

The New Heavens and the New Earth

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“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea” (Revelation 21:1). These words are truly thrilling to all Bible believers, but unfortunately not all understand them the same. There are people that believe that the new heaven and new earth of this passage are simply the same physical earth and heaven that now exists. They have the idea that this old earth and heaven will somehow be made over, improved, spruced up, renovated, remodeled, glorified so that the human race will continue life here in a more perfect and enjoyable way. This is how they understand the word “new.” Is it true that God provides a glorified eternal existence here on earth? Is this really the teaching of God’s word? With an open Bible and an honest heart examine the reason why this cannot be true.

This Heaven And Earth Will Be Destroyed

The passage states, “...for the first heaven and the first earth **were passed away.**” How could it be stated more plainly than this? This planet called Earth and surrounding universe is the **first** heaven and earth and it will pass away. Jesus affirmed the same when He said: “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matthew 24:35). He did not say, “Heaven and earth **might** pass away.” He said it **shall** pass away. One cannot conclude a renovated earth from these statements.

Let us use this terminology as we generally use it today and see what we would conclude. If someone spoke of his great uncle “passing away,” what would you think happened? Would you think that he was rejuvenated? Or would you believe that the great uncle had died; that he was no longer here in this world? There is no question that all would understand that the uncle had ceased his existence here on earth. This is the same language used in these passages. The heavens and earth passing away, signifies their ultimate end.

Furthermore, in **2 Peter 3:10-13** we are informed of the means by which the first heaven and first earth shall pass away.

“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 a fervent heat, and the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness. Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved,

and the elements shall melt with a fervent heat? Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

Again, we see the words “shall pass away” used to refer to the heavens and the earth. Fire, and the heat from the fire, will be the means by which this physical universe will pass away. Twice this passage says that the heavens and earth will be **dissolved**. This word does not convey the idea that earth will continue. God is bringing a fire that will dissolve the earth. No glorified, remodeled earth can be detected in this scripture.

The Lord is using thoughts to which the human mind can easily relate. When a building burns to the ground, it ceases to exist. In the same vane, when the earth is dissolved by fire it will be no more. There is no confusing language involved in Peter’s explanation of what will eventually become of the physical earth. When Peter encouraged his readers to look for new heavens and a new earth it was in view of the fact that the old one was going to be destroyed.

The new heavens and the new earth cannot be the same as the old or we have a contradiction in scripture. It is contradictory to say that the first heaven and earth are going to be destroyed by fire and at the same time continue to stand. However, there is no state of contradiction. Both Peter and John are in total agreement with Jesus. They all say that heaven and earth shall pass away (Matthew 24:25; 1 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 21:1). The proponents of a renovated earth cause a contradiction.

Eternal Reward In Heaven

The Lord promises rewards for His faithful servants and that those rewards are laid up in heaven. He stated: “**rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven...**” (Matthew 5:12). The preposition “*in*” indicates the location of our reward. “Reward” represents all the joys that the Lord will bestow upon His faithful children. If our reward is located in heaven then it cannot be upon this earth. Can we not understand that heaven is one place and earth is another? God’s heavenly abode and this earth are not the same place. The Christian’s reward is not upon planet Earth. It is futile to pursue a reward here; a place God plans to destroy. Colossians 3:1-2 says, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” The Christian’s focus must be upon heaven; not earth.

Jesus promised His disciples a mansion in heaven. He said,

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:1-3).

Jesus left this world to prepare dwelling places in heaven (Acts 1:9-11). This is where the Christian’s hope lies (Hebrews 6:18-20). There is but one hope (Ephesians 4:4). It is plain to see that on the last day He will return to receive His faithful disciples and transport them to those beautiful mansions above (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). This will also be the day that all the inhabitants of the world will be

judged and given their eternal reward or punishment (Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Acts 17:30-31; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

Eternal Treasure In Heaven

Christians are required to lay up for themselves “**treasures in heaven**,” not treasures upon the earth. The Lord taught the following:

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor seal” (Matthew 6:19-20).

Notice the location of the treasures—they are “*in*” heaven. Earthly treasures are not eternal as those in heaven will be. Earthly treasures will corrupt, disappoint, and be lost, but eternal riches will endure forever. What sense would it make for the Lord teach that our rewards and treasures are in heaven, but we will not there to enjoy them? The Lord assures us that our rewards are in heaven and that the faithful will be there to enjoy them.

Eternal Building In Heaven

The Christian is promised **an eternal abode in heaven**. The Bible says, “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Corinthians 5:1). The Christian’s eternal home is “**in the heavens**” not upon the earth. Our physical bodies cannot abide in heaven. Paul said “...flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 15:50). “Cannot” means it is impossible for our earthly bodies to inhabit the heavenly realms where God lives. Heaven is not a place for the physical, but for the spiritual to exist eternally. This is the reason the first heaven and earth will be destroyed (2 Peter 3:10-13).

When God laid the foundations of this physical universe, He saw a time when it would all come to an end. In the book of Hebrews a revealing quote from Psalm 102:25-27 is found, it says:

“And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail” (Hebrews 1:10-12).

It has not come to an end yet, but this passage clearly indicates that it will. The universe will “perish,” but God will continue to exist unchanged. His years will not fail even though the universe will “wax old as doth a garment.” The word “perish” sums up what 2 Peter 3:10-13 says.

Eternal And New

There will be a **new heaven** and a **new earth** for the first heaven and the first earth will pass away (Revelation 21:1). Everything associated with the old earth will vanish when the destruction of it comes. It will be a new experience to have God dwelling personally with His people (v.4). The surroundings and environment will also be new. But there will also be new conditions in the sense that no longer will there be tears, death, sorrow, nor pain, “for the former things are passed away” (Revelation 21:4). Heaven is truly appealing to those that have no love of this world or the things that are in this world (1 John 2:15-17).

The Bible says that **everything will be new**: “And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new...” (Revelation 21:5). New and different is certainly seen in the description God gives of the saint’s heavenly home. Revelation twenty-one and twenty-two presents a wonderful glimpse of the glories of heaven. Gates of pearl, streets and city as of gold clear as glass, walls of Jasper, and the foundations of all precious stones. All things in heaven will be new and unlike what we have known in this present life. If the saved remain on an old earth that has been renovated, then all things would neither be new nor different. There would still be mountains, streams, sky, plants, atmosphere, gravity, dirt, rocks, and so forth. We would still have some of the same routine duties that we have always had if we remained upon this old earth.

Conclusion

Thanks be unto the Lord that Christians can look forward to something far better than the old conditions that have existed on this decaying earth for centuries. Thank the Lord that He has designed a place in heaven where Christians will never grow old—they will abide there eternally. It will be a place in which they will be in the blessed and awesome presence of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Can one even begin to imagine what that will be like? It will be a place where they will enjoy peace forevermore. Thanks be unto the Lord for this indescribable blessing that awaits His faithful servants.

One would be foolish not to pursue such a wonderful place. Knowing of this heavenly reward should motivate everyone to serve the Lord with complete devotion. Let me encourage you today to think seriously about your own soul. Realize that there is only one way to heaven and that is through Jesus Christ. He alone is the way, the truth and the life and no one will arrive where the Father is but through Him (John 14:6). Do what the Lord tells us to do in His holy word. Jesus tells men to believe in Him (John 8:24). He teaches that we must repent of our sins (Luke 13:3,5). If we will confess His name before men, He will confess our name before the Father (Matthew 10:32-33). Jesus teaches that baptism in water is also essential in order to be saved (Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:19-20). A life of service to the Lord begins when these commands are obeyed. One must then deny self, take up his cross daily and follow the footsteps of the Lord (Luke 9:23; 1 Peter 2:21). Those steps will lead you to the heavenly reward. Do not delay, there is no assurance of tomorrow, salvation must be acquired today (2 Corinthians 6:2).