Series: Heaven

Message: 04 The New Earth 2 Peter 3\_13

Text: 2 Peter 3:13

Theme:

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**If you would please turn in your Bibles to 2 Peter 3:13, (p. 1019).**

We are in the fourth week of our series about heaven.

So far we have looked at the cosmology, the understanding of the universe held by the people of the Bible.

They saw heaven was divided into three layers. The first heaven is the sky, the atmosphere around us where the birds fly.

The second heaven is the universe where we find the planets, the stars, and all the galaxies.

The third heaven is the unique place where God dwells. In fact the definition of heaven is that heaven is the dwelling place of God.

According to Genesis chapter 1, God created the earth. A place that is distinct from heaven.

On the earth God created a garden called Eden. And in the garden God placed Adam and Eve.

In a sense God created man from the dust of the earth and He created man for the earth—to reign and rule over the earth.

Though God would meet with Adam and Eve in the garden heaven and earth were distinct places.

But then the fall happened. Adam and Eve sinned. Not only did their sin affect them but all of creation was cursed because of their rebellion.

God would not walk with man in this sin cursed world in the same way He did in Eden.

Since the fall and sin entered the world, God has promised to restore, mankind, and this creation to the way it was when God looked over all that He had created and declared it to be very good.

We live now in between the way it was meant to be and the way it is going to be.

The apostle Peter writes this in 2 Peter 3:13 “**But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells**.

With all this talk about paradise, third heaven, present heaven, some asked the question, “Where on earth is heaven?”

Let me say this very plainly. The new heaven well be on the new earth.

Revelation 21:1-3 “**Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.**

**2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 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**.

Heaven, the dwelling place of God, will come down and rest on earth. The new heaven and the new earth will be one in the same.

But don’t miss this. The new earth will be the resurrected restored earth as we know it.

Now, having said that, let me begin to explain.

In the old hymn “This is My Father’s World” there is a line in there that says “Jesus who died will be satisfied and earth and heaven be one”.

Often we sing our theology whether we realize it or not.

Let’s see what the Bible has to say.

First of all we need to look at the earth as we know it right now and that has to do with the cursed earth.

We find this way back in Genesis chapter 3. **In fact, would you turn there with me to Genesis 3:17.**

To understand why life is the way it is right now on planet earth you have to understand a bit about what it was and what happened to it that cause it to be the way it is now

And we’re going to see that throughout the Bible, both Old Testament and New Testament alike.

Genesis chapter 3:17: “**And to Adam** [God] **said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground**

[The word used for **ground** here is the common Hebrew word for earth.]

**because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life**; **18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.**

**19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground** [again the same word—earth]**, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”**

When Adam and eve sinned this perfect Edenic earth was cursed.

We have yet to outgrow that curse. Death, decay, sin, evil, sickness, cancer, automobile accidents; whatever you want to call it out there is a result of the fall of mankind.

The very earth, the very ground, was cursed because of Adam’s sin. We live on a cursed earth. All these evils are a result of sin.

When you look around and you see the horrible things are happening from random shootings to children with leukemia to whatever else you may find, understand it because we’re living on a diseased decaying cursed earth. (Hope!)

The apostle Paul writes in Romans 8:18-22 “**For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.**

**19 For the creation waits with eager longing** (all creation with an earnest expectation eagerly waits for something to happen. The created order is expecting something.

**19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.**

The created order, is eagerly expecting and waiting for the curse to be lifted. Let’s read a little bit further.

**20 For the creation was subjected to futility** [why because of man’s sin]**, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope**

**21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption** [creation itself is going to be delivered from the bondage it is living in right now. The curse is going to be dealt with] **and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.**

Creation will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

**22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now**.”

As the woman is groaning and in the pain of labor and is seeking to have that child birthed from her body so creation is groaning and laboring and longing for this to come to an end, to come to its fruition.

So we have the superb picture. In Paul’s writing to Rome we see that creation is in agony. Because of the curse. And it is longing, wanting to be redeemed, to be set free.

Luke writes in Acts chapter 3 in a similar vein. Acts 3: 21: “**whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago**.”

Throughout the BIble we see words like renewing, resurrecting, re-birth, and regeneration when talking about the sin cursed earth.

This old cursed world is crying and groaning and the prophets and even the Lord Jesus Christ himself says that the day is coming, “in the same way that I am going to finish my redemptive work with mankind, I am going to fix what they messed up. All my beautiful creation of planet earth.”

The picture we have, starting in Genesis, through the prophets and into the New Testament and culminating in Revelation chapters 21 and 22 is that this cursed world, this cursed earth, will be redeemed.

God has put in us a home sickness for Eden. A home sickness for the way God wanted it to be and will be in the new heaven and new earth.

Here we live our lives in a sin corrupted cursed earth that lies between Eden and the new heaven and the new earth.

The Bible describes the new heaven and the new earth as a beautiful country, a tremendous city, a place of many rooms.

Now we can’t understand all about heaven before we get there. Indeed the Word says that eye has not seen nor ear heard nor has entered into the mind of man all those things God has prepared for him.

But that doesn’t say that we can’t know anything. Quite to the contrary there’s somethings God wants us to know.

The Bible does tell us, the new earth will have sky and mountains and waters and trees and people and houses and cities and streets and animals and nations.

Earth as we know it is damaged but we will have a return to something even better than Eden.

Eden had boundaries. The new Eden will cover the whole of the earth.

In talking about life on this earth now. CS Lewis says that we live in the Shadowlands. We live in the Shadowlands and what we gaze upon, with all of its beauty or grandeur, is only a shadow of the real that is yet reserved for us in heaven.

Lewis captures some of this in his 7 book series The Chronicles of Narnia. The last of those, The Last Battle, has the good guys on the losing end of a battle in Narnia.

But they go through a door. A special enchanted magical door and come out on the other side one by one they go through one by one they come out on the other side.

One particular character, named Jewel, goes through and Jewel says this.

“At last. The real world. Now I have truly been born. All my life on earth was but a series of labor pains preparing me for this. This is joy itself. Every foretaste of joy in the Shadowlands was but a stab of pang, the inconsolable longing for this place. How could anyone be satisfied with anything less than this? Come all of you further up and further in.”

Then Aslan, who is the Christ figure and seen as a huge lion, spoke. Aslan said to them you do not look as happy as I mean for you to be.

And it was Lucy who said we’re so afraid of being sent away Aslan. You sent us back to our world so many times.

No fear of that, Aslan said. Have you not guessed? All of you are as you call it in the Shadowlands dead. The school term is over. The holidays have begun. The dream is ended. This is morning.

And as he spoke he no longer looked to them as a great lion but as the one they had always imagined in their own world. Jesus.

All their adventures in their own world and Narnia where only the cover—the title page.

At last they were beginning chapter one of the great story which no one on earth has yet read which goes on forever each chapter better than the last.

Makes you want to go there. I want you to think of the most glorious sunrise or sunset that you’ve ever seen. The most beautiful flower you’ve ever gazed upon. The most precious face of a little child.

Capture that for a moment will you. In all its beauty and grandeur, that is just a shadow, a vague out of focus black and white image of the real, what heaven is going to be like.

Let your mind go free. Those of you that love the outdoors, that love to hike and to go over all of these beautiful vistas, you’re going to have a blast.

Those of you live for fellowship with one another unhindered you’re going to have a blast.

Those of you that stand in awe of beauty will never want to blink again.

Heaven. The cursed earth redeemed.

**Turn with me one more time to 2 Peter chapter 3 verse 6 and 7.**

2 Peter 3:6-7 “…**and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. 7But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly**.

Yes indeed. This world as we know it. We’ll catch fire in such a way as it has never ever burned before but listen.

It’s not the destroyer’s fire. It’s the refiner’s fire. It is to purge all of the dross [explain] away. To burn away every sin and anything that could corrupt.

That out of this then God remakes God redeems God renews God regenerates God resurrects the new earth.

God’s agenda for this earth is not unlike his agenda for you and me.

This body is not designed to take me to eternity. This body cannot live for eternity.

This body from the very day I was born began the process of dying. And yours did too.

Our soul and our spirit are eternal. This body is temporary.

This body returns to the dust from which it came. But from this dust, from this pattern God resurrects the body that you and I will spend eternity in.

Just because this body is returned to dust doesn’t mean that it’s not able to be resurrected regenerated and made new.

In the same way this earth though it is reduced to ashes is not beyond the creator’s ability to bring the new earth.

Don’t ever make the mistake of thinking that heaven is somehow devoid of that which is physical. It’s going to be renewed regenerated new earth but is going to still be earth as we know it but not in the shadows.

Not the vague illustration not the out of focus black and white but the full color absolutely gorgeous and perfect earth that God has planned for us.

What a day that will be.

Let’s pray.

**Benediction: “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.” (Num. 6:24-26)**