

Heaven and the Afterlife
Lesson 5 – The Second Coming and the Destruction of the Universe
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Introduction: Before we can look at the next life we need to understand the end of the present world.

- A. Our confidence in heaven comes from our confidence in the return of Jesus.
 - 1. Jesus pointed out that Heaven was prepared after He leaves the earth and we will enter it after He returns. **(Jn 14:1-5)**
 - 2. One of the reasons we can endure suffering is because He “will come” and we will receive the promise! **(Heb 10:36-37)**
- B. We often need to be reminded that this universe will not last! **(Mt 24:35; 1 Jn 2:17)**
 - 1. This makes the promises of God and heaven even more precious.
 - 2. Some today are contending that this earth will be refurbished and that we will spend eternity here. We will look at that question.

I. The Second Coming of Christ

- A. Terms describing His coming
 - 1. Apocalypse - ἀποκάλυψις – *an uncovering*; ...by which things or states or persons hitherto withdrawn from view are made as used of events by which things or states or persons hitherto withdrawn from view are made visible to all, *manifestation, appearance*, - **Thayer**
(1 Cor 1:7; 2 Thess 1:7; 1 Pt 1:7, 13)
 - 2. Parousia - παρουσία - the presence of one coming, hence, *the coming, arrival, advent*, - **Thayer**
(1 Cor 15:23; 1 Thess 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Thess 2:1, 8; James 5:7; 2 Pt 1:16, 3:4, 12; 1 Jn 2:28)
 - 3. Epiphany - ἐπιφάνεια - *an appearing, appearance*; often used by the Greeks of a glorious manifestation of the gods, and especially of their advent to help – **Thayer**
(1 Tim 6:14; 2 Tim 4:1, 8; Titus 2:13)
 - 4. The Day - ἡμέρα – *day*... the day in which Christ will return from heaven, raise the dead, hold the final judgment, and perfect his kingdom, - **Thayer**
There are several ways this is used. Day of: God, the Lord, The Lord Jesus, “that day,” the Last day, the great day, the day of redemption, the day of wrath, the day of judgment, the day of revelation **(2 Pt 3:12; 1 Thess 5:2; 1 Cor 1:8; Phil 1:6, 10; 2 Pt 3:10; 2 Thess 1:10; 2 Tim 1:12,18; Jn 6:39-54; Rom 2:5; Jude 6; Rev 6:17)**

II. The Destruction of the Universe

- A. A key question we must answer is what will be the fate of this physical universe?
 - 1. To answer this question will also help us understand the eternal plan of God.
 - 2. We need to believe the promises God has given concerning these things!
- B. The destruction of the heavens and earth can be figurative.

1. The destruction of a land is such that all they ever knew before was destroyed. **(Isa 34:3-5)**
 2. The establishment of the church and the ending of the Jewish system are pictured as a heaven and earth changing event. **(Isa 51:4-6)**
 3. We need to be centered in the cross of Christ and let the New Testament writers guide us as to the meaning and fulfillment of these texts. **(Acts 2:16)**
- C. Jesus and the Apostles spoke of the destruction of the universe as certain.
1. Which will last longer, the words of Christ or the universe? **(Mt 24:35)**
 2. Which will last longer, he that does God's will or the universe? **(1 Jn 2:17)**
 3. The universe will end before all men stand before God! **(Rev 20:11)**
- D. What does God call on all men to believe?
1. Peter wanted all to be aware of the scoffers that laugh at the lengthy time between the promise of the 2nd coming and the fulfillment. **(2 Pt 3:1-4)**
 2. Just as the flood was a means of physical salvation and that of physical destruction in Noah's day, the second coming will be similar. **(2 Pt 5:5-7)**
 3. God is working in mercy so that as many as possible can be saved. **(2 Pt 3:8-9)**
 4. The earth and the universe will be destroyed with fervent heat. This should personally change how we look at this world! **(2 Pt 3:10-12)**
 5. The "earth" or world in this context is the actual physical earth and not just a political arrangement.
 6. **γῆ** -*the earth* as a whole, *the world* (Latin *terrarum orbis*); a. *the earth as opposed to the heavens*: Matt. 5:18,35; 6:10; 16:19; 18:18; 24:35...
2 Pet. 3:5,7,10,13; - **Thayer**
- (Some material adapted from: "Then Comes the End" by Mike Willis)

Questions

1. How important is it that we believe in a future coming of Jesus Christ? Can we enjoy the fellowship of God and of other Christians without believing this?
2. Is the second coming only to be proclaimed to Christians? What message does God want non-Christians to know as well?
3. Name several events that are connected to the second coming. What message does each event communicate to us?
4. Can we know that the earth and the physical universe will be destroyed? Give some passages that teach this.
5. What mistake do men make when they take an Old Testament prophecy and place an interpretation on it that contradicts New Testament writers? **(2 Pt 3:15-16)**