

**THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR**

*June 17, 2007*  
*No. 3363*

*Reserved unto Destruction*  
*Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma*

Dear radio friends,

**T**he apostle Peter addresses the truth, in II Peter 3:5-7, that is and always will remain a matter of contention between the believer and the unbeliever: God's sovereign power over all His creation—that God controls all of creation to fulfill all of His own will and good pleasure. We read in II Peter 3:5-7: "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: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: 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."

In these verses a comparison is made between the destruction of this world at the time of the flood and the destruction that will take place at the end of time. The days before the flood were filled

with violence. The wickedness of man was great in the earth and all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. Yet, from a mere human point of view, life continued on as usual. Society continued to function in its normal manner. But the cup of iniquity had filled and the world, from a spiritual point of view, had become ripe for judgment.

It was during these 120 years that Noah, a just and upright man, began to build the ark. God had warned him that He was going to send a flood of waters that would cover the face of the earth and all flesh would be destroyed. Noah, by faith, built the ark, all the while preaching to the world of the coming judgment.

But Noah was mocked and scorned. What Noah told the ungodly men of his day was an impossibility in their minds. It had never rained. It could not rain. That was a scientific inaccuracy. It defied the laws of nature. Forgotten was the truth that this creation belongs to God. Noah believed the word of God to him and, by

faith, therefore, continued to build the ark.

Now all of this, according to Peter in this particular chapter of the Bible, is a picture, or a type, of what will take place in the days before Christ's return. The world will become a place of lawlessness, and there will be a deliberate defiance of God's Word and His law. And yet, life will continue on as if all were perfectly normal. Society will not even suspect an end. In this world, God will establish and preserve His church. And though the church is small, its witness will yet be heard. Though men of science will have sufficiently convinced unbelieving man that the flood never happened, and even some in the church—even clergy—will convince its unbelieving membership that the flood was nothing more than a quaint fairy tale that we tell our children, the true church of Jesus Christ will believe the flood as a fact and use it as a warning of the judgment to come. And the church in these last days will continue to issue its warning: "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints to execute judgment upon all." Just as the flood came and overflowed the earth, destroying all men, so also will the destruction of the universe take place when Christ comes

again. How will the earth be destroyed at the end of time? Well, that is what we wish to consider.

You see, unbelieving man in our day, just as he was in Noah's day, is ignorant, Peter tells us. He is ignorant of an all-important truth: God is the creator and the preserver of the universe. Peter tells us in this chapter of his second epistle that, in the last days, prior to the final destruction of this world, men will be scoffers, walking after their own lusts. They will mock the church of Christ that has throughout the ages proclaimed the final destruction of this wicked world. Hah! Where is this destruction that you keep predicting? All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation! Unbelieving man says this, of course, because God is not in his heart and, therefore, not in his thoughts. God is not a part of man's scientific reasoning, a part of his philosophy of life. And whatever the child of God thinks makes no difference to him. His reasoning always lies within the structure of unbelief, while the child of God thinks and reasons within the structure and framework of faith. We believe in God and can view nothing apart from Him.

When the ungodly man

reasons and performs his experiments and his studies, it is always in the framework of unbelief.

Nothing, in his mind, ought to be explained in terms of God. There is only the here and now. That is why evolution has won the

day. The unbelieving world may be told by the church that God created everything, and that only by God's power does everything continue to exist, but this world lives in the ignorance of unbelief. They are willingly ignorant, Peter says. And for that reason, in their ignorance unbelieving men mock those who walk in true knowledge of God and of who He is and of what He has done. We know the world is going to end in destruction because we believe in God, who is the Creator and Sustainer of all things.

Peter tells us in verse 5 of this passage here in II Peter 3, "By the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water." In telling us this, Peter points out, first of all, that, indeed, God is the

creator of the heavens and the earth. But Peter also points out *how* God created the heavens

and the earth. And that is what is important if we are to understand how God will also destroy the world at the end of time.

If we were to turn to the

creation account in Genesis 1, we would find that the first work of God in creation was the calling forth of this giant mass of waters. We read of that in Genesis 1:2. Then we read in verse 6 of Genesis 1 what took place on the second day: "And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the [mass of] waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." Then we read of what happened on the third day of creation in verses 9 and 10 of Genesis 1. "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." God called forth to the waters under the sky, and these waters gathered themselves to-

*When the ungodly man  
reasons and performs  
his experiments  
and his studies,  
it is always in the  
framework of unbelief.*

gether into the globe that we now call our earth.

And by that same creative word of God, the waters on the globe of the earth were gathered together in one place. And right out of the water itself appeared the dry land. If one were to be able to stand back and look at what was taking place there on that third day of creation, he would see this mass of waters and then suddenly, by the word of God, appearing out of it and in the midst of it, dry land.

That is the point of Peter. The heavens and the earth, he writes, that were of old were created by God. The dry land, or the earth, was standing out of the water and in the water. Actually that word "in" literally is "on account of the water." And what that means is, the dry land itself was created by God from the water. For that reason the dry land, or the earth, existed on account of the water. That dry land was called out of the water itself so that the water was the substance out of which that dry land was created.

Even unbelieving scientists know that a basic element of this creation is water. Everything was made out of water. It is not so difficult to believe, then, that everything could be swallowed up in that same water.

How then can we ignore the creation account? We ought to know that God is the One who created all things. He created the water, and He therefore controls the waters as a creature of His own powerful hand.

God not only created the heavens and the earth of old, but God providentially controls them as well. And that is the other truth implied in this passage of God's Word. You see, not only did God create the dry land and the seas, but God preserves these creatures by His hands. Science has discovered all kinds of laws of nature that explain to us, for example, why the rivers stay within their banks and why at certain times of the year they might spill over their banks. Science has discovered the laws of nature that keep the seas within their bounds and what determines high and low tides. And what they discover is true, too. We will not deny that. God has indeed established His laws in nature, laws that govern the way that this universe operates. In fact, God has, from the very beginning, commanded man to discover these laws and utilize them in the service of His name.

But unbelieving scientists of today are willingly ignorant of one thing. After all is said and done, it is God who holds

all of these waters in their places.

We read of that, for example, in Psalm 104:9: "Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth." Notice what we read there in that verse. God set a bound on these waters. He not only created them, but God even now preserves them and controls them in their own particular places. By faith you and I, together with Noah, believe these things to be true. God powerfully preserves this creation. But unbelief willingly turns its back on this and rejects it.

One other striking fact Peter includes in his explanation of God's creation and preservation of this world. The heavens and the earth were of old *by the word of God!* By His word, God created and preserved the old world, that is, the world prior to the flood. The account of creation bears that out. When God spoke His word, there was light. God spoke the word, "Let there be" ... and there was the sky, and so on throughout the creation week. God just spoke forth

His powerful word and everything took place. And, you know what? That was no amazing feat for Him. It was a simple word and no more. God is the almighty and powerful God, and His word produces results. By that same word, God also upheld

the world that was prior to the flood. Again, that word of God by which He preserved and governed all things was not some fantastic deed of God that took tremendous exertion on His part. It was but a word, an all-powerful word that held the seas in their places and kept the rain from falling from the sky. God spoke it. It stood fast.

And then God spoke, and all those things that He preserved were destroyed by the flood. Amazing.

The same thing is true now. Notice what Peter tells us in verse 7 in the passage that we are considering here in II Peter. "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." The heavens and the earth that we see now are also preserved. Just as God preserved

*After all is said  
and done,  
it is God who holds  
all of these waters  
in their places.*

the old world unto the destruction of the flood, so also does God preserve this new world, the world in which we live. He preserves it unto the destruction of fire, Peter tells us. But God preserves it. Ungodly men are willingly ignorant of that fact. The church preaches freely of God's hand that preserves this world. And the hand of God that preserves the universe today is the same hand that preserved the old world. It is that almighty word of God that He speaks.

The world today is kept in store by the same word of God that preserved the old world. The universe is kept in store. That means that it is kept by God as a treasure. It is preserved as an ancient treasure that soon will be opened to reveal the horrible power of God against evil.

Now, if it is but a little thing for God to call all things into existence by the power of His word, and if it is but a little thing for God by that same word to preserve all things, is it really all that difficult for God to speak forth the word and destroy all things? It is but a little thing. We learn of that in verse 6 of II Peter 3. "Whereby the world

that then was, being overflowed with water, perished," Peter says. With a word, God released the bounds held on the waters. He caused water to bubble up out of the deep. He caused water to pour down from the sky. And by means of that word, God destroyed the world that then was.

That is what our text means when it states that the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. The old world perished—to be replaced by the new world. Amazing power of God revealed to us in that destruction of the old world.

But not so amazing as the final destruction that will take place at the end of time. The flood was small in comparison

to what will happen when Jesus Christ returns. That is why the flood is a type, that is to say, an Old Testament picture that heralds the final destruction

of the world of sin. The flood was a destruction of this earth only. At the end of time, when Christ comes again on the clouds of heaven, the entire universe is going to be destroyed. Not only the earth, but the skies and outer space

*The flood was small  
in comparison to  
what will happen  
when Jesus Christ  
returns.*

as well. Isaiah tells us that all of these things will be rolled together as a scroll. And this time it will not be water that destroys all things. But the universe will be destroyed by another basic element of this universe: fire.

Such, God's Word tells us, we will see take place. The heavens and the earth that are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire. Or a more vivid description is given to us of this in verse 10 of this chapter. "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." The heavens will melt with a fervent heat. The stars, the sun, the moon will fall from their courses. Fire shall rain down upon this present corrupt world and it shall be destroyed, and everything and everyone in it with a fervent heat.

That destruction comes. It comes as really as the flood came. The unbelieving scientists may deny it. They may say that it goes against all the laws of nature. And the unbeliever in this world may scoff at the church that declares that Christ is coming and that this world will be destroyed

with fire. And that unbelieving world may go on living as if the world will never end. But the heavens and the earth that are now will be utterly destroyed. And that by the very power of God's word.

Christ returns in power. And when He returns He will send forth His angels to save His people from that destruction. And then Christ will shout forth, and this world, this present cosmos, this universe, will be enveloped in heat and fire. And the wicked will perish.

It will be a fire that will usher in the day of judgment, Peter says, the day of judgment or perdition and destruction of ungodly men. In that day all unbelief will be destroyed. No more sin-cursed earth. No more men who will doubt and question or scoff at the power of almighty God. And then He will usher in a realm of perfection, where time will be no more and eternity will prevail in perfection.

And that leaves the child of God with the reassurance that calms us in our hearts. The wicked may be willingly ignorant. That is how they calm themselves now. Get rid of God. Get rid of His hand in creation. Develop a theory that unbelief can grasp hold of. Then those lost in unbelief need not fear an end or de-

struction anymore. Ignore the flood, ignore the results of that flood on the world that we live in, explain away all things by means of a godless evolution, and who needs to fear what the faithful church still proclaims? But that is the foolishness of unbelief.

Christ comes. And Christ comes to destroy the world of ungodly scoffers. But what a glorious day that will be for the church! Oh, awful for the wicked! But glorious for the church. And because we know, we will, as Noah, escape such destruction. We look for that final deliverance from sin.

Christ comes. Let all who hear the testimony of the Word of God that is spoken to everyone by the church take heed. He is not slow in fulfilling His promise. He comes. Let us believe that.

Let us pray together.

Our gracious God, our Father in heaven, we bow before Thy great throne of majesty

and power and we acknowledge and confess that Thou art a God who controls all things in Thy power. Thou dost rule over Thy creation. Thou hast created it to fulfill Thine own good pleasure. And even now Thou dost preserve it and control it to fulfill Thy sovereign will. And when Thy will is finished with respect to this present world, we know and we believe that Thou wilt destroy this world and Thou wilt usher in for Thy people a kingdom of eternal bliss and peace. Father, may we not grow weary, as the church of Jesus Christ, to proclaim that gospel that Jesus Christ comes and that this world will be destroyed. And may that warning not cease from the lips of Thy church. Forgive us of unbelief, forgive us of weakness of faith. And wilt Thou lead us, Father, in that way that we might know Thee in Thy Son and look forward to that day when Jesus Christ comes again. In His name we pray, Amen.