

# LIVING WATERS NEWSLETTER

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## THE WORLD, THE KINGDOM, AND THE JUDGMENT

To the environmentalist the world is being destroyed by habits and lifestyles of modern man; to many we are in danger of destroying the world by atomic warfare; many Christians believe the world will be destroyed by God at the appearing of Christ in the last day. The question is: will the world actually be destroyed? Just what does the Bible say about this subject? Didn't Jesus plainly speak of "the end of the world"? The answer is yes if you read only the King James Version of the Bible. In all the verses cited to prove that Jesus spoke of the end of the world (example: Matt. 13:39, 40; 24:3 28:20) the "world" is the Greek word *ainos* and is correctly translated "age" in other versions. The passage stating "time shall be no more" (Rev. 10:6) is "there shall be delay no longer." God was not going to delay the sounding of the seventh angel. After the flood God said "I will never again destroy every living thing as I have done, *while the earth remains*, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night..." (Genesis 8:21b, 22). Just how long will the earth remain? The answer is in Ecclesiastes 1:4: "A generation goes and a generation comes, but the earth *remains forever*." Psalm 78:69: "And He built His sanctuary like the heights, like the earth which He *founded forever*." Psalm 104:5: "He established the earth upon its foundation, so that it will not totter *forever and forever*." Psalm 115:16: "The heavens are the heavens of the Lord, but the earth He has given to the sons of man."

Perhaps the main passage used to show the earth will be destroyed is II Peter 3:10, 12: "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be *destroyed* with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be *burned up*. Since all these things are to be *destroyed* in this way what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be *destroyed by burning* and the elements will melt with intense heat!" In verse 10 he uses the word *burned up* and in verse 12 he uses the word *burning*, but the word used in verse 12 is not the same word as translated *burned* in verse 10. The word in verse 10 is *discovered*, and before we discount this look at Psalm 18:15: "The channels of the deep waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were *discovered* at Thy rebuke." When David speaking of God's judgment states: "the foundations of the world were 'laid bare' or 'discovered'." When Peter states "all these things are to be *destroyed* (ver. 12) he has also stated that the world in Noah's day was *destroyed* (ver. 6). *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* states the words translated "destroyed" (NASV) have the same meaning and should be translated the same. When God "destroyed" the world by the flood He did not annihilate it. When Peter says the heavens and the earth will be destroyed, he is not saying they will be annihilated. When he speaks of the judgment of God he uses the same terminology used in the Old Testament to describe the judgment of the world in Noah's day. Paul makes it plain in Romans 8:19-22 the world will not be destroyed, rather it will be redeemed from the curse subjected upon it because of sin. "For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the

revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from the slavery of the corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now." The word "futility" is *mataiotes*, which denotes an object that does not function as it was designed to, or, more precisely, an object which has been given a role for which it was not designed and which is unreal or illusory. The "pains of childbirth" the earth is suffering indicate the bringing forth something new. John Stott in *Romans: God's Good News for the World* states it in these words: "Not only is creation groaning but it is groaning 'until now' (NIV), and since its groans are labor pains, they look forward to the coming new order. We must hold on to the combination of present sufferings and future glory. Each verse expresses it. The creation's subjection to futility was in hope (20). The bondage of decay will give place to the freedom of glory (21). The pains of labor will be followed by the joys of birth (22). There is therefore going to be the regeneration of the world, as in the resurrection of the body. The universe is not going to be destroyed, but rather liberated, transformed and suffused with the glory of God."

The kingdom was given to Christ at his ascension. This was prophesied by Daniel and declared 7:13-14 as taking place when "one like the Son of Man...*came up* to the Ancient of Days, and was presented before Him. And to him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom." Further: Ephesians 1:20: "He (God) raised him from the dead, and seated him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that it is named, not only in this age but in the one to come." The kingdom began with Christ, was confirmed by his resurrection and ascension and will continue until "he delivers up the kingdom to God and Father; when he has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be abolished is death" (I Cor. 15:24, 25).

There is a future reign of Christ upon the earth when he returns and "the kingdoms of this world (will have) become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ and he will reign forever and ever" (Rev. 11:15). A popular hymn says "we shall reign with him on high." This is a false teaching being taught in our hymns. The scriptures teach the opposite: "...you have purchased for God with your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth" (Rev. 5:9, 10). This is portrayed symbolically in Revelation 20:6 in the words: "and they came to life (those who had part in the first resurrection (Christ's), and they will reign with him for a thousand years" (The word "thousand" years is used symbolically to refer to a vast number: Psalm 50:10; 68:17; Dan. 7:10). The Apostle Paul states "if we endure we shall reign with him" (II Tim. 2:12). The kingdom that is to come in demonstrative power and glory has already entered the world, is hidden from man and is at work in a world that doesn't recognize it. This is the mystery of the kingdom.

The religious world has been so absorbed with walking the streets of gold with Christ in heaven, they have never considered ruling with him on earth. Consider the following scriptures and keep in mind Romans 8:17 which states that we are “heirs of God and joint heirs of Christ”. A joint heir shares everything that the heir inherits. If Christ rules the nations of the earth, then we will rule the earth with him. “He who overcomes and he who keeps my deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also received authority from my Father” (Rev. 2:26, 27). This is a quotation from Psalm 2:8-10, a prophesy of the son of God. In Luke 19:17 Jesus declared: “‘well done good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, be in authority over ten cities...’ and he said to (another one) also, ‘you are to be over five cities.’” In a prophesy concerning the coming kingdom of the Son of Man, after stating he would be given dominion and glory and a kingdom, it further states: “the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come...the sovereignty and dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heavens will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One, His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him” (Dan. 7:18, 27).

Nothing short of the resurrection could precipitate the judgment and attest the right of Christ to reign as one seated at the right hand of the Father “far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come, and (having) all things in subjection under his feet...” (Eph. 1:20-22). All this was prophesied in the words of the Psalmist: “...He said to me ‘you are my son, today I have begotten you. Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as your inheritance and the very ends of the earth as your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron, you shall shatter them like earthenware.’ Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; take warning, O judges of the earth” (Psalm 2:7-10). It is in the context of the resurrection that Paul makes the following statement: “...He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising him from the dead” (Acts 17:31). Christ, having been exalted and given “all authority in heaven and on earth” (Matt. 28:18), means all judgment has been given to him. “For not even the Father judges anyone, He has given all judgment to the Son” (John 5:22). Since the ascension we have seen the ruling power of Christ exercised in the fulfillment of Psalm 2 beginning with Jerusalem and the Roman Empire being destroyed and the rise and fall of the nations of the world throughout history. Judgment is a prerogative of the reign of Christ. The word “Kings” and “Judges” is used interchangeably in Psalm 2:10. Solomon the *reigning king* of Israel *judged* the people (I Kings 3:9). One of the definitions given for the word *krino* (judge) in *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* is “to rule, govern, to preside with the power of giving judicial decisions.” In the book of Judges the Judges *reigned* over Israel. John 5:27-29 Jesus states: “...and He (God) gave Him (Jesus) authority to execute judgment because he is the Son of man. Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear his voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to the resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to the resurrection of Judgment.” The word *judgment* is

translated *damnation* in the King James Version. The word “damnation” is not found in the Greek New Testament. There will be a resurrection to life and a resurrection to judgment. In I Corinthians 6:2, 3 the Apostle Paul makes some outstanding statements that are basically ignored in the pulpit and unknown by many Christians. He asks: “Do you not know that the saints will judge the world” and then “Do you not know that we will judge angels?” This is consistent with the fact Christians will reign with Christ. The question is: Just who makes up the “world” and “angels” Paul says the Christians will judge? Now we are going to “plow some new ground.” We are not specifically told the answer to this question in Scripture. The commentaries are not much help. However we can say as Paul said on a particular subject: “I have no command from the Lord, but I give an opinion...” (I Cor. 7:25). Jesus stated in John 14:6: “*No one* comes to the Father but through Me.” This being true it would be fair to say that *everyone* should have a chance to accept Jesus as Savior. The Scriptures are very definite; anyone hearing and rejecting the gospel and refusing to obey will have no “second chance” (John 3:36; I John 5:12; II Thess. 1:8, 9; Mark 16:15,16). But what about those that never heard and never had an opportunity to obey? This would include four groups: 1. The heathen that had never heard the gospel, 2. Baby’s or the child not old enough to obey (there is nothing in Scripture about “the age of accountability”), 3. The mentally deficient, and 4. Babies alive in the womb (yes life has begun) and all the aborted babies. Theologians, Commentators and Preachers say quite dogmatically the heathen, the mentally deficient and babies will simply be accepted by God and experience salvation just as other Christians, but the Bible says nothing about that subject. What they are offering, then, is an opinion. Remember Jesus said “*No one* comes to the Father but through me.” The heathen could be resurrected in a mortal body and have their first opportunity to be saved. God could bring babies, the unborn and the aborted into the persons they were destined to be. They would then have their first opportunity to accept Christ. These would make up the “world” that would have their first (not second) chance to hear and accept Christ. Could this be the “world” Christians would judge? This, too, is an opinion and we must conclude this subject is one of “the secret things that belong to God” (Deut. 29:29).

The angels the Apostle says Christians will judge (I Cor. 6:3) must be the angels in II Peter 2:4: “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into *Tartarus* (translated “Hell” in most versions; this is the only place in the N. T. the word is used) and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment.” Jude also describes them in these words: “And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day. Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example, in undergoing punishment of eternal fire” (Jude 6,7), The only place in Scripture that gross immorality of angels is mentioned is Genesis 6: 2-4: “The Nephilim (Giants) were on the earth in those days when the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful...they came into the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.”

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