

Advent 1
2 Peter 3.1-13

The first Sunday in Advent points to the final return of Christ at the end of time. Hours before his perfect life led to his innocent death on the cross to redeem us from sin, death and the devil, Jesus said to his disciples: *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”* Peter, in 2 Peter 3, stirs up the minds of his readers to order their lives in anticipation of that last day.

Peter reminds his readers that, contrary to what scoffers say, by God’s word the heavens and earth were formed. By His word the earth was destroyed though the flood. And by His word the present heavens and the earth are being reserved for a Day of Judgment and destruction of those who do not honor God.

Peter told his readers not to overlook two facts. First, God patiently delays his return, *not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.* Second, the Day of the Lord will come unexpectedly; *‘the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be laid bare.’*

Because this will happen, Peter exhorts his readers to *lives of holiness and godliness* as they await God’s promise for *new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.* [2 Pt 3.13]

“...new heavens and a new earth...” New! The language suggests a cleansing and transformation of the present heavens and earth, not a replacement.

“...in which righteousness dwells.” Unlike the present heavens and earth... where the *ungodly* live [2 Pt 3.7], where all people need *repentance* [2 Pt 3.9], where *sinful desires corrupt the earth* [2 Pt 1.4], where the *ground is cursed* [Gen 3.17], and *creation itself [groans] to be set free from its bondage to corruption* [Rom 8.21].

Those who scoff at the promised new heavens and new earth refuse to see God revealed in the perfect life, innocent death of His only Son. Through the blood of cross Christ has defeated sin, death and the devil, reconciling to Himself all those who will enjoy the new heavens and new earth where righteousness dwells... actively and constantly and perfectly doing what is right in the sight of God... every thought, word, and action reflecting His Holy will.

So, Christ-followers look forward to the *new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.* Here is how two of several passages describe this reality.

- Isaiah 65. [17](#)“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind...[21](#)They shall build houses and inhabit them...and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands... [24](#)Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear. [25](#)The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat

straw like the ox...They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain,” says the LORD.

- Revelation 21. [1](#) Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, And I saw the holy city coming down out of heaven from God...And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God:

Between now and then we give ourselves to God’s instruction through Peter.

- Living lives of repentance and faith given to us through the perfect life and innocent death of Christ, and through us to others. [2 Pt 3.9]
- *Growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.* [2 Pt 3.18]
- *Living lives of holiness and godliness, [12](#) waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God* [2 Pt 3.11-12]

Dr. Paul Rabbe, Concordia Seminary, St Louis concludes a theological journal article entitled “The Future New Earth” with these words:

You Christians have such a bright future ahead of you. The Lord Jesus will come again visibly in glory and transform your lowly body to be like his glorious body. Then he will say to you, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” And you will enter the new and greater Promised Land, the new creation, where the crops will abound, the hills will flow with new wine, and the wolf will lie down with the lamb. Then you will see your Creator and Savior as he is, face-to-face. Then God’s name shall be perfectly hallowed, his kingdom shall come in all its fullness, and his will shall be done perfectly on earth. What a future of eternal joy and bliss. Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.

Grace and Peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ