

Examining Realized Eschatology
Part 4: The End of the World
2 Peter 3:1-18

I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** We continue to examine the false teaching: realized eschatology (aka, 70 A.D. doctrine).
2. We noted the five major errors of RE:
 - A. Christ's second coming is past.
 - B. Final judgment is past.
 - C. End of the world is past.
 - D. Spiritual adultery.
 - E. Denies the resurrection of the dead.
3. In this series of lessons we will examine the primary tenets of *Realized Eschatology* (Gal. 1:8-9).
4. **3** In this lesson we will consider *The End of the World*.

II. DISCUSSION:

I. **4** The end of the world:

- A. RE teaches there will not be an ultimate destruction of the material universe.
- B. RE teaches there will **not** be a day at the end of time when the Lord will return, judge the world, and destroy "*both the earth and the works that are in it*" (2 Pet. 3:10).
- C. It seems rather odd we would have to discuss the end of the world, but as we set forth earlier in the introduction, this aspect of our study is necessitated by the realized eschatologist's penchant for redefining biblical terms.
- D. Consider these quotes from RE's chief advocate, Max King relevant to this issue:
 - **"It is taken as fact by many that God will someday bring everything to a grinding halt. But this is not what the Bible says." (SOP-2, p. 291)
 - **"Will this earth burn with fire someday? Will it pass away with a great noise? Just what is the destiny of this material universe that God created in the beginning? The Bible actually has little to say about the destiny of the space-time universe." (SOP-2, p. 293)
 - **"To suggest that the fate of the temporal universe is not the topic of Scripture is not to deny the 'end of the age' in the end times. The world or age that ended was the Old Covenant world." (SOP-2, p. 293)
 - **"The world marked for destruction in prophecy, the end of which involved the second coming of Christ and resulted in the true redemption of Israel, was the Jewish world. Therefore it is the end of the Jewish world and not this material earth we live on today." (SOP-1, 83)
- E. ** Thus, RE teaches the *end of the world* "was the Old Covenant world," (Law of Moses & Judaism); this took place nearly 2,000 years ago at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
 - (1) Is this true?
 - (2) Did the "world" come to an end in 70 A.D.?

2. **5** Redefinition of biblical terms:

- A. According to RE mindset and terminology whenever one encounters the word *world* in the

Bible it pretty much is universally referring to the *Jewish/Mosaic* age.

- B. Thus, when passages are discussed concerning the *end of the world* they say it is not referring to the end of the literal, material earth.
 - (1) On the contrary, they maintain the reference is regarding the end of Judaism, the Jewish age, the Old Covenant, the Law of Moses (i.e., end of the *eschaton*).
 - (2) This, of course, according to RE fancy, happened in 70 A.D. and is not some yet unfulfilled event set to transpire at the end of time.
 - (3) Such “tunnel vision” reminds me of the Calvinist who upon seeing the word *flesh* invariably interpret it as *man’s sinful nature*.
 - (4) Or, the Seventh Day Adventist who interpret *Lord’s day* as always referring to the seventh day sabbath.
- C. It would do the RE theorists well to remember a passage should always be taken *literally* unless there are obvious reasons not to do so.
- D. Unfortunately, such admonitions, as with all false teachers, fall on deaf ears.

3. **6** *End of what?*

- A. **End of the world or end of the Old Covenant and Jewish system?** Let’s examine several *end of the world* passages to determine whether or not RE is truth or error.

7 **Matthew 13:24-30:**

24 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; **25** but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. **26** But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. **27** So the servants of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ **28** He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’ **29** But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. **30** Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.”’”

- B. What is the meaning of this parable? Jesus provides us with the inspired explanation in verses 36-43.

8 **Matthew 13:36-43:**

36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.” **37** He answered and said to them: “He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. **38** The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. **39** The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. **40** Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. **41** The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, **42** and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. **43** Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

- (1) **9** The sower of “the good seed” (v. 37) is Jesus,
 - ☛ the “field is the world” (v. 38),
 - ☛ the “good seed” are the righteous (v. 38),
 - ☛ the “tares” are the unrighteous (v. 38),
 - ☛ the “enemy that sowed” the “tares” is “the devil” (v. 39),
 - ☛ “the harvest is the end of the world” (v. 39),
 - ☛ “and the reapers are the angels” (v. 39).
 - (2) Vv. 28-30 inform us the Lord allows the wheat and tares to grow together until the time of “harvest” (i.e., judgment) so a complete separation can take place at that time.
 - (3) RE theory says this event took place in 70 A.D.. But that is not possible.
- C. **10** The parable teaches until “the end of the world” (v. 39, KJV and ASV) the righteous and wicked coexist with no separation until the end, or final judgment.
- (1) This “end of the world” sounds just like John 5:28-29 (“all who are in the graves shall hear His voice”; “resurrection of life” versus “resurrection of damnation”) and Matthew 25:31-46 (“All the nations shall be gathered before Him”; “sheep” versus “goats”; “life eternal” versus “everlasting punishment”).
 - (2) V. 43 makes clear the separation at “the end of the world” is a permanent & complete for “then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”
 - (3) After this point in time the godly beauty of the righteous would no longer be blighted by the presence of the “tares.”
- D. Did this occur in 70 A.D. at the destruction of Jerusalem?
- (1) Did the righteous and wicked cease to coexist? Do they coexist today?
 - (2) The answers are obvious!
 - (3) If this separation occurred in 70 A.D. there would be no “tares” today.
 - (4) Unfortunately, we live in a world dominated by the presences of “tares.”
 - (5) Furthermore, the devil continues sowing “tares” even today, but God be thanked the “seed of the kingdom” is also still being sown.
 - (6) Until the great day of “harvest” when God will “gather...all...that offend...and practice lawlessness...and cast them into the furnace of fire,” (Matt. 13:41-42) we as the “children of God” must remain “blameless and harmless” and “shine as lights in the world,” despite the fact we live “in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation” (Phil. 2:15).

11 Revelation 20:10-15:

10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. **11** Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. **12** And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. **13** The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. **14** Then Death and Hades were cast into the

lake of fire. This is the second death. **15** And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

A. **12** RE teaching claims this passage was fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

- (1) But, the “small and great” did not “stand before God” in 70 A.D.
- (2) The “dead” were not judged from the “book of life” in 70 A.D.
- (3) At the final judgment the “devil...was cast into the lake of fire” (v. 10).
 - (a) If this be true then does the devil remain our “adversary” today?
 - (b) Does he still “walk about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour”? 1 Pet. 5:8
 - (c) As I live my life, and look out on the world today, I can testify the devil remains alive and active; he still “walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”
 - (d) This is as true today as it was on the day Peter wrote it; however, if 70 A.D. advocates are right the “devil...was cast into the lake of fire” many centuries ago and is no longer our “adversary.”
 - (e) Who can believe such gobbledygook?!

B. Also, in Revelation 20:10-15 several other important events transpired.

- (1) First, “the earth and the heaven fled away...and there was found no place for them” (v. 11); in other words, the heavens, the earth and all its inhabitants vanished.
 - (a) If this transpired in 70 A.D. why are the “earth and heaven” still around?
 - (b) Why does the earth remain inhabited by mankind?
- (2) Further, verses 12-15 describes a universal judgment.
 - (a) Did a judgment occur in 70 A.D.? Yes, but it was a *local* judgment limited to Jerusalem, it wasn’t a *universal* judgment.
 - (b) In this judgment all the dead stood before God (v. 12) “and they were judged, each according to his works” (v. 13).
 - (c) Was everyone judged in 70 A.D.?
 - (d) Surely the answer is obvious to any clear-thinking person.
 - (e) Then, in verse 14 “Death” is destroyed as it is “cast into the lake of fire.”
 - (f) If this occurred in 70 A.D. then why did I have to bury my mother in July 1977 and my father in November 2001?
 - (g) Why do I fully expect some day to make my own one-way trip to the graveyard?

C. The Bible clearly associates the events in Revelation 20:10-15 with the yet future second coming of Christ in judgment.

- (1) This future coming will be announced by “a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God” (1 Thess. 4:16).
- (2) This did not happen in 70 A.D.
- (3) This coming is when “the Lord Himself will descend from heaven,” “in like manner” as the apostles “saw Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).
- (4) This event did not transpire in 70 A.D. but is yet to come.

Hebrews 1:1-12:

A. Remember the quotes from RE advocate Max King?

"It is taken as fact by many that God will someday bring everything to a grinding halt. But this is not what the Bible says." (SOP-2, p. 291)

- (1) He and other RE advocates obviously do not believe the physical universe as we know it will someday come to an end.
- (2) Although it's hard to tell exactly what they believe because on another occasion King is reported to have said, "I don't know what the destiny of the physical world is that we're living in." (*The Preterist View Heresy (II)* in *A Study of the A.D. 70 Doctrine*, p. 71).
- (3) Frankly I'm not surprised; I've never found a false doctrine yet that's consistent with itself; let's get back to what the inspired Hebrew writer says in Hebrews 1:1-12:

13 *I God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. 5 For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You"? And again: "I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son"? 6 But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him." (14) 7 And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire." 8 But to the Son He says: Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. 9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions." 10 And: "You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. 11 They will perish, but You remain; And they will all grow old like a garment; 12 Like a cloak You will fold them up, And they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not fail."*

B. In the context of the book of Hebrews, the writer is emphasizing the superiority of the Christian dispensation versus the Mosaic dispensation, the New Covenant versus the Old Covenant, Christ over Moses, etc.

- (1) The inspired writer argues the Christian dispensation is superior to the Mosaic dispensation even though the Mosaic law was "spoken through angels" (2:2) and God "spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets" (v. 1).
- (2) Why is the new superior to the old?
 - (a) Because in the new or Christian dispensation (i.e., "in these last days" v. 2) God "has...spoken to us by His Son" Jesus Christ (v. 2).
 - (b) Thus, the Hebrew writer is going to show Jesus Christ is superior to angels that he may unequivocally establish the New Covenant is superior to the Old Covenant.
- (3) **15** With this in mind, the writer draws contrasts between "the angels" and "the Son."
 - (a) Some of these contrasts include:
 - ☛ Unlike the angels, Jesus is God's "Son" (v. 5),

- ☛ Jesus is superior to angels because He is worshiped by the angels (v. 6),
 - ☛ Unlike the angels “the Son” is “God” (v. 8),
 - ☛ As “God,” “the Son” He is the one who possesses “a scepter of righteous...the scepter of Your kingdom” (v. 8).
- (b) The writer has already alluded to Christ’s role in creation in verse two and then expands on this theme in verse 10 by quoting from Psalm 102:
- “You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands.” (Heb. 1:10)*
- (4) Is there any question the Hebrew writer and Psalmist are referring to the creation of the material universe?
- (a) Not to the sound Bible student.
- (b) The Hebrew writer then goes on in the next two verses to write:
- “They will perish, but You remain; And they will all grow old like a garment; Like a cloak You will fold them up, And they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not fail.” (Heb. 1:11-12)*
- (5) **16** The writer is drawing a contrast between Christ, the **Creator**, and the material universe, the **creation**.
- (a) Christ the **Creator** is **eternal**, whereas the material universe, the **creation**, is **temporal**.
- (b) Thus, the **creation** will pass away, but the **Creator** abides eternally; His “years will not fail” (v. 12).
- (c) Amazingly RE advocates contend this passage is not referring to the end of the material heavens and earth, but to the end of the “Jewish age.”
- (d) Like the false doctrines of many groups (e.g., Pentecostals, Jehovah’s Witness) every time RE advocates encounter a passage that refers to a future event, like the end of the material universe, they twist the passage’s definition in a vain attempt to harmonize it with their pet theory.
- (6) **17** That the passage is referring to the material “heavens and earth” is indisputable for those respecting the sacred text.
- (a) Verse 11 states “they will perish.”
- (b) What “they” “will perish”?
- (c) The things He created “in the beginning” (v. 10).
- (d) What did He create “in the beginning”?
- (e) He created “the earth” and “the heavens” (v. 11; cf. Gen. 1 & 2).
- (f) As we leave this topic, listen to Wayne Jackson:
- **“Let me ask you this. In verse 10 (Heb. 1:10, cvt) the record says, ‘And you, Lord, in the beginning did lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands.’ Is there anybody in his right mind who is going to read this passage in the following fashion: ‘And you, Lord in the beginning of the Mosaic dispensation, did lay the foundation of the earth, that is, you established the law of Moses. And you formed the heavens, that is, the

ordinances of the law; these are the works of your hands'? To interpret that as the Jewish law has to be one of the most ridiculous conglomerations of theological garbage ever devised. One hates to use such strong language of condemnation, but the circumstances warrant it." (*The A.D. 70 Theory*, p. 98)

- C. This passage in Hebrews forever puts to rest RE's false notion the end of the material heavens and earth "is not what the Bible says."
- D. On the contrary, the Bible here very plainly says "*the earth...and the heavens...They will perish*"!

18 2 Peter 3:1-13: The "clincher"!

- A. There are many more texts we could examine regarding RE's false theory on "the end of the world" but we must begin to draw our study to a close with 2 Peter 3:1-13.
- B. On several occasions I've defended this passage from the sophistry of materialists like Jehovah's Witnesses, but I never dreamed I would have to defend this passage from some who claim membership in the Lord's church.
- C. But these folks have twisted this passage every bit as much as the *Watchtower* followers. Once again, consider the words of Max King:

******"The traditional idea of the end of the world is developed primarily from the text of 2 Peter 3:10-12, where Peter taught that the elements of the heavens would melt with fervent heat and the earth, along with its works, would be burned up. This is commonly interpreted in a literal sense, and is often quoted to support the end of the temporal universe as part of the end times. If this is the case, why is Peter the only one with this kind of **arcane** information about earth's last night? Are not there numerous passages of Scripture showing other ways that the world is going to be destroyed? Aren't these passages also inspired and valid in their teaching?" (SOP-I, p. 294; emphasis mine, cvt)

- D. **19** I ask you to read 2 Peter 3:1-13 several times.

I Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), 2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, 3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." 5 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, 6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. 7 But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

20 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. **11** Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, **12**

*looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? **13** Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

E. **21** Now let's briefly review the passage's main points:

- (1) Peter is seeking to “stir up” the “minds” of the brethren by writing them again to make them “mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and...the apostles of the Lord and Savior,”
- (2) This reminder was necessitated by the claims of “scoffers” coming “in the last days” who denied the coming of the Lord in judgment and the fiery end of the world.
- (3) These “scoffers” who walked “according to their own lusts” were in effect charging the people of God with preaching a lie concerning the second coming and judgment.
- (4) However, these “scoffers” had intentionally withheld something from their own knowledge: The Flood.
 - (a) **22** Peter is pointing out the Flood as a type (shadow, parallel) of the destruction that was to come upon the universe by fire.
 - (b) The first judgment by water cleansed and purified the earth, but the second and final judgment will literally dissolve the elements of the heavens and earth.
- (5) Peter then provides a comprehensive description of this fiery destruction.
 - (a) It will be so complete as to totally and completely “melt” and “dissolve” the very fundamental and elemental constituents of the heavens and earth.
- (6) Then finally, in view of this coming destruction, the apostle admonishes and encourages the saints to live their lives in such a way as to be pleasing to the Lord, so they would not suffer the “perdition of ungodly men.”

F. **23** RE advocates would have you believe 2 Peter 3:1-12 was entirely fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. However, here are five reasons why it is not so:

- (1) **First**, I submit to you we remain “in the last days” because these “scoffers” are still with us and God is still speaking to us “by His Son.” (Heb. 1:1)
 - (a) Turn on your television and go to the *History Channel*, *A&E*, or the *Science Channel*.
 - (b) You will find “scoffer” upon “scoffer” who deny/ridicule the notion of Noah’s flood.
 - (c) These pseudo-scientists are uniformitarians who dismiss and deny the idea of geological catastrophes such as Noah’s flood (“all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation,” 2 Pet. 3:4).
 - (d) The “scoffers” say it is “settled science” the Universe was not divinely created.
 - (e) According to them, lifeless, unintelligent matter somehow and somehow organized itself into an “infinitely small singularity” which then, due to unknown processes, exploded and expanded into the universe we know today.
 - (f) God is left entirely out of the picture at best and at worst the notion of divine creation is equated with the intelligence of one who believes in a flat earth or the Loch Ness monster.
 - (g) They haughtily dismiss the notion the Lord even exists, much less that He is going

to return “in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess. 1:8).

- (h) According to their theories the earth will end, but it will ‘die’ of natural causes billions of years hence when our sun explodes.
 - (i) They think those believing the earth will end when “*the Lord...come[s] as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up*” (2 Pet. 3:10) are, at best, misguided luddites, or, at worst, candidates for the insane asylum.
 - (j) If these so-called scientists are not aptly described in 2 Peter 3 then I don’t know the meaning of language.
- (2) **24 Second**, let’s read the passage again. But, let’s read it using the scripture-wresting techniques of the 70 A.D. advocate:

25 I Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), **2** that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, **3** knowing this first: that scoffers will come in 70 A.D. *but not thereafter*, walking according to their own lusts, **4** and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.” **5** For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, **6** by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. **7** But the *old covenant and law of Moses* which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of *the Jewish system in 70 A.D.*

26 8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. **9** The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward Jews, not willing that any Jew should perish but that all Jews should come to repentance.

27 But the day of the Lord will *not* come as a thief in the night *but with the signs Jesus foretold in Matthew 24*, in which the *old covenant* will pass away with a great noise, and the *law of Moses* will melt with fervent heat? both the *Jewish system* and *the law they follow* will be burned up. **11** Therefore, since all these *old covenant* things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, **12** looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God in 70 A.D., because of which the *old covenant* will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements of the law of Moses will melt with fervent heat? **13** Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for the new *covenant* and a new *religious system* in which righteousness dwells.

- (a) May God forgive me for adding to and taking away from His word, but I did so for the sake of illustrating an important point.
- (b) My editing of the text to conform to RE doctrine defies common sense doesn’t it?!
- (c) The passage is obviously dealing with the final judgment and the end of the

material universe.

- (d) This passage, by the way, agrees exactly with the Hebrew writer's view of the end of the heavens and earth (Heb. 1:10-12: heavens and earth "will perish...will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will fold them up").
- (3) **28 Third**, it is a well-known, well-accepted and a well-advised principle of biblical interpretation that words must be taken literally unless the context demands otherwise:
- ****"Rule 1. All words are to be understood in their literal sense, unless evident meaning of the context forbids.—Figures are the exception, literal language the rule; hence we are not to regard anything as figurative until we feel compelled to do so by the evident import of the passage. And even here great caution should be observed. We are very apt to regard contexts as teaching some theory which we have in our minds." (D. R. Dungan, *Hermeneutics*, p. 184)
- (a) **29** RE apologists grant regarding Noah's flood, terms in this passage such as "world," "earth," "heavens," and "water" are literal.
- (b) However, with a wave of their eisegetical magic wand "world," "earth," "heavens," and "fire" in reference to the final dissolution of the heavens and the earth become figurative.
- (c) One is accustomed to such interpretative sleight of hand from rank denominationalists, but not from those claiming membership in the Lord's church.
- (d) This twisting of the scripture by RE apologists is aptly described by brother Marc Gibson (*The A.D. 70 Doctrine Examined*, in *A Study of the A.D. 70 Doctrine*, p. 14) as "tunnel-vision." He goes on to describe it thus:
- ****"The problem of 'tunnel-vision' is...[insisting] on only one meaning of a word used in different contexts can lead to problems. As Joe Price observed, 'The A.D. 70 doctrine would make every mention of the 'coming of the Lord' or 'day of the Lord' mean the same event, regardless of its usage in context' (Price 593). Words and phrases can have different meanings and applications depending on the context. But if one has a predetermined template of a certain doctrine or timeline, then words are already defined and subjects are already arranged according to the template, regardless of how it may violate a context. Scripture is twisted to fit the predetermined theology in whatever manner is necessary, and then presented as biblical and sound. D. R. Dungan, in his standard text on hermeneutics, warned of this danger:
- ****"Many seem disposed to regard themselves as at liberty to make anything out of the Bible which their theology may demand or their whims require. And if, at any time, they find a passage that will not harmonize with that view, then the next thing is to find one or more words in the text used elsewhere in a figurative sense, and then demand that such be the Biblical dictionary on the meaning of that word, and hence that it must be the meaning in that place (Dungan 217)."
- (e) RE apologists are guilty of this transgression in many places, but they reach their zenith in 2 Peter 3:1-13.
- (f) They remind me of some Sabbatarians I studied with several years ago.
- (g) Every time those folks read the word "commandment" or "commandments" in the

New Testament they insisted it meant “ten commandments.”

- (h) Shamefully RE apologists are close kin to the Sabbatarians when they meet up with the words “world,” “earth,” “heavens,” and “fire” here in 2 Peter 3:1-13.
- (4) **30** Fourth, Peter obviously uses the judgment in Noah’s time as a parallel for the final judgment and destruction of the universe at the end of time.

(a) Peter describes the days of Noah:

- ☛ “the heavens of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water” (v. 5).
- ☛ “the world that **then existed** perished, flooded by water” (v. 6).

(i) Were the “heavens” and “the earth” literal or figurative?

(ii) They are literal! “the world that **then existed** perished”!

(iii) Was the “water” literal or figurative?

(iv) Just read Genesis 6-9: the literal earth; the planet we inhabit:

Gen. 7:17-24: “Now the flood was on the earth forty days. The waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. 18 The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters. 19 And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered. 20 The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered. 21 And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. 22 All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died. 23 So He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive. 24 And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days.”

(b) **31** The parallel to Noah’s flood is the coming destruction of the material universe:

- ☛ “the heavens and the earth which **are now preserved** by the same word” (v. 7; “the present heavens and earth”; NASV).

(i) The same “word” preserves the **same** “heavens and earth” that existed in the days of Noah’s flood! (v. 7)

(ii) Peter did not suddenly switch to figurative language and mean “the present heavens and the earth” now represent the Law of Moses, Old Covenant, etc.

(c) To make the second “heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word...reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” refer to the Law of Moses, Old Covenant, etc. destroys the parallel.

(d) **32** Another parallel in the passage is between the “water” of Noah’s flood and the “fire” of the final judgment (i.e., God’s agents of destruction).

(i) To maintain the parallel if the “water” is literal, the “fire” must be literal!

(ii) In Noah’s day “the earth” was destroyed with “water”; in the final judgment “the earth” will be destroyed by “fire.”

(iii) Furthermore, one never reads of the Law of Moses being consumed by “fire.” No, on the contrary the Bible says the Law of Moses was:

- ☛ “fulfilled” (Matt. 5:17-18).
 - ☛ Then, it was “nailed...to the cross” (Col. 2:14).
 - ☛ By doing so, Jesus made it inoperative, “obsolete,” and it “vanish[ed] away” (Heb. 8:7-13)
 - ☛ The Law of Moses “burned up”? “melt with intense heat”? Balderdash!
- (5) **33 Fifth**, Peter obviously uses the judgment and flood in Noah’s time as a type for the final judgment and destruction of the universe at the end of time.
- (a) An important principle in typology is that the antitype, the fulfillment, is always greater in magnitude, stature, glory, etc. than the type (shadow).
 - (i) For example, consider the Passover lamb as a type (shadow) of Jesus “The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn. 1:29).
 - (ii) The antitype (fulfillment), Christ, is greater in every aspect than the type (shadow), the Passover lamb.
 - (b) In 2 Peter 3:1-13 the type is Noah’s flood, the antitype is, at least according to RE theory, the destruction of Jerusalem.
 - (c) Does that make sense?
 - (d) **34** No, Noah’s flood was a **universal** event where every creature “in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life” (Gen. 7:22) perished save those aboard the ark.
 - (e) The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. was a **local** event infinitesimally smaller by comparison which only affected the inhabitants of Jerusalem and her environs.
 - (f) Noah’s flood “prevailed exceedingly on the earth...and the mountains were covered” (Gen. 7:19-20) and it killed “all flesh...that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man.” (Gen. 7:21)
 - (g) On the other hand, the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., albeit terrible and devastating (Matt. 24:21), encompassed only one city and its immediate vicinity.
 - (h) **35** I also take exception to King’s characterization of the information the inspired apostle provides in this passage as being arcane.
 - (i) “arcane.” The dictionary defines *arcane* as: “known or understood by very few, mysterious, secret, obscure, esoteric” (*Dictionary.com*).
 - (ii) I’ve been a Christian over 40 years and the only folks I know who have trouble understanding 2 Peter 3:1-13 are materialists (e.g., Jehovah’s Witnesses), premillennialists (most denominations), and those advocating the RE theory.
 - (iii) Labeling 2 Peter 3:1-13 as arcane is a calculating and deceitful attempt to plant the seed of doubt in people’s minds who aren’t good students of the scriptures.
 - (iv) Peter says nothing in this passage “mysterious,” “obscure,” or “esoteric.”
 - (v) The passage is VERY straight forward and to the point.
 - (vi) To suggest it is arcane is also an indictment of the Holy Spirit, especially so since His applications are very simple: cf. Eph. 3:1-5
 - ☛ “Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness” (2 Pet. 3:11),

☛ And, “Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless” (2 Pet. 3:14).

(vii) What an insult to the Holy Spirit! cf. 1 Cor. 2:9-10; Eph. 3:1-5

(viii) If this passage was as “mysterious” as King and his cohorts charge the disciples would have had great trouble in drawing the right conclusion and making the proper application. Balderdash!

G. **36** Finally in 2 Peter 3:10, 12 Peter uses the word elements.

(1) RE advocates are fond of raising a quibble concerning this word.

(2) The Greek word translated elements in these two verses is stoicheion.

(3) RE advocates are correct that stoicheion may refer to fundamental principles or primary doctrines and such like.

(4) For example, in Hebrews 5:12 the inspired writer rebukes the Hebrew Christians that they needed to be retaught “the first principles of the oracles of God.”

(5) The term “principles” is from our Greek word stoicheion (cf. Gal. 4:3, 9; Col. 2:8, 20).

(6) RE advocates then assert stoicheion means “principles” in 2 Peter 3:10, 12 in an attempt to deny the passage is discussing the dissolution of the basic elements of the material universe but is referring to the “principles” of the old covenant, the Law of Moses, the Jewish economy.

(7) In fact, John Watson (Watson-Daly debate) didn’t even say stoicheion means “principles” here in 2 Peter 3; he plainly said it was the Law of Moses.

H. Raising such quibbles is a tried and true technique of those seeking to avoid the force of scriptural truth.

(1) **37** On such matters I prefer to trust sound biblical exegesis to such trusted scholars as Vine and Thayer.

(2) Both Vine and Thayer list the first definition of stoicheion as “any first thing.”

(3) They then go on to list several other definitions of stoicheion.

(4) The point is very simple: stoicheion can be “any first thing.”

I. In a specific passage where stoicheion is used what “first thing” does it refer to?

(1) To make that determination one must consider the context!

(2) That is a very common characteristic of language.

(3) The vast majority of words have multiple meanings and the meaning of a word in a particular sentence must be determined by the context (e.g., homographs, same spelling with different meaning; e.g., lie = untruth or lie = lie down; tear = crying or tear = to rip cloth).

(4) E.g., the word *spirit* (Greek word *pneuma*) is used hundreds of times in the NT.

(5) It can refer to the Holy Spirit, the human spirit, an evil spirit, a person’s attitude, etc.

(6) However, to arrive at its specific meaning in a specific passage one must always consider the context.

J. The same is true with stoicheion.

(1) In 2 Peter 3 what is the topic of discussion?

- (2) Peter is seeking to “*stir up*” the “*pure minds*” of his readers “*by way of reminder.*”
- (3) He is reminding them that regardless of the boisterous denials of “*scoffers,*” “*the day of the Lord will come*” and the material universe, including “*both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.*”
- (4) In fact, this conflagration and destruction will be so complete “*the elements*” or “*very first things*” constituting “*the heavens*” and “*the earth*” “*will be dissolved*” because they “*will melt with fervent heat.*”
- (5) The certainty of this destruction and dissolution is absolute because it is affirmed by the same word of God that destroyed the world by the flood in the days of Noah.
- (6) Thus, the certainty and magnitude of this destruction should:
 - (a) Influence the Christian’s behavior (v. 11),
 - (b) Brighten the Christian’s hope (vv. 13, 14),
 - (c) Energize the Christian’s motivation (vv. 14, 18),
 - (d) And, serve as a dire warning that spiritual growth is essential to remain steadfast in the face of the ever constant onslaught of false teaching (vv. 17, 18).

III. CONCLUSION: 38

1. Once again our study has shown a stark contrast between RE doctrine and what is taught in the scriptures.
 - A. Christians are to be guided by God’s word (2 Tim. 3:16-17) not the “*doctrines and commandments of men*” (Matt. 15:9).
 - B. RE doctrine is not Bible doctrine, it comes from the mind of men, not the mind of God.
 - C. Hence, to be deceived by the errors of RE is to be turned away to “*a different gospel*” (Gal. 1:6), an “*accursed*” gospel (Gal. 1:8-9).
 - D. RE doctrine is not “*the doctrine of Christ*” (2 Jn. 9) thus those believing and teaching it are “*not abide in the doctrine of Christ*” and thus do “*not have God*” (2 Jn. 9).
2. Harsh? The consequences of wresting the truth are set by God and not by me.

Rom. 16:17-18: “*Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them s. 18 For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.*”

3. Invitation

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