

The New Earth. -- (Rev. 21:1-8)

by Martin Knapp

The sermon explores the glorious promise of a new earth where God dwells with His people, free from sin and suffering, reserved for the overcomers of faith.

Scripture: Isaiah 25:8, Isaiah 65:17, 1 Corinthians 15:26, 2 Peter 3:13, Revelation 21

Topics: "Eternal Life", "New Creation"

Description

Martin Knapp preaches about the vivid description of events following the final judgment, focusing on the promise of God to make all things new. The chapter describes the new earth and its glorious capital, the New Jerusalem, symbolizing the beginning of eternity of holiness. The sermon emphasizes that the earth will not be annihilated but purified by fire, becoming the eternal inheritance of the saints. It highlights the characteristics of the new earth, including the presence of God, the absence of tears, death, mourning, crying, pain, and the enforcement of prohibitory laws against sin and unbelief.

Transcript

This chapter is vividly descriptive of events which follow the final judgment. It shows the verification of the promise God has made that He will "make all things new." It is a description of the new earth and its glorious metropolitan capital. As the empire of Satan on earth sank in the collapse of Babylon and its false governments and ecclesiasticisms, so the opening up of the eternity of holiness begins with the descent of the New Jerusalem and the creation of the new earth.

There is an erroneous notion existing that in some way the earth and all things material are to be annihilated; but of this there is no proof in Scripture. On the contrary, promises piled mountain high declare that the saints of God are to "inherit the earth," that they are to "possess it forever," and "reign" upon it throughout the ages of eternity. This notion seems to have come from a defective translation of the word "world." There are three Greek words translated "world" in the Word of God. One, Ge, which means the earth itself; Kosmos, which means the fashion of the world, but not its substance; and Aion, which refers to time, duration, era, dispensation. The latter is the word commonly used in Scripture with reference to the end of the world, so that the Scripture teaching of the end refers to the end of time and of dispensations, and not to the destruction of the earth, which is to be purified by fire and possessed by the King of Glory and His saints forever. This finds glorious fulfillment in the scenes of this chapter. Under the fiery purgation, which attends and follows the final judgment, it doubtless will be remelted and remodeled, and adapted to the condition of regenerated and sanctified humanity, whose eternal inheritance it

becomes. Its present configuration of continents, mountains, lakes, and oceans, doubtless, will have been changed to a world of utility and beauty, such as eclipses all human imagination, where a holy people will find their holy and happy home for evermore. As an old house, which has become too small, incommodious, uncomfortable, and unsanitary for its occupants, is torn down and remodeled, with the addition of new material, and becomes a beautiful mansion, so this old home of humanity, which through sin and Satan's devastating woes became uncomfortable, incommodious, and unsanitary for the redeemed race, is remelted and remodeled, and becomes the celestial home of humanity redeemed, where the "tabernacle of God is with man; and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people; and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." What a contrast between earth as it now is, in the midst of the battle against sin and Satan, with the curse of God upon it, invested by demons, and made hideous by the abominations of devilized man, and the final home which God is preparing for His holy people! Professed Churches now are often locked against God's saints and their meetings; but then, the whole transfigured earth will welcome them. Notice some of the characteristics of this holy home, which is assured all who follow fully in the footsteps of our Great Exemplar:

The old earth on which we are now living has received occasional visits from God and from celestial messengers; but then, it is declared, "the tabernacle of God is with man, and He shall dwell with them." As, even now He comes into welcoming hearts to abide forever, so then He will glorify the new earth and its celestial capital with His abiding presence.

All Tears shall be Wiped Away. -- "God Himself will comfort them, and will be their God, and they His people." Eyes that were red with weeping here will then shine with celestial luster and with eternal youth. "Love will look light indeed to eyes that speak again, and all go merry as a marriage-bell."

It is a Deathless Land. -- Death shall be no more; for death and Hades have been cast into the lake of fire; and there, as the cycles of the flying ages sweep on with no measurement of time there will be no tolling bells, nor open graves, nor tear-stained cheeks over loved ones rudely snatched away by cruel death. Death's sting and death's victories will, with the old earth and its sepulchral experiences, have "passed away" forever.

"Our friends on earth we meet with pleasure,

While swift the moments fly;

Yet ever comes the thought of sadness

That we must say good-bye.

We'll never say good-bye in heaven,

We'll never say good-bye;

For in that land of joy and song

We'll never say good-bye."

The celestial breezes of that land immortal will never waft upon its balmy air sad requiems for the dead. "O death, thou enemy of man, thou handmaid of the devil; thou who hast transformed this earth into a great sepulcher of the dead -- thy reign at last is ended, and ended forever and forever! Thy boasted victims

shall rejoice upon the plains of light for evermore."

Mourning.--The new earth will be a stranger to mourning. This world is covered with crape; "mourners go about its streets," and there is no heart nor home that sheds no tears of loss. There, mourning will be transformed into rejoicing, and the promise of Isaiah lxi, 3, -- "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called Trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified," -- will be victoriously fulfilled beyond all power of imagination to describe.

Crying and Pain. -- They will have no place in the new earth. All causes of them will have been removed, and they will cease forever. Sickness, accidents, and physical suffering will be no more; poverty, famine, hunger, and disappointment, like the bats of night, will have disappeared with the old earth; persecution, slander, misunderstanding, with other kindred wrongs, will have been eclipsed in this eternal day. Shouting will take the place of crying, and pain will be replaced by ecstasy. These are among the things scheduled in the eternal inheritance of all who possess the sanctifying baptism with the Holy Ghost. The old things of time give place to the new things of eternity. He that sitteth on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new!" The awful abyss, which is now the receptacle of devils and lost souls, will be no more; for they, at the general judgment, are all banished into 'the outer darkness beyond the reach of the combined effulgence of all the shining suns of God's great empire. Earthquake shocks will then no more be felt. The atmosphere, which now the prince of the power of the air utilizes in precipitating storms and spreading foul miasmas, will then be pure and doubtless redolent with fragrant breezes. The sky, now often overcast with thunderclouds and swept by devastating cyclones, will doubtless then continually reflect the mighty worlds which fill the universe of God, and instead of as now being a screen to hide them from our eyes, may then be transformed into a mighty telescope, which will bring them to our very doors. The infinite and eternal blessings which are contained in the great Magna Charta of salvation will then find such complete fulfillment that He who sitteth on the throne, under whose laws they were given, will then declare that "they are come to pass." On the new earth all thirst will be quenched; for it is written that He who is the "Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," declares: "And he that is athirst, let him come; he that will, let him take the water of life freely." There is no pure, spiritual thirst but what will be slaked in the marvelous provision which is made on the new earth to satisfy all the desires of the glorified beings which throng its happy homes.

The Inheritance of the Overcomers. -- It is here Divinely declared that this new earth is the special inheritance of a holy people. It is only "he that overcometh" that shall "inherit these things." It is only the people that have separated themselves from the world, and so received the Holy Ghost as their Sanctifier that they have been enabled, in the midst of the mighty, combined forces of earth and hell to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, and claim victory through the blood of the Lamb, that are the heirs of these infinite estates. To all such this new earth is promised, and eternal sonship in the family of Him who is the Creator of it, and who declares to each who belongs to the class, "I am his God, and he shall be My son."

The New Earth is a Prohibition Country. -- The bulletin from the skies announced that prohibitory laws will govern it, and that they will be strictly enforced. For the warning of some and the comfort of others who expect to make it their eternal home, the government of heaven has published eight specific prohibitory laws that will there prevail. These laws cover the whole code of both Sinai and Calvary, and, under the following specifications, exclude all who break the law of God, reject the Son of God, and quench the Spirit of God:

(a) The Fearful. -- Only courageous overcomers can have any part in the inheritance of the new earth. Sin makes cowards. When our first parents fell they were transformed into cowards, who tried to hide themselves from the gaze of God behind an apron of fig-leaves. All who have sinned have thus imbibed the same spirit, and it is only the perfect love of Jesus, received as a second work of grace through the baptism with the Holy Spirit, which cleanses the heart from all inbred sin, that can banish this fear. All fear of the world, fear of want, fear of death, fear of the judgment, and slavish fear of a holy God, must be eliminated from the hearts of all who have any part in the possession of the new earth. Unless we have been baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire here, we will have no fitness for the new earth, that has been purged with fire, that it might be the everlasting heritage of a fire-baptized people.

(b) The Unbelieving. -- The second prohibition law proclaims that the "unbelieving" can not be tolerated on the new earth. The reason why people can not and will not believe is because they do not surrender to God. Complete surrender makes believing easy. Every plant of unbelief springs from the seed of sin. This prohibitory law excludes all people who live in sin and yet profess faith in Christ; all holiness-opposing professors who deny that the blood of Jesus can cleanse the heart from all sin; and all of every class who, instead of submitting to God and trusting in His offers of salvation and sanctification and victory, yield to an evil heart of unbelief in "departing from the living God."

(c) The Abominable. -- It is written in Proverbs 6:16-19, that the following things are an abomination unto the Lord: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, hearts that devise wicked imaginations, feet that are swift in running to mischief, false witnesses, and those who sow discord. Babylon was full of abominations, and all of the iniquities of the present day, embracing the secret, unnamable vices that are done in the dark, as well as the public insults of the King and kingdom of heaven which are perpetrated by preachers and people, who substitute fairs, festivals, and fandangos, godless choirs, and the god of culture for the simplicity of Pentecostal worship, are abominable in the sight of God, and are to be eternally forbidden.

(d) Murderers. -- All murderers are excluded from the new earth. This embraces not only the bold highwayman, but great leaders who precipitate unholy wars, and all parties to the murder of the innocent unborn, a crime which is dooming multitudes at the present day. The Word of God clearly declares that hatred in the heart is murder, and that he who neglects to do his duty to souls to whom he may be Divinely sent is guilty of their blood. The prohibition law of the new earth excludes all participants in this crime.

(e) Fornicators. -- All impurity of flesh and spirit is excluded from the new earth. The slaves of fleshly lusts, private and open, under and outside of the cloak of marriage, are prohibited from ever entering this holy world. All sham professors, who have betrayed pure and undefiled religion by flirting with the world and compromising with its people, by this act of spiritual fornication, as vile as its physical counterpart, will be shut out. Worldliness is spiritual treason, the iniquity of which will never be allowed to taint its air.

(f) Sorcerers. -- The sixth prohibition law here named declares that all sorcerers have their home in another world than this. The Greek word here translated sorcerers is found only in this one place in the Bible, and means the enchanting with drugs. It doubtless here means the manufacture, sale, and use of ardent spirits, tobacco, opium, and all kindred drugs which intoxicate and stupefy and debase and unman. It is explicitly declared that no drunkard can enter into the kingdom of heaven, and all who have aided in the making of drug-drunkards will doubtless be excluded under this same prohibitive law.

(g) All Idolatry is Prohibited. -- Idolatry is defined, "The worship of idols, images, or anything which is not God; respect or love which borders on adoration." The holy worship of a holy God by a perfectly holy people will be the religious service of this glorious world, the very atmosphere of which would suffocate the false worshipers of false gods. This prohibitory law will doubtless exclude all who in their hearts love anything or any one more than they love the God of heaven. Multitudes of half-hearted seekers of salvation go on in doubt and unrest for years, hoping that they are saved, only to wake up to the fact that they are forever prohibited from the society of a holy people on the holy earth.

(h) All Liars are Prohibited. -- The eighth prohibitive law, which will prevail upon the new earth, is the exclusion of all liars. Lying, in none of its forms, will be tolerated for an instant in the hallowed presence of Him who is the glory of that world, and of a people who shine "like the sun when he goeth forth in his might." In the burning light of true holiness a lie seems as loathsome as a serpent upon the lap of a bride at a wedding feast. This prohibitive law covers the exclusion of all falsities of every form -- false hopes, false comforters, sham ministers and sham professors, and the horde of holiness-fighting preachers and people in pulpits and pews, as well as sham systems by which paganism and popery have deceived their multitudes. Church members who are living in the open violation of their vows -baptismal vows, Church-membership vows, marriage vows, and business obligations; ministers who are heedless of the solemn covenants taken upon uniting with the Church, the ministry, and upon ordination -- such broken promises will be prohibited forever from these realms of love and light and victory.

All who live and die in the violation of the laws of God as revealed on Mount Sinai, and His love as it gleams from Calvary and Pentecost, by the very nature of their characters are eternally quarantined from the new world, which becomes the everlasting inheritance of the saints. The prohibition laws of that world not only declare that all of these shall not only be excluded from it, but that "their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Thus it will be seen that the very sins and crimes that men commit and plead for now, and abominations that were the glory of Babylon and of the reign of the Antichrist on this earth, are forever prohibited from the world that is to come. The citizens of that country will sing and shout and serve forever, unhampered by the presence of the iniquities which transform this earth into the very antechamber of hell.

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