

# A New Heaven & Earth

Oct. 25, 2009 am

Introduction:

1. Good Morning. I want to ask that you open your Bible to **2 Peter 3:10-13.**

- A. We welcome you to Laurel Heights.
- B. Some of our Winter Members are back.
- C. We've been waiting for you, impatiently all summer.
- D. Welcome back.

2. **2 Peter 3:10-13.**

3. I'm going to address the meaning of this passage, and the application to be made - *but I should like to begin with ...*

Body:

I. **An Illustration: It's hard to see things grow old.**

- A. At least once a year, I visit the little town in Arkansas where I grew up - Ft. Smith, Ark.
- B. There is an emotion I have going back to my hometown - I think you will identify with.

1. **There is a certain sadness about seeing things grow old.**

2. Some of the buildings are boarded up; some of the houses torn down.

3. The streets seem so narrow, and the neighborhood seems not to be as warm and happy and fun - compared to the 1950's.

C. If I go the High School where I graduated, I don't recognize anybody.

1. Many of the teachers I had are either retired, or they have passed away.

2. The old movie house on Garrison Ave. is a tattoo parlor.

3. The church building my father helped to build - is for sale.

D. **It's hard to see things grow old.**

1. And I have to acknowledge, I cannot change that.

2. I can't go back to my hometown and restore everything.

E. We can't make what is old new again!!

## II. God Can!

A. God can create newness after oblivion!

B. When you see how this world grows stooped and weary . . . And . . .

C. When you read this passage in 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter, where the writer says, "the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up," **it is time to focus on God's power to make a new dwelling place, and through Christ - invite us to live there!!**

D. That will be the gist of what I'm going to say.

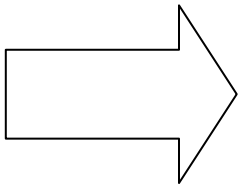
E. Listen again: **With this passage, we are able to focus on God's power to make new dwelling place - and through Christ, invite us to live there.**

## III. First, let's look at two simple facts.

A. ONE, "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night."

1. This is expressed as something known; it is a fact.

2. Facts are inflexible, and cannot be adjusted by our emotional responses to them.



3. So whether people like this or not . . . **It remains a fact announced by God: “The Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.”**

4. The exact time of this event is not given; in fact, it will be like the unexpected visit of a thief ~ that means, no advance announcement of the arrival time.

B. TWO, “the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.”

1. This is another fact, inflexible – already determined by God, therefore not adjustable or escapable by man.

2. “The earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.”

3. Our present dwelling place, here on earth, will terminate – “burned up.”

C. So we need to expect that time on earth will end!

1. We do not know when.

2. But as believers in God’s Word, we know **this will take place.**

3. "...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."

D. This is the end of time on earth.

E. This "day of God" is definitely going to happen.

IV. But Christians enjoy this confidence, as stated in verse 13: "**...we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.**"

A. **This is about the end of one dwelling place, but the beginning of another.**

B. God has prepared a new place for His people.

1. It is called "a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells."

2. This is a reference to heaven!

C. We cannot read this phrase, and think of a renewal or restoration of the physical universe - because the end of the physical universe is affirmed already, in verse 10 and 12.

1. "Burned up."

2. “Dissolved being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat.”

D. Peter uses this expression that was typical among the Jews, to refer to a place – a dwelling place, combining words which were meant to refer to a place: **HEAVENS AND EARTH...**

E. But don’t leave out – **“New!”**

1. We who are Christians know *the old dwelling place* will be burned up.

2. We look for *a new dwelling place*:  
“new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.”

3. An eternal home – provided by God for the peace and joy of His people.

F. I said earlier → **With this passage, we are able to focus on God’s power to make a new dwelling place – and through Christ, invite us to live there.**

1. Our current situation here on earth is not permanent.

2. Christians can think about the fact – we will have a better and a permanent dwelling place, with God in heaven.

3. Referred to here by Peter as a “new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”
- G. Other passages repeat this statement of hope, particularly in the final book of the New Testament.
1. **Rev. 21:1-5.**
  2. Here again – that affirmation, of God’s Supreme ability to make all things new.
  3. A new and better place awaits the people of God.
- H. Let me ask – do you sometimes realize the limitations of life on the earth, and do you often think about how much better heaven will be??
1. This earth – while it was created perfectly by God – *is under the curse of sin.*
  2. Anything men might call Paradise in the Garden of Eden – *was lost when sin came.*
  3. Paul wrote about this in Romans 8, where he said, “the creation was subjected to futility,” and in that same passage he said, “the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs until now,” (Rom. 8:18-26).

4. This earth we occupy is not a friendly place; in many ways, harsh and unfriendly.
  5. And this world – in terms of people and culture and social trends – is becoming more and more an uncomfortable place for God’s people.
  6. Our faith and hope is discounted...  
Our Savior is treated with indifference...  
Our Moral Standard is considered out-dated.
- I. What happens – if you take a fish and place him on the beach? Is he supposed to be happy and comfortable?
1. You don’t think so.
  2. What if you put a little pair of sunglasses on the fish . . . and prop him up in a beach chair!
  3. *Not going to be happy, until we place him back in his element – water.*
  4. He wasn’t meant for the beach.
- J. I tell you now - - we were not made to be permanently fulfilled here on earth!!
1. This is really not our element!
  2. When you become a Christian, the world becomes less of a home for you.

3. Paul said – speaking about Christians – that our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3).
  4. Peter said to Christians – *You are like foreigners and strangers in the world* (1 Pet. 2:11).
- K. We will never have perfect peace until we get home . . . in heaven, where righteousness dwells.
- L. **2 Pet. 3:10-13** → With this passage, we are able to focus on God’s power to make a new dwelling place – and through Christ, invite us to live there.

V. **Do You Want To Go To Heaven?**

- A. It is not automatic that you will.
- B. It is not simply a function of your claim to be a Christian, or your membership in a local church, or the righteousness of your parents.
- C. Going to heaven is about – **your personal response to Jesus Christ!**
1. Do you believe in Him?
  2. Have you acted on that belief, by following the instructions in the New Testament.
  3. By grace, salvation from sin and heaven is offered.

4. By the activity of your individual faith, the gift can be received and kept.
5. **It is about your response to Christ, and how you live out that response!!**

D. Look back at our passage, this time – a closer look at verse 11.

*Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness.*

1. What manner of person are you, in responding to the gospel of Christ?
2. Have you been baptized?
3. If you have been baptized – what are you doing with your heart and life right now?
4. What manner of person ought you to be?

Conclusion:

1. Listen: **2 Pet. 3:10-13.**
2. A lot of things we bring to your attention here at Laurel Heights – find their essence in one question: **Do you want to go to heaven?**

- A. When we study the book of Nehemiah, and we talk about how a person filled with a love for God can accomplish great things ...
- B. When we preach sermons about what the Bible says we should do, and should not do . . .
- C. When we urge you to read your Bible, and use what you learn to govern your life . . .
  - 1. To discern between truth and error.
  - 2. To raise your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.
  - 3. To participate in the work of the local church.
  - 4. To talk to people about the gospel . . . to worship . . . to pray . . . *on an on...*
- D. **It is about going to heaven!**

**3. With this passage, we have been able to focus on God's power to make a new dwelling place - and through Christ, He invites us to leave sin, come to Him and live with the hope of heaven . . . . everyday . . . BEGIN NOW, while we stand to sing.**

Warren E. Berkley

