

The Destruction of the Earth and Universe

(Renovation or Recreation?)

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Thinking of the fullness and duration of this wonderful earthly life, W. B. Hinson, a great preacher of a past generation, spoke from his own experience just before he died. He said, "I remember a year ago when a doctor told me, 'You have an illness from which you won't recover.' I walked out to where I live 5 miles from Portland, Oregon, and I looked across at the mountain that I love. I looked at the river in which I

rejoice, and I looked at the stately trees that are always God's own poetry to my soul. Then in the evening I looked up into the great sky where God was lighting His lamps, and I said, 'I may not see you many more times, but Mountain, I shall be alive when you are gone; and River, I shall be alive when you cease running toward the sea; and Stars, I shall be alive when you have fallen from your sockets in the great downpulling of the material universe!'"

The Bible teaches that the present earth and heavens, both the atmospheric and stellar or planetary "heavens" (2 Pet. 3:10; 12-13; Ps. 19:1), will one day be destroyed and then recreated. In this study, we want to address such questions as when the universe will pass out of existence, how God will destroy it, and in what manner God will recreate the universe.

The Face of Jesus and the Destruction of the Earth and Heavens

The Book of Revelation 20:11 states:

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them."

The expression "from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away" is a description of the earth and the heaven fleeing out of existence before the face of

Jesus tells us how this old earth and universe is going to be destroyed someday. The face of Jesus will bring about the explosion that will destroy planet earth and the universe as we now know it. The face of Jesus with its majestic radiance and glory will in some way cause this old world and universe to be destroyed in a great blast and atomic noise, wherein everything in existence will be done away.

Henry Morris remarks in this way:

“The fire which had fallen from heaven to consume the multitudes following Gog and Magog seems to be nothing less than the unveiled glory, the pure, white-hot energy, of the Creator in all His ineffable brilliance. Now that same cosmic power penetrates the very atomic structure of the earth and its atmosphere, and they are vaporized in a gigantic holocaust that brings this present world to an end.”

The Creator in all of His inexpressible and indescribable brilliance will create a fiery energy flow from his face, which will penetrate the very atomic structure of the universe, vaporizing both the earth and heavens in a gigantic holocaust that brings the present universe to an end. Yes, in some



indescribable way, the face of Jesus will cause the old earth and heavens to pass out of existence. A movement of divine energy will advance from the face of Jesus, as He sits upon the throne, which will destroy the present earth and universe.

When Jesus takes His occupancy on the throne, it's then that the old earth and heavens will be destroyed. One thing is sure, the face of Jesus will cause the earth and heavens to blow up in one cataclysmic judgment.

Bible scholars differ on what this means when it states: “the earth and the heaven fled away.” Some teach the old earth and heavens will only be renovated or refaced for eternity. But this text and others teach the earth and the heavens will flee out of existence or pass completely out of existence in a giant cataclysmic judgment. In other words, the earth and the heavens, as we now know them and see them, will be totally destroyed and then recreated for the Eternal State. The Bible

definitely teaches the recreation of the earth and universe for the Eternal State – not merely a renovation of the old earth and universe.

The expression “fled away” (Rev. 20:11) can only mean to pass out of their previous existence and therefore speaks of total destruction – not merely renovation or a remaking or refacing of the present heavens and earth. The verse also states, “and there was found no place for them.” This simply means that the universe (planet earth and all of universal space), as we now know it, will be no more. They will be destroyed and cease to exist. There will be no more place for the earth and heavens to exist since Jesus will undo the atomic structure of this universe!!

The two terms “fled away” (Rev. 20:11) and “passed away” (Rev. 21:1) imply a complete disappearance of the old earth. Revelation 21:1 speaks of a “new heaven” and “new earth” – not a renovated earth. The emphasis on the word “new” speaks of recreation – not renovation! It points to total replacement – not a refacing of the old universe. God only works on the basis of recreation (2 Cor. 5:17) which intimates a total destruction and brand-new creation of the earth, planets and universe.

In Revelation 20:11 it states: “and there was found no place for them.” This indicates a total destruction of the earth and heavens. In Revelation 21:1 it states, “and there was no more sea” in the new earth. This means the oceans were destroyed as a result of God’s judgment. In a similar way, the entire earth and heavens as we now know them will be destroyed and taken away, but they will be recreated and replaced. The fact that there is no more sea would indicate a similar fate has happened to the earth and heavens. They will cease to exist but then be recreated.

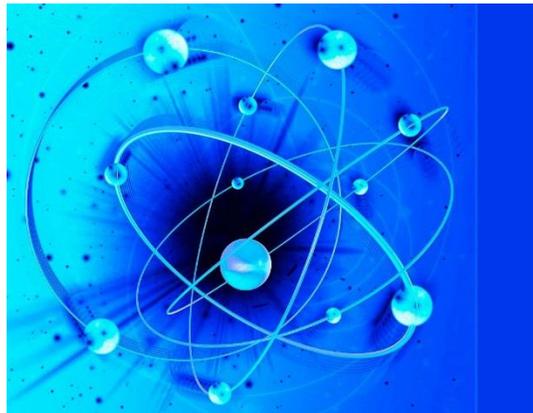
Peter and the Destruction of the Heavens and Earth

2 Peter 3:10 verifies that the present heavens and earth will someday be destroyed. “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.”

Peter mentions both “heavens” being destroyed and gives the promise that we can look for “new heavens” to be created. Peter uses the same terminology that John

does when speaking about the total destruction of the universe (“pass away”). This means that both the earth and the “heavens” (the earth’s atmosphere and the starry sky, not God’s abode – only the first and second heaven) will pass out of existence. Peter is speaking about a termination of the present order of the old universe. A “great noise” is undoubtedly referring to an atomic explosion or blast of some monstrous proportion. The Greek word was used for the swish of an arrow, the rush of wings, the splash of water, and the hiss of the serpent. These are appropriate ways to describe an atomic blast.

The same God who created the laws of nature can break these same laws. And this is what the Bible teaches God will do when He destroys the universe. When Peter says “the elements shall melt with fervent heat” he is talking about the atomic structure (building blocks) of the earth being destroyed. The word “elements” (stoicheion) refers to something that is orderly arranged and speaks of the atoms which are the building blocks of the universe. The fundamental components of matter or the atomic building blocks of the world will be split by God who holds the universe together.



Hebrews 1:3 reveals:

“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 on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

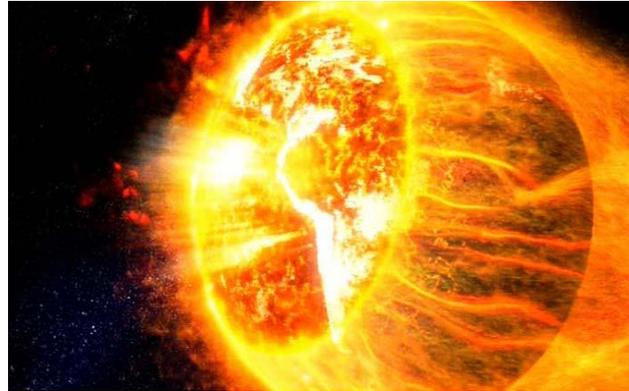
Originally He spoke to bring the worlds into being (Heb. 11:3). Today the Lord still speaks and His powerful word sustains life, holds matter together, and maintains the universe in proper order. Here is a simple explanation of a profound scientific problem. Scientists grapple to discover what holds molecules together. We learn here that Jesus Christ is the great Sustainer, and He does it by His powerful word.

Colossians 1:17 adds:

“And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”

The word “consist” means “to set together” and speaks how Jesus Christ holds the atomic structure of the universe in the palm of His hand. Jesus is the superglue of the universe!

Jesus is the superglue of the universe! Peter concludes that the building blocks or fundamental components of the universe will disappear with a roar, which in some way will involve fire (2 Peter 3:7, 12). The texts reveal that the “elements” (atomic structure or building blocks of the universe) will “melt” (luo) or “be loosened, broken up, broken in pieces, untied” with “heat” (fiery force of burning heat) resulting in a cataclysmic explosion of epic proportion where the “earth also” will pass out of existence along with all of “the works that are therein” (rocks, trees, hills, etc.). This old earth will explode into oblivion and everything else that is on the earth “shall be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10).



2 Peter 3:11-12 goes on to say:

“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 fervent heat?”

The “day of God” is referencing the Eternal State which the Book of Revelation unveils to us after the destruction of the old earth and heavens (Rev. 21-22). Peter’s theology is the same as John’s theology or teaching. The “things” Peter is referring to is the present earth and heavens whose atomic structure will be broken down. The atmosphere and the heavens are structurally intertwined with the earth and all will be destroyed at the same time.

William McDonald correctly observes:

“In this nuclear age, we understand that matter is stored-up energy. The splitting of an atomic nucleus results in the fiery release of enormous quantities of energy. So all the matter in the world represents tremendous explosive potential. At present

it is held together by the Lord (Col. 1:17). If His restraining hand were removed, the elements would melt.”

This is what is going to occur when Jesus blows up the earth and heavens. He is going to remove His restraining hand and everything will be destroyed. The whole structure of the universe is operating on the principle of a clock which is running down. This is why Peter says the heavens and earth are being “reserved for fire” (2 Pet. 3:7). The word “dissolved” (luo – same word translated “melt” – vs. 10) is used twice in these verses (vv. 11, 12) and once again means “to loosen something tied or fastened – to break something in pieces.” Peter reiterates and reemphasizes how the “elements” (atomic structures – atoms, molecules, etc.) of both the earth and heavens will be inwardly split and broken apart by some kind of fiery field of energy or “heat” (vv. 10, 12) which will “melt” (teko – “liquefy” – vs. 12) the building blocks of the universe.

In other words, a fiery energy force of some kind will break down the atoms of the universe. Revelation 20:11 reveals that this field of fiery energy will come from the face of Jesus! As a result, the physical earth and heavens, along with everything existing in the physical earth and heavens will be destroyed (“the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” - 2 Peter 3:10b). This is a cosmic catastrophe which will bring about the total destruction of planet earth and the heavens. There are not indications of merely a renovation of the previous earth and heavens.

The Old Testament describes the pollution and destruction of the present universe. Job 15:15 says, “the heavens are not clean in his sight.” Isaiah 24:5 declares that “the earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws (the moral laws of God), changed the ordinance (the prescribed decree or statute), broken the everlasting covenant” (the Noahic Covenant). This everlasting covenant (Gen. 9:16) primarily deals with our care of God’s world and the treatment of our fellow human beings (Gen. 8:20–9:17).

The defilement of the heavens and the earth will lead to a fiery end of the heavens and earth (2 Peter 3:12) which will give way to a new heaven and earth (Rev. 21:1). But before the Eternal State can commence, God must get rid of everything that has had contact with sin and anyone who still is connected with their sins (Rev. 20:15). We cannot enter the state of perfection and bliss without sin being dealt

with in every area, both the physical and spiritual. In the Eternal State, God will not put up with anything or anyone that has been infected by sin. This old world is polluted by sin (Job 15:5) and cursed by sin (Gen. 3:14-19); therefore, its doom is sure. This is why the Bible teaches it will be destroyed. The earth will go from being cursed to being cured when God creates a new one (Rev. 21:1).

Recreation and the Destruction of the Heavens and Earth

When God destroys the heavens and the earth, it will be like uncreating the universe and then recreating it once again. It will be God's second act of creation. This is why John says in Revelation 21:1: "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."



2 Peter 3:13 speaks of this recreation:

"Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Donald Barnhouse comments on the recreation:

"There is to be an end of the material heavens and earth which we know. It is not that they are to be purified and rehabilitated, but that the reverse of creation is to take place. They are to be uncreated. As they came from nothing at the word of God, they are to be sucked back into nothingness by this same word of God" (*Revelation: An Expository Commentary*; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971, pp. 391)

All of this suggests that an absolute reversal of creation will occur when God destroys the earth and heavens. God will in one sense destroy the present world and universe (His original creation) and then recreate it. This will once again be a miraculous work of God, even as the previous creation was a spectacular work of Almighty God (Genesis 1). Psalm 102:25-26 reminds us that the present universal order will undergo a complete transformation someday: "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed."

With the destruction of the universe (2 Pet. 3:13) and the recreation of the new universe (Rev. 21:1) there will be a total transformation of planet earth, the atmospheric heaven, and the stellar or celestial heaven. In the recreation of the earth and the heavens there will be a transformation that is remarkable and stunning. God will resurrect that which is destroyed and bring it back to a glorious, wonderful, majestic, and picturesque thing of beauty. As God will one day bring the body back from its skeletal remains, ashes, or from disintegration, He will also bring back the earth and the heavens. The thought of resurrection brings us to our next point.

Resurrection and the Destruction of the Heavens and Earth



I don't know much about quantum physics or mechanics. But if God works on the same principle as resurrection (1 Cor. 15:22-23; Rev. 20:12-14), meaning that He brings back together again the atoms and molecules that comprised our physical bodies when we once lived on earth, then He may very well bring

back the earth and universe in the same way. He may use the same components or building blocks (the underlying atomic structure) that previously held it together before it was disrupted and destroyed. As God brings back the bodies of those Christians who have died and remain in various stages of decomposition, so He may choose to bring back the previous atomic structure and order that was broken when recreating the universe. This is rather interesting to contemplate.

Some suggest that we will receive a new physical body based upon a different order of creation. However, it seems more probable to understand the concept of resurrection as bringing back the same body that went into the ground, while bringing it forth with new characteristics not previously possessed (Luke 24:39; 1 Cor. 15:35-44). The actual seed that the farmer plants dies and no longer exists. This is what happens to the body when it dies and goes back to the dust. However, the seed that was sown brings forth a plant which possesses the same identity as the seed. The same is true with the resurrection body. Our resurrection bodies will undergo a complete recreation and metamorphosis but we will still retain the same identity even as the harvest is linked to the seed (1 Cor. 15:37-38).

I do not think it will be necessary for God to use every part of the human body when he raises it from the grave. Such a thought is not taught in Scripture. In fact, it is scientifically true we don't have the same body today that we had seven years ago. There is an identity that we maintain all our lifetime, and yet there is not one cell in our bodies that was there seven years ago. In the resurrection the bodies of the saints will bear their individual identities but still be very different in makeup and design.

Some unbelieving skeptics have proposed the argument that it will be impossible for the same body to be raised, since the bodies of those who have been dead for hundreds of years, and have become decomposed or reduced to powder.

Dr. Wilbur M. Smith answers this objection:

“The fact that after death our physical substance disintegrates and scatters, creates no difficulties for God, so that He could not bring those bodies back gloriously transformed.”

The same analogy may be applied to the recreation of the earth and the heavens. God will bring back the earth and the heavens completely transformed, even though He may use the original building blocks of the universe.

Philippians 3:20-21 looks ahead to the resurrection day:

“For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”

The word “change” is used in connection with the resurrection body and means to transfigure. It has been suggested that we have here the thought of metamorphosis which is a remarkable change in the form and structure of a living body. Biologically speaking, the change of a caterpillar into a butterfly is spoken of as a “metamorphosis.”



The ugly, repulsive caterpillar is confined to a tomb which it spins for itself. While in the cocoon there is an apparently dead and formless substance. But after the warm sun of spring has beaten its golden rays upon that cocoon, there comes forth a beautiful butterfly. Although the butterfly is different in appearance from the caterpillar, we recognize the beautiful winged insect as being the same as the caterpillar. It is the same living creature, yet different. So also is the resurrection of the body. Now we have a "vile" body (or a body of humiliation) but in the resurrection a glorious body. It will be the same body in that it will be recognizable, but wonderfully changed.

The concept of resurrection (a new creation, a metamorphosis, a transfiguration) seems applicable to the destruction and recreation of the earth and universe. When God raises up planet earth and the entire universe from its previous atomic structure, it will be recreated and undergo a complete metamorphosis. Although there will be many similarities, there will also be many changes. In one sense, the earth and heavens are going to reemerge from their cocoon when God recreates them. One thing is certain; it didn't take eons of evolution to create the universe, nor will it take eons of time to recreate it. Everything will be recreated by the word of God!

God always seems to work on the principle of recreation and transformation – not renovation. This is true in relation to our physical creation in the womb (Psalm 139:14). God uses the sperm and egg from previous parents to bring about a new creation. It's also true even in relation to our new birth (2 Cor. 5:17). Our human spirit, which we already possess and which has been previously dead (Eph. 2:1-2), is made spiritual alive (John 3:6). God works with dead things and makes them new! He takes that which seems hopeless and brings them to life. The same is true with the earth and heavens.

Although God destroys the heavens and the earth, He will raise them from the realm of death and destruction, in one sense, bringing them out of their graves and into a new and wonderful sphere of existence (Rev. 21:1). The universe will become a new physical creation that has been raised from its previous atomic structure, even as our previous bodies are raised from physical death and our spirits are raised from spiritual death. Beloved, the half has not been told and we'll understand it better by and by!

Jesus and the Destruction of the Earth and Heavens

Jesus said in Matthew 24:35:

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”

Jesus was teaching about the eternal nature of His own words. He reminds the disciples that His words, in relation to His predictions and the fulfillment of prophecy, would always remain true and come to pass, while the earth and heavens, as we now know them, will not remain forever. The words and promises that Jesus spoke and taught would continue on forever but this would not be true of the heavens and earth. At one point they would be destroyed. His words would be preserved but not the heaven and earth. This is exactly what Jesus taught. We cannot wiggle out of it. When something is said to “pass away” it means to “perish” and suggest a total destruction. This is the same word Peter used in 2 Peter 3:10 when he said “the heavens shall pass away with a great noise” (an atomic blast!).



Psalm 102:25-26 gives the same testimony that Jesus shared:

“Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed.”

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The Lord Jesus Christ confirmed this Old Testament teaching when He declared, “Heaven and earth shall pass away” (Luke 21:33). Yes, the heavens and earth will one day pass out of existence. The Psalmist said “they shall perish” and Jesus said that they “shall pass away.” We cannot mistranslate these words or try and explain them away without doing a great injustice to the words of Jesus and what the Bible teaches on this subject. Jesus clearly said that the present heaven and earth will be destroyed someday. However, not everyone accepts this truth that Jesus taught His disciples.

Israel and the Destruction of the Earth and Heavens



Some have concluded that the earth cannot be destroyed in view of God's promise given to Israel. Several passages use the sun and moon as witnesses of eternal promises given to Israel.

In Jeremiah 31:35-36 God promises:

"Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, *and* the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts *is* his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, *then* the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. "

This promise should not bring one to the conclusion that the earth and planets cannot be destroyed in the future. There are several reasons for this. First, God was simply using the illustration of the heavenly bodies as a sign of stability and constancy. As the sun and moon are consistent in giving light, so God promises that Israel's seed would continually remain and maintain their national identity (Rom. 11:1). Second, God's Word does not conclude that the sun, moon, and stars would forever be destroyed. In the Eternal State there will be no more sea (Rev. 21:1) but the heavenly bodies will apparently exist and continue to shine in spite of the glorious light of the heavenly city.

Revelation 21:23 prophetically anticipates:

"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

Revelation 22:5 adds:

“And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.”

The Bible says “the city had no need” for the luminaries but it does not conclude that they are nonexistent in the Eternal State.

John Walvoord states:

“The form of expression would not make impossible the existence of the sun and the moon, as this scripture merely says there is no need of them.”

Neither the sun nor the moon will be forever destroyed, since God has promised that they, as well as all the starry heavens, will endure forever (Psalm 148:3-6; Dan. 12:3). It is just that their light is no longer needed to illumine the holy city for the city itself radiates light to all the surrounding regions of the heavenly Jerusalem. However, the sun and moon will continue to serve their present functions with respect to the other regions of the earth during the Eternal State, serving there as lights by day and night. The situation may be similar to the early part of creation week. God created light on the first day (Gen. 1:3), but the sun and moon were not created until the fourth day (Gen. 1:14), indicating that they would exist in addition with God’s original light of creation. The same is true in the Eternal State. The sun and moon will exist in conjunction with the light of the Lamb.

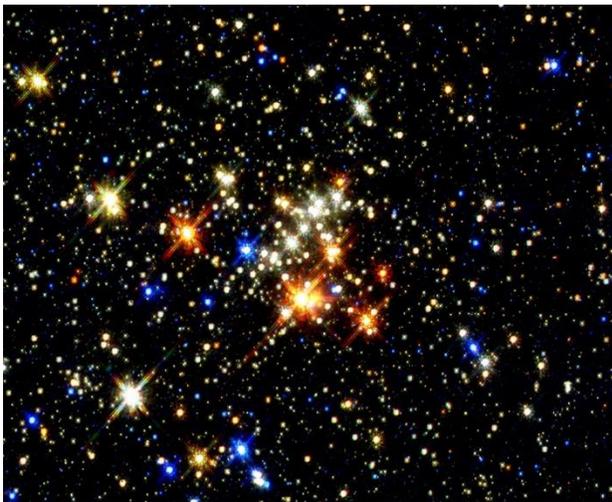
These two passage (Rev. 21:23; 22:5) do not say that there will be no sun or moon, only that there will be no need of the sun and moon because the glory of God will illuminate the city (the heavenly Jerusalem). The sun and moon in comparison with the light of the glory of God will be like turning on an outdoor light in the broad light of the sun in our world today. However, the light of the sun, moon, and stars will still exist in answer to God’s promise to Israel (Jer. 31:35-36).

Psalm 89:35-37

“Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.”

Here is another Bible passage and promise directed to Israel. It states that Israel would continue to be an enduring nation with a promised throne and King. These passages tie God’s faithfulness to Israel and the Davidic throne (2 Samuel 7:16) to the continuance of the sun and moon. Some expositors imply that these promises

are meant to extend only to the end of the present earthly order (Rev. 21) but not beyond into the eternal order. They suggest that the specifics of these promises may exist during the Millennial Kingdom (Isa. 60:19-20) but no longer pertain to the Eternal State once Israel's promises have been fulfilled on earth and the Millennial Kingdom phases into the eternal kingdom (1 Cor. 15:24-28). However, it seems better to conclude that the reliance of these promises on the sun and moon may actually indicate their recreation and continued existence in the Eternal State as part of God's creative wonders.



This is because the Bible declares in Psalm 148:3-6: "Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created. He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass."

God will not go back on His word and promise to Israel "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. 1:29). The sun, moon, and stars will remain intact forever as a constant reminder of God's covenant promise to His beloved national people. The luminaries will be recreated in the stellar heaven and be an eternal witness that God will not disavow His covenants with the Jewish people.

The Flood and the Destruction of the Earth and Heavens

2 Peter 3:6-7

"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."

Some will use these verses to also make the argument that the earth will not be destroyed but only renovated and renewed for the Eternal State. Since the world was not totally destroyed in Noah's day by the global deluge or Flood, the analogy suggests



that the world will not be destroyed in the future, but only renewed and renovated by fire to be prepared for the Eternal State.

There is a flaw in this reasoning. The "world" (*kosmos*) must refer to inhabitants, since the earth itself was not destroyed in the Flood. It's the people who "perished" in the global deluge. Peter is using the term "world" to speak about the death of earth's inhabitants in relation to the universal judgment of the Flood. The term "world" (*kosmos*) refers to inhabitants, since the earth itself was not destroyed in the Flood. Similarly, in John 3:16 and many other references "the world" (*kosmos*) means the globe's inhabitants (John 1:9; 3:17, 19; 4:42; 6:33; 7:7; 15:18-19; 17:14, 21, 23, 25; 1 John 2:2; 3:13; 4:14).

Peter is not making an exact comparison between the judgment of the earth in Noah's day and the judgment of the earth in the future. He is comparing the judgment of unsaved people living on earth during Noah's day with those who will be judged at the Great White Throne. Peter's point is that the "world" of unsaved humanity who lived on earth during Noah's day was judged at the same time when the earth experienced a cataclysmic judgment by water. In a similar way, all of mankind will someday be judged at the Great White Throne Judgment ("the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" – 2 Pet. 3:7) when Jesus decides to destroy the earth by fire. The comparison being made is between the judgment that unsaved people experience - not the types of judgment that God inflicts on the earth.

Peter was simply teaching that the earth experienced the judgment of a global flood at the same time people were being judged. What occurred during the Genesis Flood (the judgment of the earth along with lost sinners) will also be true at the Great White Throne Judgment (the destruction of planet earth with lost sinners).

The Great White Throne Judgment of unsaved humanity will occur in conjunction with His judgment upon the earth and the entire universe (Rev. 20:11). Although the judgments may vary in some measure, nonetheless, they are severe judgments. In Noah's day the face of the earth was judged and sinners entered the judgment of hades. In the final judgment, the earth is destroyed and the dead are raised to spend eternity in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:12-15). Both are scenes of judgment with devastating outcomes, although differing in certain aspects. The general similarity or comparison Peter is making between the historical and prophetic accounts is that people are judged when God sends a specific type of judgment upon the earth.

Let's recap everything one more time. In the future, the heavens and the earth will flee out of existence, when Jesus takes His place or occupancy on the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11). It's during this same time that unsaved mankind will be resurrected to stand before this dreadful throne (Rev. 20:12-14) awaiting his ultimate fate and judgment. So, both the Books of Revelation and Peter (2 Pet. 3:7) accurately conclude that mankind will be judged at the Great White Throne in connection with the earth's cataclysmic judgment. Judgement Day is coming! In the meantime, the heavens and the earth are being "reserved" (held on layaway) for fire "against" or until the "day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men" takes place (2 Pet. 3:7).



Again, this means the heavens and earth will be destroyed when Jesus sits upon the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11), which is the time when all of humanity will be judged. In a similar way, when God brought the global Flood on planet earth, all humanity was judged in Noah's day. "The world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished" (2 Pet. 3:6) except for Noah and his family, who entered the ark and eventually lived on the new

earth. The same will be true for all of God's redeemed saints who will, after the destruction of planet earth, inhabit the new earth that God recreates, while experiencing joyous fellowship with God.



Revelation 21:1-3

“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. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a

great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.”

The Bible does not say this will be a “newly revised” or “new and improved” heaven and earth but a completely new creation of the universe. The Bible is suggesting that the old order (earth and heavens) will be destroyed and a new one created. The word “new” (kainos) does not mean new in a chronological sense (occurring after), but new in a qualitative or creative sense. The new heaven and the new earth will not merely succeed the present universe in chronological sequence; they will be something brand new, fresh, and never before seen. This is a making of “all things new” (Rev. 21:5), not simply a renovation or reworking of the old, which has fallen under the curse of sin.

Once again, God works on the basis and principle of making things brand new, recreating them, or transforming them from a previous state of destruction and death. God’s redeemed, who are a new creation themselves (2 Cor. 5:17), brought forth from spiritual death and destruction, will live on a newly created earth, which has been brought back from destruction (Rev. 21:1). Yes, everything will be new in the Eternal State. This is because God and the Bible places a strong emphasis on the significance of new things!

A Practical Note on the Destruction of the Earth and Heavens

2 Peter 3:11

“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.”



I would like to share some practical information which I gave in another study entitled “When God Blows Up the Earth.”

After speaking about the destruction of the current earth and heavens, Peter makes some important notes of application. Prophecy is designed to impact our Christian living and the destruction of the earth and heavens (“seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved”) should help us keep perspective on what is eternal and motivate us to live for eternal things.

Douglas Moo states:

“Christians need to remember the ultimate, ‘bottom-line,’ purpose of biblical eschatology: to make us better Christians here and now.

Warren Wiersbe once said:

“The purpose of prophetic truth is not speculation but motivation.”

Here is Peter’s point. If nothing attached to the universe is eternal, then we should not engage ourselves in temporal things. We should live for those things which will bring reward and richness to our lives throughout eternity. Christians should get their lives in order and start living godly lives that will count for eternity. This world is going to blow up someday and everything in it – your cars, your house, your money, your clothing! It’s going to be blown to smithereens. Why are you living for the things of this world? Why is your heart fixed upon these temporal things? We should live for eternity, “the day of God” (2 Pet. 3:12) as Peter calls it, instead of living our own selfish life.

The world is literally “passing away” even now as I write and as we live out our daily lives. Nothing attached to the world has any eternal value. Don’t be a fool and live for those things which will not last. Don’t live for things which will be forever destroyed. There is no eternal value in worldly things – only heavenly things!

Colossians 3:1

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.”

Our duty is to live for the “above things” and not the “below things” since everything that is tied to this world is transitory and passing away. The old chorus says:

“With eternity's values in view Lord
With eternity's values in view
May I do each day's work for Jesus
With eternity's values in view.”

Jesus taught us to live for the “treasures of heaven” (Matt. 6:19-20; Luke 18:22) and not earthly things which have no eternal value attached to them. The destruction of the earth and heavens remind us of the futility of living for earthly things such as materialism, money, and the meaningless pursuits of fame, lust, and pride. With the coming destruction of all that is in the world, we must remember to take a spiritual inventory, take time to be holy, and take living for Jesus Christ seriously. This is because we only have one opportunity to engage our life in spiritual and eternal pursuits.

“Only one life twill soon be past,
Only what’s done for Christ will last.
Only one chance to do His will.
So give to Jesus every day,
It’s the only life that pays.
When you recall,
You have but one life.”

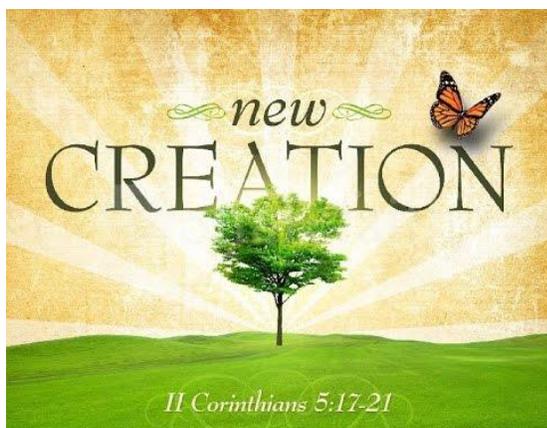
2 Peter 3:12 gives another practical lesson:

“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 fervent heat?”

Peter reminds us that we can speed up the start of the Eternal State (“hasting the day of God”). With the destruction of the earth and heavens, a new earth and heavens will be created (Rev. 21:1), which ushers in eternity. The expression “the day of God” looks forward to the eternal state so vividly described in Revelation 21-22. But how do believers hasten or speed up the commencement of the Eternal State? How do we get to eternity faster? It’s interesting that in the providence of God, He has built in to the fulfillment of His purposes, the involvement and acts of His followers (Matt. 6:10; 24:14 Acts 3:19-20). We see this repeated at various times throughout Scripture. God has interwoven the actions of His followers to bring about His eternal purposes (Acts 2:23).

Richard Bauckham correctly concludes:
“This does not detract from God’s sovereignty in determining the time of the End, but means only that his sovereign determination graciously takes human affairs into account.”

The Bible is teaching that we can speed up the start of eternity, we can get to the Eternal State faster by living godly lives, praying, and witnessing. Believers affect God’s timetable. The sooner we fulfill our spiritual obligations; the sooner the Eternal State will begin. This reminds me that I’m not just a speck in the cosmic universe; I’m part of the plan of the ages! God uses me to bring His ultimate goal to its finish – eternity! This brings meaning and significance to my life. I’m part of the eternal purpose and plan of God. Similar to the recreation of the new earth and heavens (Rev. 21:1), God has brought my life out of destruction (Ps. 103:4) and recreated me, transformed me, and given me a new purpose (2 Cor. 5:17).



“Life was shattered and hope was gone,
Crushing the load that I bore.
Then out of the depths, I cried, ‘O God,
Give me something worth living for.’

Something more than my yesterdays,
More than I had before.
Something more than wealth or fame,
He gave me something worth living for.”