

## New Creation

### Weekly Devotion #2

Below is a short devotion based on the Week 2 Devotion questions in your Renew: Session 4 handout. You'll get the most out of this devotion if you answer the questions yourself first. The goal is not for you to have the exact same response, but to understand the correct meaning of the Biblical text and then apply it personally in a way that uniquely helps you grow in your knowledge, love, and worship of God.

2 Peter 3:1-13 ... (4) They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." ... (8) But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. (9) The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. (10) But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. (11) Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness...

God's promise of a future new heavens and new earth leads a lot of people to ask an obvious question: when? Even within the lifetime of the apostles, people were already asking this question: "where is the promise of his coming? ...All things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation" (verse 4). The Apostle Peter answers that question, not by giving us a timeline, but by first reminding us that God doesn't exist on a timeline. As the Creator of space and time, God exists above those things and isn't bound to them like we are. This is why Peter says that "with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day" (verse 8). So, we think of events in terms of being "soon" or "far" or "quick" or "delayed," but God doesn't think that way because he sees and knows the past, present, and future all at once. That's why the prophet Isaiah said that God declares "the end from the beginning" (Isaiah 46:10). So, because of his eternal nature coupled together with his love and faithfulness, **we should trust that God has good reasons for not re-creating the heavens and the earth sooner.** As a matter of fact, Peter tells us one of those reasons in verse 9: he waits out of loving patience for people who are not yet ready for that day, people who will not be made new, but will perish.

Now, this may leave you scratching your head. Why is Peter talking about people perishing? Isn't the new creation supposed to be a good thing? What exactly is going to happen when God makes all things new? Verse 10 gives us the answer. In order for the new heavens and new earth to become a reality, the old heavens and the old earth have to "pass away" and "be burned up and dissolved." Whether or not some of this language is figurative or literal, one major point is clear: **this process of re-creation will, like a refining fire, expose the works that are done on the earth. It will reveal what is true about all of us and the lives we have led.** For those who have trusted in Christ and sought to follow him in all they do, their sins will be remembered no more and they will be transformed to live forever within the new heavens and new earth. For those who have rejected Christ and pursued their own way instead of God's, their sins will be judged and they will be removed forever from the new heavens and new earth. That's why Peter goes on to say this in verse 11: "Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness..." In other words, even though the timing of it can't be predicted, since Jesus' return and the renewal of all things is certain and since it will expose the truth about who we really are, we should seek to live a life that isn't afraid of being exposed. If we truly love and trust in Christ, then we should imitate him - not in perfection, but in the constant pursuit of true holiness and godliness. Living like this is the key to having assurance on the day when all things are exposed, because we'll already have been living our lives exposed. **Instead of pretending to be something we're not, we need to be showing evidence that we belong to Christ and that His Spirit is truly bearing fruit in our lives and, therefore, when God makes all things new, he will make us new too!**

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, you are not just the Creator, you are the New Creator; not just the one who made all things, but the one who promises to make all things new. Thank you for not giving up on your creation! Thank you for loving it so much that you gave your only Son to redeem it. And thank you for calling us to be a part of it! It can be so easy to ignore this future day of renewal because it seems so distant, but help us to remember that the lives we live now will be exposed on that day. Forgive us for all the times we grieve your Spirit by failing to live like Jesus. We know that you don't expect perfection in this life and we praise you that our ultimate salvation doesn't depend on our good works, but on your grace! But, we also know that your grace is transformative. As Paul told Titus, it teaches us to renounce ungodliness. So, by your grace, by the Spirit of Jesus, transform us daily to live lives worthy of your calling, worthy of citizens of the new heavens and new earth! In Jesus' name, Amen.