

The End of the World. Peter is speaking of momentous future events here in chapter three. But Peter is not speaking of the Rapture. The Rapture is the long awaited, promised, secret return of the Lord Jesus Christ for His Bride. Nor is he speaking of the glorious public appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ with His saints at the **beginning** of the Day of the Lord, His 1000 year reign over the earth. No, Peter is here speaking of the literal end of the world. This long prophesied event really will occur, although much later than sooner. It takes place at the **end** of the Day of the Lord and **begins** the Day of God.

All is part of a Master Plan God had before the foundation of the earth. Knowing Adam would sin leaving each of his descendants, all mankind, with sinful natures, God in His infinite mercy and grace wisely tests mankind with various opportunities to acknowledge and confess their rebellious departure from their Creator and return to Him. (The reason God can do this and maintain His righteousness is because He gave His one and only Son Jesus Christ our Lord to die upon the cross.) God tests man in differing ways in different ages down through the course of time. Each time He displays His goodness, mercy and grace dispensing new signals to repent. These dispensations are marked out in scripture. Brother A. E. Booth (and others) noticed this and he charted out the progressive revelation of God over the course of time, an island in the sea of eternity. The seven days in the Genesis account of the Creation correspond with the different ages.

Peter mentions the first test and its outcome, the Flood, first. It is a witness of God's power and willingness to judge the whole world. Men today scoff at it. They do not want to face reality. Peter then skips down thousands of years to the final dispensation of God's Plan, the Day of the Lord. In the the sixth day of Genesis 1, Adam and Eve are given dominion over the earth, prefiguring Christ reigning with the Church. This thousand year period is a time of unparalleled earthly blessing and prosperity, peace and safety, and righteousness reigning over the whole earth. It begins with the Lord appearing and destroying those coming to fight Him. He then calls all of the living before Him to weed out those who rejected and opposed Him. When this is done mankind enters a new era given a fresh new start . . . everyone on earth is a believer. Satan and the demons are locked up so they cannot harass or tempt people. There is no disease, hunger, wars or crime to mar or threaten their daily enjoyment of life. Life is easy! Any person openly sinning is immediately detected, apprehended and punished. To avoid this men hide out as far from Jerusalem as possible and feign obedience. They somehow manage to behave under these rigorous conditions as but entertain no love or subjection for their King in their hearts though He has blessed them with ideal

earthly living conditions. And this at the cost of the cross.

The test! Can man subject himself to God's Anointed King under these ideal conditions? Will they? No! When the 1000 year test is completed Satan is released and gathers men who had chafed under the law and order dominion of the Righteous King. Who are these? The children born to the believers who will have made up the initial population of the Kingdom. They still have Adam's sinful nature. Now a vast multitude of these descendants, who had feigned obedience, openly rebel and gather to attack the Camp of the Saints, Christ's capitol, Jerusalem. God doesn't mess around fighting them. He sends fire down from heaven and destroys them all in a flash. They will appear before the Great White Throne. (These cannot claim that poverty, squalor, violence or corrupt leadership caused their rebellion as some criminals do today.) With no further ado God acts to do what Peter so graphically describes in this chapter. The heaven and earth are destroyed and a New Heaven and New Earth appear. Righteousness no longer **reigns**, righteousness **dwells** there. **God dwells there.** Enforcement is no longer needed. The tests are over. The total depravity of man is fully proven. The awesome grace and longsuffering of God are fully proven and displayed as well. Many are saved! Many perish! Many refuse His love, do not come when invited, hide when sought, reject His overtures to return, and perish in their sins. But **none** are unloved, unwelcome, unsought, or rejected. The world as we know it will come to an end. A fiery end. Yet a well publicized end. But a manner of ending well suited as a final awesome commemoration of the utter incurable depravity of sinful man. God through this fire eliminates sin from the created universe for ever and ever. We look forward to that. Hallelujah!

Peter and Paul. Peter shows no sign of asserting or exerting any authority above Paul or any one else except as an equal among the apostles. Paul doesn't either. Paul had to clearly establish his unique call to apostleship by the risen Christ, Galatians 1 and 2, because some were claiming all authority flowed from Jerusalem and that the Old Testament was still in effect for believers today including the Gentiles. In his letter to the Galatians (ch2) Paul took great pains to clearly establish that he didn't receive his apostleship or any spiritual gift, power or authority from the 12 apostles residing in Jerusalem or from the established assembly there. He documents how he respected the other apostles and took great pains to demonstrate that on his visit to Jerusalem. He also made personal calls on them and received their right hand of fellowship in his position work and teaching. Peter reconfirms that here. There was obviously great mutual respect between them and there is no hint of rivalry and they condemn rivalry among saints in their writings.