

The Lakeview Lamp

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." - Psalm 119:105

October 2, 2005

The Earth Shall Cease

Jon Quinn

Billions and billions of years in the future, the sun will sputter as it gives off its last glimmering spark to become a cold, dark body. It will have long before ceased to have enough energy to give light and heat to the earth. The earth will at that time have been a frozen, lifeless planet for eons. And now in darkness, it will remain forever as star after star fails, succumbing to the laws of entropy. All the ruins of whatever was left of long dead civilizations on earth will become permanently frozen giving testimony to no one in particular that the human race once existed.

Well, that's the picture of the end of the earth that the atheist describes. Pretty bleak, isn't it! Maybe we can find a better future in religious doctrine. The "Jehovah's Witnesses" teach that the earth and life on the earth will never end. They maintain that 144,000 righteous ones will go to heaven and that the earth will be cleansed of its physical and moral pollution.

This future earth they describe with words such as "paradise," "loveliness," "breathtaking beauty," and "glorious." The rest of the righteous other than the 144,000 will live on this new earth eternally in a perfect, permanent youthful state.

Now I like that picture better than the first one. But, like the first one, it isn't true. Consider what the future holds for the earth as is related to us in the Scriptures.

The Difference Between "Forever" and "Eternal"

"And He built His sanctuary like the heights, like the earth which He has founded forever" (Psalm 79:69). "A generation goes and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever" (Eccl 1:4). In both of these verses the earth is said to be founded or remain "forever." The Hebrew word in both is the same: it is "olam." A study of this word will show that it does not mean "eternal" or "without end." Rather, it means "age-lasting" or "to the end of the age." It is used of temporary things such as the observance of the Passover (**Exodus 12:24**), the washing of hands at the bronze laver before offering animal sacrifices (**Exodus 30:21**), the law concerning the grain offering (**Leviticus 6:22**) and the blowing of the silver trumpets by Aaron's sons to convene assemblies (**Numbers 10:8**). These are all parts of the Old Law and were therefore temporary (**Hebrews 8:6-13; Galatians 3:24-25**). "Forever" must be understood not as "eternal" but as "to the end of the age." When used of the earth, it means that the earth will last until it reaches the end of its age which God has established.

The Physical Universe Will Be Destroyed

"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...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!" (2 Peter 3:10-12). There are a number of words used in these three verses to describe the end of the world. The word "destroyed" or "dissolved" in verse 11 means to loose or break, as it is used to describe the breaking down by Christ of the wall of partition that had divided Jew and Greek in times past (**Ephesians 2:15**). The "elements" which melt are the very substance of the material world. The phrase "pass

away” means to cease to be, like the glory of a rich man (**James 1:9-11**). This world will not end in a frozen state. It will not continue eternally. Its final hour will come with intense heat.

A New Heavens and a New Earth

“*But according to His promise we are looking for a new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells*” (**2 Peter 3:13**). Those who believe the earth will last forever insist that this is the same heavens and earth “made like new” by cleansing and restoration. But the same word is used by Jesus to describe the new covenant (**Luke 22:20**). This was not the Old covenant redone, but an entirely new covenant (**Hebrews 8:8,9**). Likewise, the word is also used of the new tomb Joseph laid the body of Jesus in (**Matthew 27:60**). It was not an old tomb cleaned up and made like new. It was completely new. The new heavens and new earth is also completely new. The old heavens and earth will have passed away (**Revelation 21:1**).

The Lord has said that He will once more “shake not only the earth, but also the heaven.” What does that mean? We are not left to guess because He explains: “*And this expression, ‘Yet once more,’ denotes the removing of those things that can be shaken, as of created things, in order that those things which cannot be shaken may remain*” (**Heb 12:26,27**).

Our Stay on Earth Is Only a Pilgrimage

“*Set your mind on things above, not on things that are on the earth*” (**Colossians 3:2**). There are so many passages that show that our eternal home is not of this world, that it and the things it contains are only temporary. We are told that the things we see with our eyes are only temporary. It is the unseen things that are eternal. The earth is obviously in the first category; things that are seen and therefore temporal (**2 Corinthians 4:16-18**; see also **5:1-10**). Jesus taught that a Christian’s true treasure is in heaven, not upon the earth (**Matthew 6:19-21**).

The Bible says that the Christian's citizenship is in heaven (**Philippians 3:17-21**). Paul looked forward not to a future earthly paradise but to a home in the heavenly kingdom (**2 Timothy 4:18**). The great heroes of faith never considered this world their home. Instead, they looked for a heavenly home; a city not made with hands; because they recognized that they were strangers and exiles here upon the earth (**Hebrews 11:13-16**). To inherit this kingdom we must shed flesh and blood. We have borne the image of the earth; we shall bear the image of the heavenly (**1 Corinthians 15:49-50**). We look forward to that day as we live by faith.

“O LORD of hosts, How blessed is the man who trusts in You!” – Psalm
84:12

Family News

Virginia Bryant has a great amount of pain in her right leg and hip. She has started therapy but it has not helped. She will get another pain shot on the 11th.

Scott Edwards, Nancy Read's nephew, is in critical care from a car accident.

Nell Ferrell remains at NHC in room # 202. She has an infection and fever.

Jessica Gore, Ame White's niece, had a car accident on Tuesday. She has had surgery and remains in room #568 at St. Thomas hospital.

There is a new report from **Gary Hunt** in the back of the auditorium. Gary is scheduled to have shoulder surgery this Tuesday.

Sandra Hunt will see a neurosurgeon next week because of spine problems.

Alvin "John" Jenkins, Robert's father, continues treatment for lung cancer.

Natalie Johnson has had tonsil problems for two months. She is now on medicine for the fourth time. They will probably perform surgery soon.

Allen Malone has returned home from Vietnam!

Sarah Neighbors went home from the hospital during the middle of the week. However, she was readmitted on Thursday. They found out she has gallstones. They induced labor late last night.

Fran Pickens was moved from Middle TN Christian to Vanco Manor on Tuesday. She is receiving therapy for three weeks. She is in room #308 and the address is: 813 South Dickerson Road, Goodlettsville TN 37072.

Bill Procter, whose wife Wanda visited with us, has lung cancer. The cancer appeared to be contained in his left lung and the whole left lung has now been removed. The surgery went well and he is now at home.

Ray Ranes, Ame White's nephew, had quadruple heart bypass surgery on 10/22. He is now home but is not doing very well.

Doma Stewart, Ame White's aunt, had successful knee replacement surgery last month. She continues to receive rehabilitation therapy.

Joyce Werner had shoulder replacement surgery two Wednesdays ago. She remains at home and is receiving therapy. Therapy is going well and she is showing gradual improvement. However, yesterday she got sick from medicine.

Ame White had surgery on Tuesday to remove a knot in her intestines. She went home yesterday. She will see the doctor in December for follow-up.

Out of town, traveling, or visiting: **Walter Boyd** (gone in AM, here in PM); **Hulls** (gone later in week); **Lannings** (gone later in week)

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"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks" (1 Thes 5:16-18).