

Peter's Answer To Evolution and The Millennium

By

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The second epistle of Peter is as up-to-date as the evening news, and leaves nothing to the imagination of “interpreters.” He does not employ symbols and spiritual types, but uses natural terms readily understood.

In chapter one he gives assurance of the reality of salvation through Jesus Christ to all who are faithful to Him. In chapter two he warns of false teachers and servants of corruption, giving a description that portrays our own times. Then, in chapter three, Peter destroys the foundation of evolution and straightens out the Millennial question, all in a few terse verses.

The question has to do with “the last days” and the “promise of His (Christ’s coming’ (3:3–4). First, the apostle states the position of the evolutionists, who are identified as mockers “walking after their own lusts.” They say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.” In scientific terms this is called “uniformitarianism” and is absolutely essential to the evolutionist theory, which requires millions of years of gradual growth under the same atmospheric conditions. The idea is to be able to trace man’s development backward step-by-step, bone-by-bone, through millions of years.

This can’t be done, Peter declares, because things have NOT remained the same. The evolutionists willfully forget, Peter says, that the heavens and earth that existed at creation were destroyed in the flood by the word of God. It isn’t as if they couldn’t know better, or had overlooked the fact. The evidence of a universal flood is everywhere! The evolutionist must “willfully” forget it; he must reject the evidence deliberately and deny the revealed word of God on purpose.

More and more scientists are coming out with scientific proof of a universal flood, which destroys the foundation of the evolutionary theory. Never mind the proof; the official religion of government (including government schools) is evolution. The alternative is recognition of the Creator, the Lord Jesus Christ.

This refutation of the “last day mockers” leads into the statements concerning the coming of Christ, and the final dissolution of the present world. Peter writes that the same word that brought destruction by flood will also bring future destruction by fire. “The heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men” (Vs. 7).

The question concerns the “promise of his coming,” and Peter asserts that in the day He comes the whole earth will be burned with fire as judgment against the ungodly, involving them in its destruction.

It is interesting to note that many commentators on this verse suggest that “destruction” does not mean that the ungodly are to be destroyed, but rather banished to some place far away from God. But this is to drastically twist Peter’s statement so that it makes no sense at all. Of what purpose is the fire as judgment upon man, if man is not to experience it, but is to be removed to some place where he is safe from it? In Rev. 20:15

and 21:8 it is said that the lost are cast into a “lake of fire which is the second death.” Jesus repeatedly spoke of the final fire as a means of destroying the ungodly, and Jude wrote that the fire was exemplified by the destruction of Sodom. Certainly that fire was not for the banishment of the citizens of Sodom, but for their destruction. (See Mt. 3:12, 10:28, 13:30, 42, Jude 7).

Had Peter wanted to say “banishment” or “spiritual suffering” or some other phrase so common to those who do not believe God will actually cast sinners into a literal fire, he could have done so. The Holy Spirit is never at a loss for words. The passage is self-explanatory; the heavens and earth are stored up for fire in the day of judgment and the destruction of the ungodly.

What, then, of all the things that are supposed to happen AFTER Christ’s coming, such as a 1,000 year reign, commonly known as the “millennium?” According to this popular idea the saints will be taken out of the earth at Christ’s coming (there are variations of the exact details of this) and, with Christ reigning on earth, all those who had not received Him previously will then have opportunity to do so. There will be perfect peace on the earth and great prosperity for a thousand years!

It seem terribly odd that the peace so longed for by Christians is not to come to them, but rather to the ungodly, who have hated peace and rejected the Prince of peace. But, besides this, there are several statements by Peter that refute the possibility of such a thousand year reign.

In the day Christ comes the ungodly are to be judged and destroyed. The reason for the delay in His coming is because He is longsuffering, and is allowing sufficient time for repentance, and salvation of all who will ever believe in Him (Vs. 9). Now, if the Lord is not coming until all have repented who will ever repent, 1) there could be none saved during that 1,000 ears; 2) the longsuffering, which allows time for repentance, will cease when He comes in judgment, and there will then be no further opportunity for salvation; and 3) the world and the ungodly will be destroyed at His coming, so there would not only be no one to live under an earthly reign for 1,000 years, but there would be no place for them either!

Peter describes a thorough total destruction, as if he had in mind the many concepts of millennialism advanced in our day. “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; ;in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (Vs. 10). The day of the Lord is the day Christ is revealed “from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus, who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord, and from the glory of his might when he shall come to be marveled at in all them that believed...” (II Thess. 1::7–10).

It is an even that comes suddenly, as a thief comes unannounced. Not only is it sudden and without any warning, but it is a day of total catastrophe to the present world, save for the saints who are saved form it(Gal 1:4) While it is sudden, it is not silent. The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the very elements shall be disintegrated. The earth and all man’s works shall be destroyed by the fire.

Three times Peter emphasizes that it is all to be burned up, totally dissolved, so that we have absolutely nothing to look to but an entirely “new heavens and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness) (Vs. 13).

While Jesus, Peter and Paul all had much to give us with regard to our “blessed hope,” encouraging us that we should endure all things in this world, no matter how difficult and painful it may be, because we are assured of the glory to come, none of them left us with any of the strange and sensational teachings that are being popularized (and often exploited for profit) by today’s prophets of a coming “millennium.” How is it that Paul, in all his letters, never had a word about this coming earthly paradise? Instead he strongly refuted claims of Judaism, which did place its hopes (and still does) in an earthly temporal kingdom of this world.

While wild prophetic views are being given preeminence in churches today, we would do well to return to the inspired words of the apostle Peter, who had “the keys of the kingdom,” who wrote that “all things that pertain into life and godliness” are granted us through the knowledge of Christ (II Peter 1:3) and that “no prophecy of scriptures is of private interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from god as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (Vs. 20–21). What does Peter say we are to be concerned within the light of Christ’s second coming? “Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy living and godliness...!”

We look for His coming. It is delayed by His longsuffering, that all the elect may come to repentance. When He comes, all else will be destroyed in the fire. Then, with nothing else—with nothing we have earned, or made or called our own—we will stand before Him. The only thing that will count is what we are in the sight of our Lord. God will create a new earth—“Behold, I make all things new”—and it will be populated with those who have submitted to Him and His purpose, who have been made “new creatures” through the redemption in Christ Jesus.

“What manner of persons!” The essence of God is holiness. He created many holy, for man was created in His image. That purpose has not changed, and the promise is that when Christ comes, we who are His children “shall be like Him” (I John 3:2). Peter described our proper manner of life as holy and godly, because that’s the way it will be in the new creation, the kind of world, and the only world, that will exist after His coming.

We are not told to preach the “millennium” nor even to look for such a thing. In fact, the only reference to a thousand year reign is a symbolic expression in Revelation and has nothing to do with some future earthly kingdom.

The Day of the Lord will end all opportunity for salvation as well as all earthly ambitions and accomplishments. In the meantime, let us look to our manner of living, and “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ. To him be the glory both now and for ever”(II Peter 3:18).

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