

LESSON 24 (Second Epistle of Peter - Lesson 8). – December 15, 1888.

2 PETER 3 :1-7.

(Commit to memory the verses in Peter which form the basis of this lesson.)

I. To whom was the second epistle of Peter addressed? 2 Peter 1 : 1.

2. Why was it written? 2 Peter 3 : 1.

3. Of what does the apostle wish us to be mindful? Verse 2.

4. What purpose does prophecy serve? 2 Peter 1 : 19.

5. Upon what is special light given by the prophecy? I Peter 1 : II, last part; Dan. 2:28.

6. Give reference to some prophecies which foretell the final glory of Christ, and give the substance of each. Ps. 50 : 1-3; Hab. 3 : 3-6 ; Isa. 63 : 1-6, etc.

7. What must we look for just before the end? 2 Peter 3 : 3 ; Jude 17, 18.

8. Mention some other places in the writings of the apostles where this is foretold. I Tim. 4: 1, 2; 2 Tim. 3:1-5, 13; 4: 1-4; 2 Thess. 2: 8-10.

9. Of what do these scoffers profess to be ignorant? 2 Peter 3 : 4[-5].

10. Is there any excuse for such ignorance? Verse 5.

11. What notable event recorded in Scripture shows that all things have not continued as they were from the beginning of the-creation? Verses 5, 6.

12. How did the earth come into existence? Ps. 33 : 6, 8, 9.

13. In what condition was the earth at first? Gen. 1 : 2.

14. What division was first made in this watery mass? Verses 6, 7.

15. What was done with the waters that were beneath the firmament? Verse 9; Ps. 33.7.

16. When, by the word of the Lord, the flood destroyed the earth, how did the waters that were stored up in the earth contribute to that result? Gen. 7 : 11.

17. What fate, by the same authority, now awaits the earth? 2 Peter 3 : 7.

18. Where has the word of the Lord declared this? Nahum 1:5; Isa. 34 : 8-10; Deut. 32 : 22.

19. What positive assurance have we that this will be done?

Ans.-We have the word of Him who spoke the earth into existence, and who caused the water that constituted a portion of the earth, to contribute to its destruction. See 2 Peter 3:5-7.

20. Show the analogy between the destruction of the earth by water, and its destruction by fire. See note on verses 5-7.

#### **NOTES.**

THE phrase, "the earth standing out of the water and in' the water," does not at all express the idea of the original. The Greek word which in the Authorized Version is rendered "standing," should, as the margin indicates, be rendered "consisting." Robinson's "Lexicon of the New Testament" says of the word: "To place together parts into a whole, i. e., to constitute, to create, to bring into existence. Hence, in N. T., intransitive, to be constituted, created; to exist," as in Col. 1 : 17, "by him all things consist." Wakefield translates the passage thus : "A heaven and earth formed out of water and by means of water." Bloomfield. says: "The earth . . . being formed out of water, and consisting by means of water." Murdock's translation of the Syriac has it: "The earth rose up from the waters, and by means of water, by the word of God." The meaning is that the earth in its chaotic state was simply a watery mass, as indicated by Gen. 1 : 2: "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

"WHEREBY the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." When God gathered the waters together into one place, and made the dry land appear, he evidently stored large quantities of water in the interior, of the earth. This is indicated in the second commandment, by the phrase, "the waters which are under the earth," and by Ps. 136 : 6: "To him that stretched out the earth above the waters," and also by Ps. 33 : 7 ; 24 : 1, 2. In the flood which destroyed the earth in the days of Noah, the waters in the interior of the earth united with the rain from heaven, as the record says : "The same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." Gen. 7 : 1. The idea of the passage in Peter's epistle is that one of 'the very elements from which the earth was formed, was made to contribute to its destruction. Having disproved the assertion that all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation, the apostle draws a parallel, thus :

"But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word [the word of God, see verse 5] are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men." 2 Peter 3 : 7. Instead of, "are kept in store reserved unto fire against the day of Judgment," a better translation would be, "stored with fire, reserved unto the day of Judgment." Now the comparison is at once apparent. By the word of God, the earth, in the beginning, was formed from the watery mass which God had spoken into existence. Part of this water was stored up in the earth, and by the word of God was afterward caused to overflow the earth, and contribute to its destruction. And the same word of God, which performed this, has stored the interior of this present earth with fire, and is keeping it till the day of Judgment, when, as in the case of the waters of the flood, the fire within the earth, uniting with that which comes down from God out of Heaven (Rev. 20 : 9) will destroy it.

PARTICULAR attention should be given to the word "kept." Instead of all things continuing as they were - from the beginning of the creation, the earth has within it the elements of its destruction, and it is only the power of God that stays the catastrophe.

SOME have fancied that this chapter teaches that the earth will be annihilated at the Judgment day. This is a mistake. This earth will be destroyed in the same sense that the original earth "perished" by the waters of the earth. It was all broken up, and the face of it was changed,' so that the earth after the flood had no resemblance to the earth before the flood. This was the last and greatest curse caused by sin, and completed the desolation of the earth. But the matter which composed the earth was not destroyed. So by the fires of the last day "the elements shall melt with fervent heat," but they will not be annihilated. From those melted elements, "new heavens and a new earth" will be formed, which will have no more resemblance to this sin-cursed earth than this earth does to Eden, the garden of God. The people that shall dwell in it will all be righteous (Isa. 60 : 21); and "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it. the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God." Isa. 35 : 1, 2.

### Ellen White Notes Compiled:

#1 "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." {RH, April 24, 1900 par. 1}

If all could appreciate this great blessing, what an advantage it would be to them! We can obtain like precious faith with Peter and those who were his companions, only through one source,—the righteousness of Christ, who as a sin-bearer stood at the head of humanity, overcoming in our behalf, that we might overcome in his strength. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." {RH, April 24, 1900 par. 2}

#2, #3 The apostle Peter says, "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance; that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour." In view of the infinite resources which the Lord Jesus has proved for all who will love and serve Him with undivided affection, can we consent to give Him only a tithing of that human nature which He came to sanctify and ennoble? He desires that His followers shall be strengthened with all might. He would impart to them His glory, which is His character. {Lt15-1894}

#4 Yet convincing as was this evidence of the certainty of the believers' hope, there was another still more convincing in the witness of prophecy, through which the faith of all might be confirmed and securely anchored. "We have also," Peter declared, "a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the daystar arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." {AA 534.3}

#5 Peter, writing of the salvation brought to light through the gospel, says: Of this salvation "the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister." [1 Peter 1:10-12.] {GC88 344.2}

The transforming grace of God was made manifest in his servant, and he pleaded most earnestly for the lives of the very men who afterward in a secret, underhand manner made plans by which they thought to put an end to the life of Daniel. These men became jealous of Daniel, because he found favor with kings and nobles, and was honored as the greatest man in Babylon. "Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation. The king answered and said to Daniel, . . . Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king; but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; as for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass." Then in all humility of mind he acknowledges that the wisdom is not in him, but in the God of heaven, and that the vision has been revealed to him for the sake of God's servants, and that the king might know the thoughts of his heart. {YI, November 22, 1894 par. 5}

#6 The coming of Christ to usher in the reign of righteousness, has inspired the most sublime and impassioned utterances of the sacred writers. The poets and prophets of the Bible have dwelt upon it in words glowing with celestial fire. The psalmist sung of the power and majesty of Israel's King: "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence. . . . He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people." [Psalm 50:2-4.] "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad" "before the Lord; for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth." [Psalm 96:11, 13.] {GC88 299.2}

Said the prophet Isaiah: "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise." "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." [Isaiah 26:19; 25:8, 9.] {GC88 300.1}

And Habakkuk, rapt in holy vision, beheld His appearing. "God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. And his brightness was as the light." "He stood, and measured the earth; he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow; his ways are everlasting." "Thou didst ride upon thine horses and thy chariots of salvation." "The mountains saw thee, and they trembled. . . The deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high. The sun and moon stood still in their habitation; at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear." "Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed." [Habakkuk 3:3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13.] {GC88 300.2}

The mind may speculate upon this, and fail to comprehend it; for the great matter to be decided in the conflict was not merely between God and man; every creature that God had created was involved in the conflict. The unfallen worlds saw that the character of God could be vindicated only through this trial and conflict of the two forces. The attributes of God must be made to appear. Of the stability of his government there must be no question. And the Son of God himself proposed to carry forward the work to the end, to gain the victory over the prince of darkness and over all his allies. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me; for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me." Mrs. E. G. White. {YI, April 15, 1897 par. 13}

#7 The proclamation of a definite time for Christ's coming called forth great opposition from many of all classes, from the minister in the pulpit down to the most reckless, Heaven-daring sinner. The words of prophecy were fulfilled: "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the father fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." [2 Peter 3:3, 4]. Many who professed to love the Saviour, declared that they had no opposition to the doctrine of the second advent; they merely objected to the definite time. But God's all-seeing eye read their hearts. They did not wish to hear of Christ's coming to judge the world in righteousness. They had been unfaithful servants, their works would not bear the

inspection of the heart-searching God, and they feared to meet their Lord. Like the Jews at the time of Christ's first advent, they were not prepared to welcome Jesus. They not only refused to listen to the plain arguments from the Bible, but ridiculed those who were looking for the Lord. Satan and his angels exulted, and flung the taunt in the face of Christ and holy angels, that his professed people had so little love for him that they did not desire his appearing. {GC88 370.1}

#8 It was apostasy that led the early church to seek the aid of the civil government, and this prepared the way for the development of the papacy,—the beast. Said Paul, There shall “come a falling away, . . . and that man of sin be revealed.” [2 Thessalonians 2:3] So apostasy in the church will prepare the way for the image to the beast. And the Bible declares that before the coming of the Lord there will exist a state of religious declension similar to that in the first centuries. “In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” [2 Timothy 3:1-5] “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.” [1 Timothy 4:1.] Satan will work “with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.” And all that “received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved,” will be left to accept “strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.” [2 Thessalonians 2:9-11.] When this state of ungodliness shall be reached, the same results will follow as in the first centuries. {GC88 443.4}

#9, #10, #11 Peter, writing as he was inspired by the Holy Spirit, described the manner in which the message of Christ's second coming would be received: "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 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 the creation. 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." [2 Peter 3:3-7.] {4SP 231.2}

Those who perished in the waters of the flood had an opportunity to escape. All were urged to find refuge in the ark; but the multitudes refused to heed the warning. So when the first angel's message was given, all who heard were invited to receive it, and share the blessing to follow its acceptance; but many scorned and rejected the call. One turned to his farm, another to his merchandise, and they cared for none of these things. Inspiration declares that when the antediluvians rejected Noah's words, the Spirit of God ceased to strive with them. So when men now despise the warnings which God in mercy sends them, his Spirit after a time ceases to arouse conviction in their hearts. God gives light to be cherished and obeyed, not to be despised and rejected. The light which he sends becomes darkness to those who disregard it. When the Spirit of God ceases to impress the truth upon the hearts of men, all hearing is vain, and all preaching also is vain. {4SP 231.3}

#12 "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth." "For He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." Psalm 33:6, 9. The Bible recognizes no long ages in which the earth was slowly evolved from chaos. Of each successive day of creation, the sacred record declares that it consisted of the evening and the morning, like all other days that have followed. At the close of each day is given the result of the Creator's work. The statement is made at the close of the first week's record, "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created." Genesis 2:4. But this does not convey the idea that the days of creation were



other than literal days. Each day was called a generation, because that in it God generated, or produced, some new portion of His work. {PP 112.1}

#13 He causes "the light to shine out of darkness." 2 Corinthians 4:6. When "the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep," "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." Genesis 1:2, 3. So in the night of spiritual darkness, God's word goes forth, "Let there be light." To His people He says, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Isaiah 60:1. {PK 717.2}

#14, #15 (No comment supplied)

#16 But I looked upon deep gorges, the seamed and cleft rocks, the varied shapes and structures, and then thought how the people had brought all this curse upon themselves because of ingratitude to God and disobedience to His law. The torrents of rain descending from the heavens above, the fountains of the great deep broken up, the trees which men had enjoyed and idolized, uprooted and swept away with the inhabitants, the groves, the palaces, the costly works to satisfy the pleasure lovers--all swept away. Those places where men had placed their idols and worshiped the works of their own hands were filled with masses of rubbish and earth, and rocks which were concealed under the surface of the earth were thrown up above the earth covering the most lovely places that man had adored and glorified. The fruitful trees, the shady avenues, the beautiful forests and gardens they had enjoyed were utterly destroyed. The lovely home God had given to man was turned to a broken, uneven surface, and the earth was a frightful solitude. Here before me were the evidences of the destruction of the old world by a flood because the law of God was not observed. . . . {10MR 369.2}

#17 When Noah proclaimed the solemn message, yet an hundred and twenty years the judgments of God in a flood of water should destroy the world and its inhabitants, men would not receive it, so it is at the present time. Those who warn the transgressors of law to repent and turn to their allegiance for the Lawgiver is coming to punish the disobedient, will plead and entreat and warn the majority in vain. Peter describes the attitude of the world in reference to the last message: "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts 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 the creation. 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. But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 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." {ST, January 3, 1878 par. 7}

#18 More terrible manifestations than the world has ever yet beheld, will be witnessed at the second advent of Christ. "The mountains quake at Him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at His presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before His indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of His anger?" Nahum 1:5, 6. "Bow Thy heavens, O Lord, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke. Cast forth lightning, and scatter them: shoot out Thine arrows, and destroy them." Psalm 144:5, 6. {PP 109.3}

Then are fulfilled the words of the prophet: "The indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter." [Isaiah 34:2.] "Upon the wicked he shall rain quick burning coals, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup." [Psalm 11:6. MARGIN.] Fire comes down from God out of heaven. The earth is broken up. The weapons concealed in its depths are drawn forth. Devouring flames burst from every yawning chasm. The very rocks are on fire. The day has come that shall burn as an oven. [Malachi 4:1.] The elements melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein are burned up. [2 Peter 3:10.] The fire of Tophet is "prepared for the king," the chief of rebellion; the pile thereof is deep and large, and "the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it." [Isaiah 30:33.] The earth's surface seems one molten mass,--a vast, seething lake of fire. It is the time of the judgment and perdition of ungodly men, --"the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion." [Isaiah 34:8.] {4SP 487.2}

#19 (No comment)

#20 (No comment)