earth in the canopy, water came crashing down on to the earth from above. God then broke up the fountains of the deep, fractured the earth so that the continents which now exist were formed then and not before, shifting the tectonic plates of the earth and the water that was inside the earth belched forth. And when the earth cracked open, gas, dust, air, water exploded up into the atmosphere. And the world has never been the same...never been the same. The whole order of the earth and life on the earth, dramatically changed. All of a sudden people had

difficulty living for a hundred years. Dinosaurs disappeared cause they couldn't live long enough to get that big. The world changed dramatically...dramatically changed.

The Egyptians have a world flood creation...world flood destruction account. The ancient Babylonians had a world flood destruction account. The ancient Assyrians had a world flood destruction account. There are creation stories and there are flood stories all across the globe. These people willingly are ignorant of this because if it's true, then this powerful God can step into human history and alter this planet. And why did He do it? Genesis 6 says because He looked at this world and saw that everything man did was only evil continually. And He repented that He had made man in the beginning.

The world, friends, has not always been the same. The whole order of the heavens and the earth was dramatically altered by the Word of God as He drowned the ungodly all over the earth. And this is testimony that sin will not go unpunished and that the Lord does do things that dramatically alter this universe in which we live. We're worried about squirting hair spray into the air, as if somehow this is going to bring down the planet. There is One who will bring down the planet, it's not you and it's not us collectively. All the fossil record, strata can be explained by the unbelievable cataclysm of a universal Flood, catastrophe, not uniformity.

False teachers refuse to face the true history. They become revisionists historians. They deny all kinds of evidence. Make up their own history without divine intervention so they can live immoral lives. Things have not continued as they were. The most cataclysmic environmental event that ever happened in this world was the Flood. Just think of it. Talk about an environmental disaster, everybody died. All life was destroyed. And God did it. And that is the historical precedent for what is coming.

Look at chapter 3 verse 7, "But the present heavens and earth..." Now the present heavens and earth, the one we know, the one we experience is not like the one the people experienced before Noah, it's different. It's the one that's been environmentally devastated by God, the present heavens and earth by His Word are being reserved not for watery destruction but for fire. This is the post-flood. We're living in the second earth system, the second eco-system, if you want to use that kind of language. We're living in the second biosphere, the present world system since the Flood. And it was by His Word that He brought the first system into existence. And it was by His Word that He destroyed that system. And the present heaven and earth by His Word are being reserved for a future destruction by fire for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. Once water, next time fire. In fact, in the original creation there's no mention of fire, there's water below and water above, no mention of fire. Now we live on the crust of an inferno, ten miles below your feet is molten lava at a temperature of twenty-four thousand, five hundred degrees centigrade.

Why? And above you are flying around in the heavens fiery balls, some of them a million times larger than this little planet. Fire will be God's tool next time when He destroys the second heaven and earth.

He's given us a taste of what that might be like. Genesis 19, Sodom and Gomorrah, two wicked cities

characterized by homosexuality, lust were destroyed by fire and brimstone belching out of the ground at the command of God. The prophets of the Old Testament warn about this. "Behold, the Lord will come in fire," Isaiah 66:15, "His rebuke with flames of fire." Verse 16, "The Lord will execute judgment by fire." Daniel 7 says the same thing. Micah 1 says the same thing. Malachi 4 says the same thing. John the Baptist said the same thing. Second Thessalonians, I read to you earlier, that Christ will return in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who know not God and obey not the gospel. Fire could come from the sky in fiery balls, ...Revelation describes that, doesn't it? Fiery balls coming out of the sky. It can come from below. We live on a fire ball.

More devastatingly, fire can come from the splitting of the atom. We understand a nuclear holocaust. Well, when God decides to split all the atoms in the universe, the thing will incinerate instantaneously. There's a fire storm coming. This world will not continue, will not continue the way it is permanently. Its judgment was built into its original creation with water. Its judgment is built into this recreation with fire. And so, he says in verse 7, "The present heaven and earth by His Word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men." It's coming. It is coming.

Now, that's only the first argument from the saints. There's a lot more but our time is gone. So we'll save those for next time. But I'm going to give you something to think about, okay? I hope I've given you a lot of things to think about, this is one more thing to think about. Look at Genesis 8. After the Flood...after the Flood, verse 2 of Genesis 8, "The fountains of the deep, the floodgates of the sky were closed." You remember I told you the water came up from below and down from above, God shut off the water. The rain from the sky was restrained. The water receded steadily from the earth, decreased, months went by, finally, as you remember, verse 13, "It came about in the six hundred and first year and the first month, the first of the month, the water was dried up from the earth and Noah removed the covering of the ark, looked and behold, the surface of the ground was dried out." God said to Noah in verse 15, "You can leave the ark."

And then Noah built an altar to the Lord in verse 20, and gave Him an offering. And the Lord said to him, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth, I will never again destroy every living thing as I have done." And how did God make that promise visible? With a rainbow. So when you see a rainbow, that's a reminder that God will never destroy the world again by water. By fire, yes.

But look, folks, verse 22, listen to this, this is God's promise. "While the earth remains..." Did you read that? Or, "As long as the earth remains," and who determines that? God. "As long as the earth remains, seed time, harvest, cold, heat, summer, winter, day, night shall not...what?...cease." That's a great promise, isn't it? We're not going to kill the planet. This is a divine promise. This planet is here for man to use and as long as it is here, God will sustain it for our use and our good and our joy and our praise to Him. So don't worry about it. As Rick says, "Step on the grass, shoot a deer, drill for oil."

All right, the rest next week, let's pray.

It's so wonderful, Lord, to be able to turn to Your Word and to find the answers to the things that

seem to be so difficult for the society in which we live to comprehend. We're so grateful, Lord, Your Word is so amazing, so powerful, so consistent, so true. You are such a great God, how privileged we are to know You and to be loved by You and to serve You. May we be faithful in all things, giving honor to You in Your Son's name. Amen.

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