

Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness,

2Peter 3:11

Store In My Heart

Hebrews 1:3

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact expression of His nature, sustaining all things by His powerful word. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. (HCSB)

This letter was likely written between 60 and 70 AD. While we have no knowledge of the writer, his purpose is clear. The focus on shadows from the Old Covenant shows he wrote to Jews who had believed Christ. The author urges his readers to look to Christ, who is supreme, rather than the shadows that pointed to Him.

The superiority of Christ is shown to help these brethren remain faithful in face of the urging of their Jewish friends. For us it gives confidence in our Savior and Lord to see us through any struggles we might face. Faith in Jesus will bring us to our rest.



The New Heavens And The New Earth

Jim McDonald

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away, and the sea is no more

Revelation 21:1

Some, even some brethren, see this passage as literal and conclude that the eternal dwelling place of the redeemed, resurrected souls will be planet earth. Before we accept this position as truth, it is needful that examination be made of what Bible writers meant by the expression "*new heavens and a new earth*," for John is not the only biblical writer to use the phrase. Certainly, considering the nature of Revelation, one should be extremely cautious in making **Revelation 21:1** literal when the expression is surrounded by highly symbolic language. To name just a few, John saw four horses in the first four seals of the seven seals (**Revelation 6:1-8**); the sealing of 12,000 out of each of the 12 tribes of Israel (**Revelation 7:5-8**); the plagues of the 7 trumpets (**Revelation 8, 9**); an angel who stood with one foot on the sea, the other on land (**Revelation 10:2**); the measuring of the temple (**Revelation 11:1-2**); the great red dragon who, with one sweep of his tail, brought 1/3 of the stars of heaven crashing onto the earth (**Revelation 12:4**). Who regards these visions as literal? One should do a second take on literalizing the phrase "*new heavens and a new earth*" when the book overall is so highly symbolic and figurative.

There are four passages in the Bible where the expression "*new heavens and a new earth*" is found. Two of these appear in the Old Testament in the writings of the prophet **Isaiah (65:17; 66:22)**. Two

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For Our Information

Joyce Venable is wearing a heart monitor and is not feeling well.

Paula Laubach is recovering well from her fall but is still having knee trouble.

Theresa LaValla has been suffering from some rough headaches.

Phyllis Jackson is recovering some from her bronchitis.

John Ragsdale is getting over his infection.

Pray for safety, courage & healing.

other times the expression is found in New Testament writings (**2Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1**). It is clear that Isaiah's promise of a "new heavens and a new earth" were not intended to be understood in a literal sense. Instead, the writer is promising, in the era of the Messiah, a new order of things: the church and salvation offered to all men without respect of persons. The church, God's promised kingdom (**Daniel 2:44**), and the redemption one finds in Christ are Isaiah's "new heavens and a new earth." Isaiah's "new heavens and a new earth" are here, but not literally so. The fact that Isaiah used the same expression as John and Peter (yet never intending to suggest a new literal earth) should cause men to question, "Since the expressions in Isaiah were figurative, is it not possible that the appearance of the expressions in both Peter and John's writing is also figurative?"

In **2Peter 3** Peter tells us that in the last days mockers would come and say, "Where is the promise of his coming, for from the days the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (**2Peter 3:3-4**). These mockers questioned the veracity of the Lord's words that He would come again, and Peter reminded them that they were willfully forgetting something. The heavens from old, and an earth, compacted out of water and amidst water by the word of God, was overflowed with water and perished — by the word of God. But the heavens that now are, and the earth by the same word, are stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men (**2Peter 3:5-7**).

Jehovah's Witnesses argue that symbolism is here: that the world "perished" but wasn't destroyed — it's still here! And that's what will happen when Jesus comes again. That, although the world overflowed with water, it didn't perish. It was just cleansed and Noah and his family continued to live on it, and that in like manner, when the earth is "destroyed" at Jesus' second coming, it will be purified and made suitable for God's redeemed ones to live here — a new earth, so to speak. There is a huge problem with this explanation: Peter uses two words to speak of two different things, not one. Peter speaks of the world, then he speaks of the earth, but HE IS NOT USING TWO DIFFERENT WORDS TO DESCRIBE THE SAME THING. The "world" is the people of Noah's day; the "earth" is our planet. True, the "earth" of Noah's day is still here, but the "world" of Noah's day is gone. IT DID PERISH.

(This article will be continued in next week's bulletin. I generally try to avoid splitting articles like this, but the topic is timely as a preparation to some of the lessons we will have in our Sunday AM class in a few months. I suggest you take the time to read this article now, then re-read it before reading the second half next week. DLH)



We seek only to serve God according to His Will!