

2 Peter 3:13

by John Gill

The sermon explores the promise of new heavens and a new earth, emphasizing the role of righteousness and God's faithfulness to His promises.

Scripture: Isaiah 65:17, Jeremiah 33:16, Matthew 5:5, Romans 8:18, 2 Peter 3:13, Revelation 20:1

Topics: "Hope in God's Promises", "Righteousness and Renewal"

Description

John Gill expounds on 2 Peter 3:13, emphasizing the promise of new heavens and a new earth as a literal transformation rather than a figurative one. He explains that this renewal will involve the purification of the current heavens and earth, making way for a realm where only the righteous will dwell, free from wickedness. Gill reassures believers that their hope is grounded in God's promises, including the resurrection and eternal life, and that they should not fear the destruction of the present world. He highlights that the righteous, made so by Christ, will be the only inhabitants of this new creation, fulfilling the prophetic visions of both Peter and the Old Testament. Ultimately, Gill encourages the faithful to look forward to this glorious future with expectation and joy.

Transcript

Ver. 13. Nevertheless we, according to his promise,.... Or promises, as the Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin version; namely those in Isa 65:17;

look for new heavens and a new earth; not figuratively, the world to come in distinction from the Jewish world or state; a new church state, the Gospel dispensation, with new ordinances, as baptism and the Lord's supper, all legal ceremonies and ordinances being gone, and everything new; for these things had taken place already, and were not looked for as future: but these phrases are to be understood literally, as the heavens and the earth are in every passage in the context, 2Pe 3:5; and designs not new heavens and earth for substance, but for qualities; the heavens and elements being melted and dissolved, and so purged and purified by fire, and the earth and its works being burnt up with it, and so cleared of everything noxious, needless, and disagreeable, new heavens and a new earth will appear, refined and purged from everything which the curse brought thereon for man's sin: and such heavens and earth the saints look for by faith and hope, and earnest expectation, and with desire and pleasure; and therefore are not distressed, as they have no reason to be, with the burning of the present heavens and earth, as awful as these things will be; and they expect them not upon their own fancies and imaginations, or the vain conjectures and cunningly devised fables of men, but according to the promises of God recorded in the

above passages, and in which they may be confirmed by the words of Christ, and by the vision of John, Re 20:1. The Alexandrian copy reads, "and his promises"; as if it respected other promises the saints looked for besides the new heavens and earth; namely, the resurrection of the dead, eternal life, the incorruptible inheritance, the ultimate glory and happiness:

wherein dwelleth righteousness; meaning not the heavenly felicity, called sometimes the crown of righteousness, and the hope of righteousness, to which righteousness gives a right, and where it will be perfect, for the apostle is not speaking of the ultimate glory of the saints; nor the righteousness of Christ, as dwelling in the saints, as if the sense was this, we in whom righteousness dwells, look for new heavens and a new earth; for though the righteousness of Christ is unto and upon them that believe, yet it is not in them; it is in Christ, and dwells in him, and not in them; it is not inherent in them, but imputed to them: by "righteousness" is meant righteous men; such as are so not in and of themselves, or by the deeds of the law, or by works of righteousness done by them, but who are made righteous by the obedience of Christ, and are righteousness itself in him; see Jer 33:16; now these, and these only, will be the inhabitants of the new heavens and the new earth; there will be no unrighteous persons there, as in the present world, which lies in wickedness, and is full of wicked men; and they will be stocked with inhabitants after this manner; all the elect will now be gathered in, and Christ, when he comes, will bring all his saints with him from heaven, and will raise their bodies, and reunite them to their souls; and those that are alive will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and will make up together the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven; and whereas, upon the coming of Christ, the present heavens and earth will be burnt or purified by fire, and so made new and fit for the spirits of just men made perfect, who being again embodied, will fill the face of them, and shall inherit the earth, and reign with Christ on it for a thousand years, during which time there will not be a wicked man in them; for the wicked that will be alive at Christ's coming will be burnt with the earth, and the wicked dead shall not rise till the thousand years are ended, and who being raised, will, together with the devils, make the Gog and Magog army; wherefore none but righteous persons can look for these new heavens and earth, for to these only are they promised, and such only shall dwell in them; so the Targum on

Jer 23:23 paraphrases the words,

"I God have created the world from the beginning, saith the Lord, I God will "renew the world for the righteous":"

and this will be, the Jews say, for the space of a thousand years;

"it is a tradition (they say {l}) of the house of Elias, that the righteous, whom the holy blessed God will raise from the dead shall not return to their dust, as is said, Isa 4:3, and it shall come to pass, &c. as the Holy One continues for ever, so they shall continue for ever; and if you should say those years (some editions read, "those thousand years", and so the gloss upon the place) in which the holy blessed God "renews the world": as it is said Isa 2:11, and the Lord alone; &c. what shall they do? the holy blessed God will make them wings as eagles, and they shall fly upon the face of the waters:"

and this renovation of the heavens and the earth, they say, will be in the seventh millennium;

"in the seventh thousand year (they assert {m}) there will be found new heavens and a new earth;"

which agree with these words of Peter.

{l} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 92. 1, 2. Ed. Coch. p. 317. {m} Zohar in Gen. fol. 35. 3.

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