

Reserved for Fire
2 Peter 3:3-7 (08/24/14)
Ernie Godshall
Faith Bible Church
Evansville, Indiana

End-time mockers will mock Christianity about the second coming. "Where is He? It's been 2000 years and He hasn't come yet!" Peter ties two historical cataclysmic events to the future second coming and says these mockers willingly, deliberately refuse to accept the biblical accounts of creation and the flood in Genesis! As hard as it is to believe in the billions and millions of years of evolution and as crazy as that seems, the presupposition is there is no God out there doing stuff, all has happened naturally, materially, slowly, over millions of years. Biologist Richard Lewontin wrote in the introduction to Carl Sagan's *Cosmos* that we have a prior commitment to materialism and "cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door."

The big guns of unbelief, even among professing Christians, are aimed at the literal interpretation of both creation and the flood, regardless of what the Bible says. Let's lay down a principle here and then dig into these three catastrophic events. **IF YOU TRY TO UNDERSTAND LIFE APART FROM THE LENS OF GOD'S REVELATION, YOU WILL FAIL MISERABLY!** Psalm 119:104 asserts, "By Your Word I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way!"

The only way to understand life is through the lens of Scripture. If you aren't living your life based on Scriptures, aware of what God has said about life, the past and the future, you are sadly deceived. If you don't interpret life based squarely on the Scriptures, you will fail to see what God has done by His powerful Word. Peter says mockers deliberately refuse to accept three major events Scripture clearly teaches: Creation, the Flood, and Future Judgment.

You will fail to see how God created the heavens and the earth and Adam and Eve – v. 5.

For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, (ESV)

Before going any further, notice these deliberate denials are an attack on God's Word, vv. 5 and 7. So it's man vs. God here! Whom will we believe? And, God rules His universe by His Word. He created the heavens and earth by His Word, He upholds all things by His powerful Word, and when He says enough, He will bring all things to a screeching halt.

Let's look at creation for a few minutes. No one was there except God, right? I love this verse from Job 38:4, "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding." This should be posted over the entrance to every science department in every university. You weren't there so how do you know it happened? There were three people there, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and all three were involved.

The dominant theory is that the universe came into existence out of nothing by a huge explosion from a pinhead of incredible energy, maybe 12 billion years ago. Our sun and solar system and earth formed around 4 billion years ago. Life emerged out of the primordial soup maybe 3.89 billion years ago, and modern, homo sapien man around 100,000 years ago. Now we feel for these people. And in the professional field, you're locked in. If you go with Ken Hamm and the biblical account, you're, well, helpless. Bill Nye feels sorry for our children! And we feel sorry for Bill Nye.

Now I'm neither a scientist nor the son of a scientist. But some things are obvious to me. One of my seminary professors, Dr. Charles Smith, gave us four questions about evolution and they are helpful. If evolution is true and no God is outside doing stuff and creating cells with information locked into the DNA of various kinds:

1. How do you get something from nothing? If there ever was nothing, there is still nothing. You simply don't get something from nothing. The Latin phrase is *ex nihilo, nihil fit*.

2. *How do you get life from non-life?* Some evolutionists have even resorted to extra-terrestrial seeding of life on earth. Life simply doesn't come from non-life.
3. *How do you get higher forms from lower forms?* You can't.
4. *How do you get man from animals?* We may act like monkeys, but we're no kin to the monkey!

But the big guns are aimed at Genesis 1 and 2 and are constantly firing off like Hamas rockets into Israel. Romans 1:20 says "since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse." We could list one truth after another about God just from Genesis 1 and 2.

The creation account teaches us so much. In verse 1 you have the origin of time – beginning, energy – God created, space - heavens, and matter – earth. And it clearly tells us earth began as a watery mass in verse 2. All that water you drink goes all the way back to Genesis 1:1-2. It just keeps getting recycled, clouds, rain, rivers, oceans, clouds. Who knows who drank that water before you drank it? Then God began to do His incredible work of bring order out of that original *tohu* and *bohu* (without form and void). In one day after another He created stuff: light, the earth's atmosphere, veggies, stars (100 billion galaxies) and sun and moon. This universe is incredibly finely tuned. Think of the power of that sun heating and shining its wondrous rays on us faithfully! Think of the power of gravity and the balance of nature with oxygen and carbon dioxide and the tilt of the earth and the distance of the earth from the sun. A little closer and we'd freeze; a little further and we'd roast.

On day five God spoke and fish and fowl filled the seas and air. The great blue whale, as far as we know the largest and heaviest creature on earth ever, weighs 170 tons. Its heart weighs 1300 pounds and can be heard beating two miles away. Then on day six, all the animals! What a menagerie of amazing creatures! And God locked them all into their own unique DNA determined kinds.

That word "kind" is found ten times in Genesis 1. Incredible. Robins don't even mate with ducks, or humming birds with turkeys! They have bred zorses and zonkeys, but I don't think it's a good deal.



Now all of this happened in six days. There was evening and morning, day one, two, three, four. The only numerical days we know of are 24 hour periods. God has told us clearly in Exodus 20:11, "For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day." Then God repeated it later in Exodus 31:17, "In six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed." There's nothing hard to understand about "six days."

And then you have the crown of divine creation, Adam and Eve. Theistic evolutionists have to have many evolving hominids running around naked all over the place and then God decides to pull out two of them and inject His image in them and call them Adam and Eve, or others says the whole idea of Adam and Eve is bogus, just a myth. But God is clear. In Genesis 1:27, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." The greatest Scientist and Anthropologist who ever lived assured us in Matthew 19:4, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female." "Wait, Jesus. How do you know?" Jesus, "I was there! In fact, I created them! I know what happened." So the question is, who will you believe?

We've had numerous babies born recently. I know this is anecdotal, but it's true. All I have to do is look in the face of my grandkids and know we aren't random chance pieces of animated matter in a purposeless world. There is a personal God who started this whole chain of events back when he created these two people, male and female, Adam and Eve. And they were unique in creation, not advanced mammals but created by God in God's image and likeness.

Without Scripture, you will fail to see how God created the heavens and the earth. This is the first cataclysmic event mockers deliberately reject. But the mockers also aim their guns at another cataclysmic event in history found in Genesis 6-8. They refuse to accept it, so they reinterpret it. But if you don't interpret all of life through Scripture...

You will fail to see how God sent a world-wide flood and destroyed all human life – v. 6
through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.

I was on my way back from a visit to Pennsylvania several years ago and came through western Maryland on I-68 and saw this. This is Sideling Hill and evidence of a young earth – folded or bent rock formation. The Garden of the Gods has rock waves. There are all kinds of evidence of a worldwide flood, including fossil beds all over the globe. In Chile on a mountain 5000 feet above sea level there's a huge bed of marine fossils, including 80 whales. Evolution tries to interpret this phenomenon, but a world-wide deluge makes much better sense. Answers in Genesis has an article giving ten scientific evidences of a young earth. One is bent rock layers. Some have to do with the Genesis flood. Soft tissue in fossils, DNA in ancient bacteria, little salt and sediment in the oceans, and more.



I'm not a scientist, not the son of a scientist, but anyone knows you don't have fossils from dead animals lying out there for millions of years. What about that deer I hit several years ago just up the road? Eric Coher had invited me to speak at USI one night and I had every intention of getting over there, but just a little ways down Oak Hill Road a deer ran in front of my car. I thought the guy coming the other way was about to hit it when suddenly I hit it. The light from my headlight flashed at me and the guts of the deer came crashing through the windshield right onto my lap. I opened the door and pushed the stuff out on the street, steaming and warm! But the rest of the carcass went flying over the top of my car and into the field. Now, it will never be fossilized, no matter how many years pass. In fact, most of it, if not all, has already passed through a possum or bird or raccoon. It's gone!

Fossils require encasement. Encasement implies upheaval, and God says the flood was a catastrophic upheaval all over the world. Genesis 6 says the entire world was so wicked that every imagination of the thoughts of man was only evil continually, and He told Noah to build an ark big enough to save enough animals and his own family. So God says, and Jesus verifies the account, Noah built an ark 1 ½ football fields long, 75 feet wide, with the capacity of holding 522 railroad cars worth of stuff. Imagine waiting at a train crossing for 52 cars to pass, and then 52 more, then 52 more, ten of them! That's a lot of space.

God said He was going to destroy everything on the earth that has breath, and that's exactly what He did when he sent a global flood. The fountains of the deep burst open and windows of heaven opened, and it took six weeks to empty the atmospheric ocean above the earth. Everything, everyone, everywhere that had breath died. God is saying, "Sin has a price – the wages of sin is death!"

After 375 days in that ark, when it was all over, Noah and his family and all the air-breathing critters unloaded into a brand new world. But there was still one major problem. Noah and his family brought their sin nature with them and it wasn't long before that wickedness expanded and corrupted the whole newly cleansed world! That's why you and I need Jesus. We all come from Noah and his three sons, we all are sinners, and we all need redemption!

If you don't interpret life and history through the lens of Scripture, you will fail miserably. You'll fail to believe God about creation, and you'll fail to believe God about the flood! He won't send another one. Dr. Whitcomb wrote, "One such flood was sufficient to demonstrate forever the sovereignty and holiness and power of God as the judge of all mankind."

You will fail, finally, to believe that God is going to come again and bring a fiery judgment on all sin and evil – v. 7

But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

This is what the mockers especially close their minds to. They refuse to believe this. Rob Bell wrote that book *Love Wins* because he just can't believe God will bring eternal fiery judgment on human beings. I have a theory that when scholarship turns creation, Adam and Eve, and the flood into a myth, it won't be long until they no longer believe in a final, catastrophic and fiery judgment, as Peter describes it here.

Notice, God is keeping this present universe together by His Word. Colossians 1:17, "In Him, Christ, all things consist or hold together." If only we could see how involved God is with His creation, every day, every moment. Hebrews 1:3 says Christ "upholds all things by His powerful Word." God rules His universe by His sovereign and omnipotent Word. We're not just impersonally spinning through time and space. God has His hands all over it. He created by His Word, He sent a flood by His Word, and He keeps this present world going, holding it together, until the coming day of judgment! That's what the mockers really resent and don't want to believe!

Here God is today, with all the unbelief, the persecution, the secularists working overtime trying to scrub God out of the public domain, and God is patiently holding it all together. He is ruling by His Word. He is still saving people. We as believers rest knowing that while our faith is under attack, when creation and the flood are being completely denied and ridiculed, God is in control. God has a plan for the future, and people can mock if they like, but they are banging their head against the immovable infinite Rock.

This world is being reserved for fire. We live in the day of man. God seems to be letting man get away with lots. It often seems there's no justice. If God is such a good God, why does He allow all this wickedness? You have forgotten; He has the last word. The bills will have to be paid. Justice will be exacted. Evil must be prosecuted. Sin must be punished, and it will.

God will punish all ungodliness, but we fail to realize that we too are ungodly. Every day we lie, lust, gossip, slander, steal, cuss, hate, despise. The record of our sin is huge. It's a mountain. Each one of us fit into this category of "ungodly men." We're not innocent! Romans 2:3, "Do you think you'll escape the judgment of God?" Romans 3:19-20 adds "Every mouth will be shut, every person is guilty before God."

THE GREATEST JUDGMENT

That's why the greatest judgment of all has already taken place. The greatest judgment of all was when God unleashed his wrath on His own Son in the place of guilty sinners. As we'll see in the weeks to come, God is patient with all the evil and wickedness. He could zap all evil people instantly. But He spared not His only Son to be our substitute. Christ is the only way to escape this fiery judgment God has reserved for wicked men!

GOD'S LOVE AND WRATH

There is great comfort here for those who submit to Christ. We understand God is just and holy and regardless of how evil destroys and hurts and maims and abuses in this world, God's love is a holy, wrathful love, and God in love will prosecute all evil. His wrath and His love are not at odds. His wrath is the expression of His love against all that hurts and destroys. But Peter warns us, mockers hate to hear of this and deliberately reject it. In their pride and arrogance, as modern man, they assure themselves they are right. But this judgment will come, just like creation and the flood came. Where do you stand on this matter? And may God help us to keep telling people of the only escape from the wrath to come, the same message Peter preached, "Christ bore our sins in His body on the cross that He might bring us to God." (1 Peter 3:18)