

EAST CAMBRIDGE CHURCH OF CHRIST

"A first century church in the 21st century"

Bible Reading Plan

Week 08

- Lev 8-11; Ps 110; *Heb 4*
- Lev 12-14; Ps 111; *Heb 5*
- Lev 15-18; Ps 31; *Heb 6*
- Lev 19-20; *Heb 7*
- Lev 21-23; *Heb 8*

Leading Services

Announcements: Larry L.

Morning:

Song Leader: Mike V.

Opening Prayer: Zack V.

Lord's Table: Brock G.

Asst By:

Closing Prayer: Richard L.

Evening:

Song Leader: Bill G.

Opening Prayer: Mike V.

Closing Prayer: Ben V.

Scripture Reading: Brock G.
(Matthew 6.16-24)

Sermons

AM: Can Any Man Forbid Water
PM: Why Pray?



New Earth

This lesson will be our goal to properly understand what the scriptures mean by, "new heavens and a new earth". It is the conclusion of some that God will establish again a cleansed beginning point on this terrestrial globe. They would see these words as promising a renewed earth; much like the days of Noah, after the flood. We need to examine what the scriptures teach about this "new earth. So that we can properly understand what the statement refers to. Let's open the scriptures together to consider this statement more closely. Will this Earth Be Renewed? There are many who have been taught and believe that God is going to once more cleanse the earth and renew it for future use. They compare the final destruction to the flood in the days of Noah (Genesis 6-9). The problem with this comparison is that these two events, according to the scriptures, were for two different purposes: The Flood in Noah's day was to "destroy mankind" (Genesis 6:6-7) and the destruction in the end will be of "the earth" itself (2 Peter 3:9-10).

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What we know about the “New Earth”

Therefore there is no direct correlation between these two events, except that they are both judgments of God. To answer the question, "Will this earth be renewed?" we need to consider what the scriptures say about our earth and our dwelling after the end.

According to the scriptures this earth will be vacated—all of us will be taken away from this place: We will all be changed (1 Corinthians 15:51-54 and lifted up (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17); and every soul will be taken to judgment (2 Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 9:27). We also learn that this vacated world will be destroyed—burned up—even the most elemental parts will be consumed by flame (2 Peter 3:10, 12). It will not be like the flood that destroyed mankind. This destruction will bring a complete end to the physical/material world. Through the scriptures we are also taught that our dwelling will be in a spiritual realm not a physical realm. The promise is that our dwelling will be in God's dwelling place (Matthew 25:23; John 14:1-6).

Our greatest blessings are spiritual and will be realized in "the heavenly" place—in contrast to an earthly place, where we presently dwell (Ephesians 1:3). We are also told that we will have spiritual bodies (1 Corinthians 15:44) suited for a spiritual dwelling place (1 Corinthians 15:50). Why does it say, "New heavens and new earth"? There are two New Testament passages that speak of the "new heavens and a new earth". First, 2 Peter 3:13, where we read, "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells."

Then also, Revelation 21:1, where we read, "Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away..." We need to find an answer to the question, "What do these verses mean?" Our earth, under our sky (the heavens), is the only dwelling place that we have ever known or experienced. God's dwelling place, called Heaven, is a spiritual realm, is not anything that we have ever experienced or known. In order for us to understand the concept of this spiritual realm, this "unknown/un-experienced place" is compared to the things "we do know or have experienced". Therefore these "new heavens and new earth" describe our new dwelling. This is a very powerful teaching tool (leading from the known to unknown) certainly does not escape God's knowledge. God knows exactly how to reveal information to us; He always has (Deuteronomy 29:29). This teaching tool was recognized and implemented by ancient educator Socrates during his life, four centuries before the writing of the New Testament. His teaching principles were known in the first century and are still used today.

Our Dwelling is the Place of "Promise" What place is promised to the faithful? We are promised life everlasting: "The righteous into eternal life" (Matthew 25:46). "Should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "... who sees the Son and believes in Him may have an everlasting life" (John 6:40). "...and the end, everlasting life" (Romans 6:22). This everlasting life is to be received and lived out in Heaven: "Great is your reward in heaven..." (Matthew 5:10-12). "I go and prepare a place for you..."—"in my Father's house" (John 14:1-6). "Our citizenship is in heaven..." (Philippians 3:20). "The hope, which is laid up for you, in Heaven" (Colossians 1:5). Yes, heaven is our perfect dwelling forever.

We will have no more of the problems of this life (Revelation 21:4). We will be in God's presence to worship Him directly (Revelation 21:22-23) In heaven we will be free from sin (Revelation 21:27). Just as promised: Christ will come back to gather us (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17). This material realm will be consumed with fire (2 Peter 3:9-10). The righteous will have a new dwelling place in the spiritual realm (John 14:1-6; 2 Peter 3:13). These points are all easily verified by the scriptures. By ignoring the scriptural evidence we can open ourselves to endless speculations about the end times. However, with the scriptures properly used (2 Timothy 2:15) we can know with certainty what we are looking for in the end; and how to prepare for it (2 Peter 3:12). Today are you aware of the events foretold by the scriptures? Christ will return for His faithful, are you among His faithful? This physical world will be no more, are you prepared to receive a new, better home?

The spiritual realm of Heaven is a dwelling reserved for the righteous, are you seeking righteousness daily? It does not make any sense to remain unprepared for something you know is going to happen. Will you seek your preparation today, through obedience to Christ? The opportunity is yours; if you believe, now is the time to obey.

- T. Sean Sullivan