

New Heavens & A New Earth

2 Peter 3:10-18

November 24th, 2024

I. Introduction: A Conflagration?

There is a view of the end that is spoken of by theologians usually under the name of the ‘Conflagration’, or the burning up of all things. This view believes that this earth and these heavens will be completely destroyed, rolled up, and tossed aside. As a result, this present creation will not, according to this view, participate with us in the glories to come. Instead God will create, *ex nihilo*, a brand new creation for the redeemed to live in. But this view misses something integral to the salvation that our Lord is working in this world. The Lord is not simply redeeming *people* in this world, but He is redeeming *this world*.

II. The Text: 2 Peter 3:10-18

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. 14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; 15 and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation . . .

III. Three Options

How should we think about the full consummation of God’s promises, of a new heavens and new earth in which righteousness dwells, and the relation of this present creation to that future reality? We have three options:

- First, “There is _____ relation.” This present creation, as in the conflagration view, will be utterly destroyed, made into a fiery lake for Satan and his angels. It does not participate in the glories to come. It participates in the destruction of the enemies of God.
- Second, “There is a _____ relation.” This present creation is that future reality, largely unchanged. This view generally downplays what it means that the earth is ‘burned up’ in our text, going with the ‘exposed’ verbiage instead.
- Thirdly, “There is a _____ relation.” This present creation relates to that future reality by way of transfiguration. It is the same creation, but it will be gloriously changed.

IV. The World Before & After the Flood

God’s judgment of the ancient world is a _____ for His future judgment of the present world. Just as the world was originally formed in and through water and by the Word of God and then destroyed *by* that water and by the same Word of God, so also is the present world being ‘preserved by the same word, reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men’ (v. 7). The world pre-flood and the world post-flood is the same world. It is not new material. It is not a creation out of nothing. It is the older world changed, renewed. It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose that the earth pre-judgment day and the earth post-judgment day will be the same earth, only purged, cleansed, made new.

V. Let the Earth Rejoice! (Ps. 96:11-13; Rom. 8:18-22)

God is merciful in His judgments toward those who are innocent. Far be it from Him to sweep the righteous away with the wicked, the innocent away with the guilty. The Judge of all the earth shall do right. . . And isn't the earth innocent? In the first account of murder, when Cain murdered his brother, Abel, the Lord called Cain to order, and said, "The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground" (Gen. 4:10). The ground was stained, and so it groaned, it shakes, it is in turmoil over the wickedness of man. Sin pollutes the land and bloodshed _____ the land (e.g., Ps. 106:38). We groan and eagerly wait for our full adoption—the full consummation of our salvation. And creation does, too. Not simply because it is happy on our behalf. But because creation longs to participate in it, to enjoy it with us (Rom. 8:18-22).

VI. The Head Over All Things (Eph. 1:20-23)

Jesus Christ took a body from the line Adam, which means He took His body from the earth (e.g., Gen. 2:7). When He died and rose again, not only were we, the Church of God, redeemed and glorified with Him, but also this earth was redeemed and raised with Him. Jesus was set over all of creation as its new _____. Therefore, just as the earth was cursed and subjected to futility and corruption on Adam's behalf, so also shall it be blessed and redeemed and glorified on Christ's behalf. Jesus is the new head over all things.

VII. Baptism of Fire

Jesus was baptized with water. We are baptized with water. Jesus was baptized with sufferings, with afflictions, and ultimately with death. And we are baptized with sufferings, with afflictions, and ultimately with death. The same is true of this earth. Like Christ, like us, it was baptized with water. And like Christ, like us, it shall be baptized with fire, with death. But death was not the end of Christ; it shall not be for us. Nor shall it be for this world. We all share in the hope of the resurrection. The earth shall be burned up. It shall die by fire, even as it died by water. And it shall be raised anew, changed, transformed, and made to partake of the glorious resurrection of the King set over all things.

VIII. "What manner of persons ought you to be . . ."

First, this charge to become what we will be forever comes to us from the transfigured Jesus, the Son of God. And what has He said? He has charged us with this life-consuming calling, to make every effort to apply ourselves to His ways. We dare not turn aside to the right or to the left.

Second, this charge meets us in the midst of many other false voices vying for our obedience. False teachers arise in our midst with a different charge. But God's people of every age who have faithfully applied themselves with diligence to the ways of the Lord have been delivered from judgment, rescued from Sodom and Gomorrah, rescued from the world pre-flood filled with wickedness. And so shall we, as we, too, faithfully walk with the Lord with all diligence.

Third, this charge is how we acclimate to our heavenly inheritance. According to the promises of God, we look forward to a world purged of sin. How do we hasten its coming? We ourselves become what we will be forever.

IX. Come & Welcome to Jesus Christ