

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE EARTH?

Immediately after the destruction of Satan and his armies, John says, "I saw a 'Great White Throne' and Him that sat on it, from whose face the Earth and the Heaven (atmosphere of the earth) fled away; and there was no place for them." Revelation 20:11. John then describes the judgement of the "Great White Throne," and then adds- "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. John does not tell us how it is to come to pass, but the Apostle Peter does.

"But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, RESERVED UNTO FIRE against the Day of judgement and Perdition of Ungodly Men. 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. 2 Pet. 3: 7-13.

"Nevertheless we, according to His Promise, (Isaiah 65:17 & 66:22) look for a New Heavens and a New Earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

It is clear that Peter is referring to the same event as John, for he says it is to be at the "Day of judgement and Perdition of Ungodly Men," and that is the "Great White Throne judgement" of the Wicked Dead.

A surface reading of the above passage would lead one to believe that the earth as a planet, and the all the heavens, are to be destroyed by fire and pass away. But a careful study of the Scriptures will show us that this is not so, that what is to happen is, that this present earth, and the atmosphere surrounding it, is to be Renovated by Fire, so that its exterior surface shall be completely changed, and all that sin has brought into existence, such as thorns and thistles, disease germs, insect pests, etc., shall be destroyed, and the atmosphere purified and forever freed from evil spirits and destructive agencies. That this is the correct view of the passage is clear from Peter's words in verses 5 and 6.

"By the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water; whereby the world, that then was, being overflowed with water, PERISHED."

The world that the Apostle is referring to here, was not the "Antediluvian World" that was changed by the "Flood," but to the "Primeval World," mentioned in Genesis 1:1, and which was made waste and void by a Flood that completely submerged it. Genesis 1:2.

The Apostle Peter divides the history of the earth into three periods. The period before the earth was made "formless and void," or the "Primeval Earth," which he calls "the world that Then Was;" the present period which he calls "the heavens and the earth which Are Now," and in which there has been no great change since the restoration of the earth, described in Genesis 1:3-2:1; and the New Heaven and Earth which is yet future. 2 Peter 3: 5-7,13.

Now as the Framework of the "Primeval Earth" was not destroyed by its "Watery Bath," so the Framework of the "Present Earth" is not to be destroyed by its "Baptism of Fire." This is confirmed by the Apostle's use of the Greek word "Comos," which means the "land surface the inhabitableness of the earth, and not the earth as a planet. It is the exterior surface of the earth then that is to "Melt With Fervent Heat" and the "Works Therein Burnt Up."

The intense heat will cause the gases in the atmosphere to explode, which the Apostle describes as the "heavens (the atmosphere) passing away with a great noise." The result will be the destruction of all animal and vegetable life, and the alteration of the earth's surface.

The Greek work "Parechomai," translated "pass away," does not mean "termination of existence" or "annihilation," but means to pass from "one condition of existence to another." The Apostle Paul in his letter to Titus, (Titus 3:5), speaking of the "Regeneration" of men, uses the same word that Jesus used when, in Matthew 19:28, He promised His Disciples that in the "Regeneration," that is in the "New Earth," they should sit on "Twelve Thrones" judging the "Twelve Tribes" of Israel. Now no one supposes that the Regeneration of a man is his Annihilation"

It is simply a Renewing Process by which he is brought back to the condition of man spiritually as before the Fall. The word "Restitution" in Acts 3:21, means the same thing. The "Dissolving" of which Peter speaks, (2 Peter 3:11), is the same word Jesus used when He said of the colt "Loose

him and let him go." The teaching of the Scriptures is, that "Creation" is at present in a "State of Captivity," waiting to be Loosed from the Bondage that sin has caused. Romans 8: 19-23.

More proof of the regeneration of earth as opposed to it's complete renewal can be found in Psalms 102:25-26. "Of old hast thou laid the foundations 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." Psalm 104:5 "Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed forever". Although the surface has undergone change and destruction on a global scale, the foundations have never given way, they are there to stay. They have been shaken but never damaged.

As to the "Departing as a Scroll" of the heavens, and the "Flying Away" of the earth and heavens, of which John speaks, (Revelation 6:14; 20:11), a total disappearance of all the material worlds is not at all the idea, for he tells us that afterwards he saw the New Jerusalem coming down out of Heaven, and nations living and walking in the Light of it on the earth, and the Kings of the Earth bringing their Glory and Honour Into It." Revelation 21: 2, 24. The Holy Spirit by Solomon said, "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, but the Earth Abideth Forever." Ecclesiastes 1: 4.