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2 Peter 3:10 - 3:18



2 Peter - Steve Gregg

In this talk, Steve Gregg discusses the concept of new heavens and a new earth as described in the Bible. He touches on the different beliefs around pre-millennialism and a-millennialism, as well as the idea of a future resurrection. He emphasizes that when Jesus comes back, he will end the present cosmos and introduce a new heavens and earth, where the curse will be removed and everything will be glorified. He concludes with a message to continue growing in grace and knowledge of the Lord.

Transcript

We have a little bit left of 2 Peter 3 before we're done with this book. We've got chapter 3 verses 10 through 18 ahead of us, and this is divided into two major sections. Verses 10 through 13, and then there's verse 14 that begins, and that is therefore.

So, 10 through 13 is going to be presenting some concepts, some theology, basically. And the therefore that follows will be application to those concepts. Verse 10, And but the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat.

Both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness? Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Now, in a passage like this, it's impossible to avoid my amillennial convictions coming out in contrast with the premillennial convictions, because this scenario is seen differently by these two systems. Premillennialism is a system that holds that when Jesus comes back, he will establish on this earth a righteous reign for a thousand years, at the end of which Satan will be loosed for a little while, will attempt a rebellion, but will be put down and thrown into the lake of fire at the end of the thousand years. Then, there will be a new heavens and a new earth.

After the thousand years, there will be a dissolving of the present cosmos and the creation of a new heavens and a new earth. This scenario, and this chronology, is taken almost entirely from Revelation chapters 19, 20, and 21. In chapter 19 of Revelation, we find that John sees a rider on a white horse who clearly is Christ, and he has a sword proceeding out of his mouth by which he goes and strikes the nations and conquers them.

There is a massacre of the enemy that is depicted there at the end of chapter 19, and it is believed by most that this is the second coming of Christ that John sees with this white horse rider. Then comes chapter 20. In chapter 20, there is an angel with a chain that binds Satan for a thousand years.

After that thousand years, Satan is loosed for a while, stages his rebellion, and is destroyed, as I just mentioned. That is chapter 20. There is a judgment at the end of chapter 20 in which all whose names are not found written in the book of life are cast into the lake of fire, as is Satan and the beast and the false prophet in that chapter.

Then, in chapter 21 of Revelation, it says, I saw new heavens and new earth, for the first heavens and the first earth had passed away. Then, chapters 21 and 22 describe especially the new Jerusalem on the new heavens and new earth. So, what we have as we read through Revelation 19, 20, and 21 is what appears to be the second coming of Christ in Revelation 19.

A thousand year righteous reign in chapter 20, and then the new heavens and new earth in chapter 21. This scenario, this viewing of these chapters, is what has given rise to what we call the premillennial view. It means Jesus will come back before the millennium.

Premillennial means the premillennial return of Christ. So, the idea is that Jesus comes in chapter 19, there is a millennium of Christ reigning on the earth in chapter 20, and then there is a new heavens and new earth in 21 and following. This is a very widely held view in our time, and it was also held in ancient times in the church.

The first three centuries or so, there were a lot of premillennialists in the church, some important ones. Justin Martyr, Papias, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, these were premillennialists. The Didache expressed premillennialism also.

So, we had premillennialists in the early church, but not all the church was premillennial. Justin Martyr, who was premillennial, mentions in his dialogue with Trifo, a Jew, that there were many Christians of the pure faith and true Christians who disagreed with his premillennial views. We don't have their writings, but then we don't have very many writings from that early.

We have only a sampling of a few writers from the first few centuries. How many of them

were premillennial and how many were, like Justin said, many who don't believe in premillennialism, we don't know. The writings we have that are preserved happen to be premillennial writings.

The writings by others who were not premillennial have not survived, so we can't really say much about it. What we do know, though, is that in the third century, that is in the 200s, origin held to a view that would be more agreeable with what we call amillennialism. Later still, Augustine, who was also amillennial, more or less standardized that view in the church, so that from Augustine, around 400 AD on, the church was entirely amillennial, up until even beyond the Reformation, because the Reformers were amillennial.

The Roman Catholic Church was amillennial, but before that, Augustine was. Before that, origin was. After the Reformation, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, they were amillennial.

Premillennialism reappeared in the 19th century, after being pretty much gone for 1,500 years from the church age. When it did reappear, it reappeared in the form of dispensationalism. John Nelson Darby created dispensationalism.

Now, there was never a dispensationalist teaching in the church before Darby. There was premillennialism, but it was not dispensationalism. Dispensationalism was a view that gave a central place in God's dealings to the nation of Israel, and had several other features that had never been taught in the church before, including a pre-tribulation rapture, the idea that the rapture happens before the tribulation.

This was not taught by the premillennialists in the early days of the church. What we can say is the church has known amillennialism for most of its history. In modern times, there is a very great resurgence of premillennialism in the form of Darbyism or dispensationalism.

Early in the church, there was also another form of premillennialism, which we call historic premillennialism. They believed in a future millennium after Jesus comes back, so that's premillennial. But they didn't believe in the pre-trib rapture and Israel being dominant and things like that, which was never taught until Darby's time in the 1800s.

I say all that because premillennialism has been around a very long time, although there was a long time in the middle there where there really wasn't anyone believing it. The early church, some people believed it, and lots of Christians believe it now. It's based on, largely, I think, this sequence in Revelation.

The second coming of Christ in chapter 19, the millennium in chapter 20, the new heavens, new earth in chapter 21. Now, the amillennial view that I referred to holds that the millennium does not follow chronologically after the second coming of Christ, even if, in fact, Revelation 19 is talking about the second coming of Christ, the rider on the white

horse. By the way, striking the earth with the sword out of his mouth, his word, some people take that symbolically to mean not the second coming of Christ, but the church going forth and conquering the nations by preaching the gospel.

That would be more of a postmillennial view. I won't get into that. Let's accept for the time being, just for the sake of argument, that Revelation 19 does describe the second coming of Christ at the end of the world.

Does this mean that the millennium, which you read in the next chapter, comes after the second coming of Christ? Well, it is recorded or described after the description of the second coming of Christ, but this is not something you can count on. It's not necessarily that it's describing later events, because Revelation sometimes doubles back and tells the same story another way. For example, in Revelation 11, we have the seventh trumpet sounds, and we have the second coming of Christ there.

In chapter 11, verse 15, we seem to have the actual second coming and judgment of the world. But in chapter 12, the opening verses depicts the birth of Jesus at the beginning of the age again. In other words, there's a cycle that ends with the second coming of Christ at the end of chapter 11, but a new cycle begins in chapter 12 that starts at the beginning again.

Many believe that chapter 19 does depict the second coming of Christ and therefore ends another cycle, but that chapter 20 begins a new cycle at the beginning of the age again. In other words, the fact that Revelation 20 appears after chapter 19 is not necessarily saying that the events described in chapter 20 must follow the events described in chapter 19. The things in Revelation are not necessarily chronologically recorded, but rather John has seen visions in a certain sequence.

Some of these visions go back and talk about earlier things. The Amillennial view is that the thousand year reign in chapter 20 is a symbolic picture of the age of the church, the present age. Not a period of time after Jesus comes back, but a time before Jesus comes back.

They believe the binding of Satan at the beginning of the thousand years refers to what Jesus said he had done when he had bound the strong man and was plundering his house. A number of references in the New Testament talk about Jesus' great victory over Satan when he was here the first time, especially at the cross. Satan was disabled.

He was bound. He was defeated. But at the end of the thousand years, which is thought to be symbolic of a long period of time, it doesn't matter how long, a thousand years like a day or a day like a thousand years is not a literal period of time, but after a long time, when Satan rebels again, we see in Revelation 20 and verse 9 that fire from heaven comes down and destroys the enemies of God.

Well, that's the second coming of Christ, according to Amillennialism, because Paul said in 2 Thessalonians 1.8 that Jesus will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who don't know God and who don't obey the gospel. So, Amillennialists see this chapter 20 as a symbolic, very symbolic drama of Christ's victory over Satan, a long period of time representing the church age, which is symbolically called a thousand years, then the second coming of Christ at the end of that period. And you'll notice in Revelation 20, after verse 9, you have the resurrection and the judgment, which is elsewhere in Scripture always placed at the second coming of Christ.

That's an important point. The resurrection and the judgment are described in Revelation 20 verses 11 through 15, the end of chapter 20 in other words, after the thousand years. Those events, the resurrection and the judgment elsewhere in Scripture are always placed at the second coming of Christ.

So, the Amillennialist says the second coming of Christ is not at the beginning of the millennium, it's at the end of that period. That period is symbolic for the present age and it ends with the second coming of Christ. Thus, the Amillennialist does not believe in a pre-millennial return of Christ.

The pre-millennialist believes Jesus comes at the beginning of the millennium. The Amillennialist thinks he comes after it's over, at the end of it, his coming ends it. Now, then of course, chapter 21 comes.

Now, it's interesting that in Revelation 20 and verse 11, this is at the end of the millennium, at the point where the Amillennialists like myself think that this is at the second coming of Christ. It says in verse 11, then I saw a great white throne and him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away and there was found no place for them. Okay, there's the end of the world, the end of the heavens and the earth.

The heavens and the earth flee away from the face of him who sits on the throne. That's got to be the end of the cosmos. And when you get to chapter 21 verse 1, and I saw a new heaven and new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.

Yeah, they passed away when? Back in chapter 20 verse 11. From the face of him who sat on the throne. Now, that's a great white throne judgment.

You might remember Jesus said, in Matthew 25 verse 31, he said, when the Son of Man shall come in his glory and all his holy angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory and he will call all the nations to him and separate between them like sheep and goats. And it's the judgment. Jesus said when he comes back, he's going to sit on his throne and judge the nations.

That's what happens here in chapter 20 verse 11. I saw a great white throne. He who sat

on it.

From whose face the earth and the heavens fled away. When Jesus comes back, he judges and it's the end of the world. Then there's a new heavens, new earth created.

In other words, what's the difference between the actual outlook of the amillennialist and the premillennialist? The only difference is this. The amillennialist believes that when Jesus comes back, it'll be the end of this present cosmos and he'll set up the new heavens, new earth, which is eternal. Now, the premillennial view is the same, except they just stick a thousand year millennium between the second coming and the new heavens, new earth.

You see? It's pretty much the same. Both believe in the second coming. Both believe in an eternal new heavens, new earth.

But the premillennialist thinks that in between those two is a thousand year reign described in chapter 20. I don't mean to confuse you. This is complex.

Now, the reason I bring all this up is because there's not very many places in the Bible that talk about the new heavens and the new earth. You have it there in Revelation 21. You also have it in our present passage in 2 Peter chapter 3, verse 13.

Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and new earth, in which righteousness dwells. Now, we also have twice the mention of new heavens, new earth in Isaiah, but we won't look there yet. We will before we're done.

Right now, I've got something else to consider. If you look at the passage before, 2 Peter 3, 10-13, what does Peter say? He says, What's that? I think that's the second coming of Christ. The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.

Jesus said his coming would be as a thief in the night. So, we're looking at the second coming of Christ. In which? In what? In the day of the Lord.

The day Jesus comes. In that day, the heavens will pass away with a great noise. The elements will melt with fervent heat.

Both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be? In holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, which he called in verse 10, the day of the Lord. Now, he calls it the day of God.

Same day. Because of which, the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat. Now, this definitely looks like it's saying when Jesus comes back at the day of the Lord, which comes as a thief in the night, it's the end of the world.

The heavens will be dissolved, the earth will be burned up. Isn't that an awful lot like from the face of him who sits on the throne, the heavens and the earth flee away, there's no more place for them? And then he says in verse 13, nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for, now he doesn't say a millennial reign of Christ. No, he's not looking for that, he's looking for a new heavens and new earth.

What we anticipate when Jesus comes back is not a millennial reign on this earth, but the end of this present cosmos, replaced by a new heavens and new earth, in which dwell righteousness. Now, the point I'm trying to make here is that Peter was an amillennialist. He did not think that Jesus was going to come back and set up a thousand year reign, followed by a new heavens and new earth.

He believed Jesus was going to come and set up a new heavens and new earth. By the way, you would never get any other impression of this anywhere, except Revelation 19 through 20, assuming that chapter 20 must chronologically follow chapter 19. That's where you'd get a premillennial scenario.

There is no mention of the thousand year millennium in the Bible, except for Revelation 20. Amazing, if that is a biblical doctrine, that God would get you through 66 books of the Bible, and almost through the very last one, before he mentions it. But he mentions it only in the most symbolic of all the books of the Bible, and seems to be, if you take it, that Jesus is going to set up a millennium on earth.

And by the way, I don't care if he does or not, I don't have an emotional stake in this, it doesn't matter to me, but I used to believe it, and I see now there's no biblical reason to, at least not sufficient. If there is a millennial reign of Christ after his second coming, and before the new heavens, new earth, Peter didn't know about it, nor did Paul, as we shall see. But Peter says that when Jesus comes back, it's the end of the world, the end of the universe.

And what we're looking for is not a millennial reign of Christ on earth, we're looking for the new heavens and the new earth. Now, let's look a moment over at Romans 8, because I said Paul also knew nothing about a millennial reign. Not only did he not ever mention a millennial reign, but he actually spoke as if there couldn't be one, as if he'd never heard of it.

In Romans 8, beginning at verse 18, Paul said, For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation, I take that to mean the heavens and the earth, was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it in hope.

That is, he's talking about the fall, I think, that the curse came on the earth. Not because the creation brought it on itself, but because of Adam, and because of the punishment of

Adam. Because the creation itself will be delivered from the bondage of corruption.

And corruption here means decay. From the decaying aspects of the fall. Creation will be delivered from that.

The curse is going to be removed. By the way, I would point out to you that in describing the new heaven and the new earth in Revelation 22.3, it says, And there shall be no more curse. It's describing the new creation.

It says, There will be no more curse. There's the effects of Adam's fall will no longer be on the new earth. Paul's talking about that very thing.

This creation has been subjected to the effects of a curse because of Adam. But it's going to be delivered from those effects of the curse. There will be no more curse.

He's talking here about, of course, the new heavens and the new earth. He says, The creation, verse 21, will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.

And not only they, but we also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for what? The adoption, that is, the redemption of our body. No doubt he means the resurrection when Jesus comes back. In others, we're looking forward to the resurrection at the second coming of Christ.

But the creation is looking forward to that too. The creation is looking forward to what? The glorious liberty of the sons of God, the manifestation of the sons of God, the resurrection of our bodies, the second coming of Christ, in other words. The creation anticipates Christ's second coming.

Why? Because it will be delivered from the bondage of decay at that time, the bondage of corruption. The curse will be removed. The new heaven and new earth is here referred to.

Paul doesn't know about an interval between the second coming of Christ, between the redemption of our bodies at Christ's coming, and the time when the curse will be removed from the creation. The creation is anticipating the very time that we will be glorified, manifested as the sons of God. Because that's also the time when the creation will be set free from the curse.

In other words, Paul sees our resurrection at the second coming of Christ being the time when the earth and heavens, the creation, will be set free from the bondage of the curse, which revelation places at the time of the new heavens, new earth. So Paul, he could have said it clearly if he knew there was going to be a controversy about this. He's alluding to things without explaining because he didn't know there would be pre-

millennialists who would have a different scenario.

But you can see from what he's saying that his expectation is the renovation of the universe at the coming of Christ when we are renovated in our resurrected bodies. So this, I believe, is how we understand it. Now Jesus, by the way, we won't go into all of his teaching, but the relevant teaching here on the pre-millennial question is the resurrection.

Because on the pre-millennial view, there is a resurrection and a judgment at the end of the millennium. We see it clearly at the end of chapter 20. The graves give up their dead.

The sea gives up the dead. They all stand before the great white throne. They're judged according to things in the books.

Those who are not found written in the book of life are cast into the lake of fire. All that is at the end of the millennium in chapter 20. That's also the things that Jesus said will happen when he comes back.

But the pre-millennialist says, no, Jesus came back a thousand years before that time. So the pre-millennialist says, well, Jesus is going to raise the Christians at his second coming, but the wicked will be raised at the end of the millennium. So we have two different resurrections.

Well, Christ didn't say that. Jesus said in John 5, 28, the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear his voice and come forth, some to a resurrection of life and some to a resurrection of condemnation. The hour is coming when all those in the graves, good and bad, some to a resurrection of life, some to a condemnation.

In one hour, it's all happening. Jesus said, that's John 5, 28. And there are other things Jesus said that point this out.

I don't want to go into them in detail, but of course Christ said four times in John 6 that he'll raise us up on the last day, us Christians. I will raise them up on the last day, he said. But it's also the last day that he will judge the wicked, according to John 12, 48.

The wicked will be judged in the last day. So there's one day. Peter in our passage we're looking at calls it the day of the Lord in verse 10 and the day of God in verse 12.

Sometimes, like in Philippians, it's called the day of Christ. And in 1 Corinthians, it's called the day of our Lord, Jesus Christ. It's one day though.

It's either the day of God, the day of the Lord, the day of Christ, the day of Jesus, the day of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's that day which Jesus called the last day. There's a day that's the last.

He'll raise his people and he'll judge the wicked on the last day. So, the idea that there's a resurrection of some people before the millennium and some people afterward doesn't fit with what's taught about the resurrection elsewhere in Scripture. So the premillennial view doesn't really seem to have much to support it other than taking those chapters in Revelation chronologically which is not necessarily something that should be done.

Okay, now there's one other question about this new heavens, new earth we need to consider in 2 Peter 2. You know very well that I believe that there are many passages in the Bible that are talking about the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. In seeing so many passages on that subject, the view I hold on this is called partial preterism. Preterism means fulfilled in the past.

And I believe that part of the prophecies that we find in the New Testament were fulfilled in the past, in the destruction of Jerusalem. Now, there are people who are called full preterists. I'm not one of them.

In fact, I'm going to be debating one in Denver next month. Full preterists believe that all the prophecies in the Bible were fulfilled in A.D. 70. In other words, if you look at all the prophecies in the New Testament that people usually apply to the second coming of Christ, a partial preterist says some of those prophecies aren't about the second coming of Christ.

Some of those are about what happened in A.D. 70. Partial preterists. That's what I am.

A full preterist says all of them are about A.D. 70. A full preterist says everything's been fulfilled a long time ago. There's no future second coming of Christ.

There's no future resurrection. There's no future end of the world. It's all been fulfilled in A.D. 70.

Now, I disagree. And this is one of the passages I disagree about. They believe that this passage is talking about A.D. 70 and the destruction of Jerusalem.

You might say, but that wasn't the end of the world. They say, no, this is figurative language. The old order of Judaism, which came to an end with the destruction of the temple, is likened to the old creation.

And the new covenant order brought in by Christ is the new creation. Symbolically called the new heavens and new earth and old heavens and old earth. After all, Paul did say if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation.

And therefore, they say, that the reference to the old creation or the old heavens and old earth passing away, that's symbolically. It's going up in flames. It's like the burning of Jerusalem, the end of the temple, the end of the old order.

Whereas, we're looking for new heavens, new earth means the new order that replaces it, that continues beyond that. Now, one thing they have going for them, it's not enough in my opinion, but they have this going for them. All the books of the New Testament, with the possible exception of John's writings, were written before 70 A.D. That means the predictions might be suggested to have been fulfilled in 70 A.D. since the prophecies were written before that.

Peter was written before 70 A.D. And to a very large extent, no doubt, many of the Christians anticipated this thing that Jesus had predicted. Jesus said about the temple, not one stone will be left standing on another that will not be thrown down. He predicted the total destruction of the temple.

The Christians expected that. Some think that this passage is talking about that. Now, I don't believe they're right.

But I will tell you one reason that they have at least an argument to consider. And that is, if you look back at Isaiah chapter 65, Isaiah 65 is the first place in the Bible to mention a new heavens, new earth. And it's only mentioned one other time after that, and that's in Isaiah 66 in the Old Testament.

So, before Peter wrote this and Revelation was written, Peter and Revelation are the only places you find they reference new heavens, new earth. Those expressions were found only in Isaiah 65 and 66. However, it's even ambiguous there what they mean.

In Isaiah 65 and verse 17, God says, For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. Now, this wording is interesting because earlier in Isaiah, God said, Do not remember the former things, nor bring them to mind, for I do a new thing. Many times in Isaiah, God is talking about the new covenant order being a new thing he's going to do, and the old covenant order being an old thing that will be out of mind and over.

And the wording here sounds like he could possibly be speaking about the same thing. In favor of the fact that he might be is the fact that the section of Isaiah that we're in, which is from Isaiah 60 to 66, the last seven chapters of the book of Isaiah, this section is continually talking about destruction and replacement, destruction and replacement. It's a cyclic theme in Isaiah 60 through 66.

Now, here's the thing. Probably seven or eight times, the New Testament writers quote from this very section of Isaiah. They quote frequently from Isaiah 60 through 66, and they always apply it to their own time.

They always act as if the thing they're quoting is about the time they're living in, which would mean that the New Testament writers felt that the transition from the old to the new, that Isaiah 60 through 66, as I wrote, was a transition they were living to see. And

that would help support the idea that Isaiah 60 through 66 is talking about the abolition of the old order, the Jewish order, the temple and all that, and the introduction of the new order under the Messiah, the new heavens, the new covenant. And it's in this section that Isaiah talks about new heavens, new earth, which again encourages some to say, you see, the new heavens and the new earth, that's really just a figure of speech.

It's not really the end of the universe, as we know it. It's the end of the Jewish universe. It's the end of the Jewish order.

The old creation set up by Moses is replaced by a new creation in Christ, the new covenant. Now, I have to say, as I read Isaiah 60 through 66, I see validity in that. I actually do see strong reasons to suspect that Isaiah is using the language that way.

But I still don't think that Peter is. And in this, a full preterist would say I'm being inconsistent. Because I am a partial preterist, I see some of these passages that way, but not all of them.

The full preterist says, why not just be consistent and see them all that way? Well, there's reasons. I think you have to take passages in their context, case by case. What I believe is this.

The new covenant order is a foretaste of the actual new creation. Remember in Hebrews 6, when the writer was talking about those who have fallen away? And it says, it's impossible for those who are once in light and have tasted of the heavenly gifts, and so forth. And they have tasted of the powers of the age to come.

Christians are people who have tasted of the powers of the age to come. I think there's an age yet to come, which is the new heavens, new earth. We've tasted of the powers of that.

Spiritually speaking, we've kind of gotten a foretaste of that. Enough so to even refer to what we have as being a new creation. But it isn't fully materialized yet.

God has inaugurated a new order. But there's a future age to come, and what we're experiencing now is just a taste, a foretaste, of that order, which still has to come when Jesus comes back. So that I don't think it's inconsistent to recognize passages that speak of the new heavens, new earth, or the new creation as something relevant to now, but also seeing a fulfillment in the future of it.

And one reason I say that is because in Revelation chapter 21, and I don't know if I have the verse number, but it says, I saw new heavens and new earth descending, having the glory of God. I have to say I'm not sure which verse it is. It's near the beginning of chapter 21.

I don't have time to search for it because we're running out of time. But what John sees

is the new heavens and new earth, oh, verse 11, and the new Jerusalem having the glory of God. Now, the church is not yet glorified.

We will be glorified, I believe, when Jesus comes back and we're resurrected. That's the glorification. John in Revelation 21 sees the church glorified.

That's not yet. That's after the second coming. And Peter, he says, we're looking for a new heavens and new earth in which righteousness dwells.

I personally believe that he's talking about the same new heavens and new earth that John is talking about, the fulfillment at the second coming of Christ. Now, why would I choose that if I could take it either way? If I believe that Isaiah may in fact be talking about the transition from old covenant to new, why would I not have Peter talking about that too? Why would I say he's talking about the future like Revelation is? Well, there's a reason for that. Because in the earlier verses in chapter 3, Peter's talking about how the world was created out of the water and in the water by the word of God.

And it was overflowed by water. And then he says, now the present world, meaning since the flood, the world is kept in store by the word of God for a judgment day of fire, which he describes as the heavens being dissolved and the earth being burned up and so forth. What he's saying, he's not describing the Jewish order coming to an end.

He's describing the end of the world since the flood. The world before the flood was destroyed by water. The world since the flood will eventually be destroyed by fire.

He doesn't seem like he's talking about the Jewish order coming to an end. But God has judged this present world once with water and he says he's going to do it again with fire. It's not the Jewish order, but it's the world that was destroyed in water in Noah's day.

And the Jewish order wasn't even created immediately after that. The world since the flood is not the Jewish order. So when Peter then describes in detail this destruction of the world and the universe, I believe he's talking about the ultimate destruction at the coming of Christ.

Now this may be so far technical that you couldn't care less. I have to be mindful that people who listen to these lectures in the recording may come from any number of perspectives. I don't think anyone in this room has ever been flirting with full preterism, but many people are.

And many people use full preterism to debate about this passage a great deal. So I tell you that I think they are wrong in applying this passage to AD 70 because it doesn't fit with the lead up to it. The lead up to it is 2 Peter 3, 1-9 which talks about the world and God's dealings with the world as a whole.

Wiping it out with water first, wiping it out with fire later. And therefore I think he's

talking about the second coming of Christ which is the day of the Lord and the day of God. And we're looking for a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

That's future. Now finally in verses 14 to the end, Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found in him in peace, without spot and blameless. This reminds us of the writer of Hebrews saying pursue peace, holiness, and peace with one another.

So also pursue peace, that's your relations with other people, and being spotless, holy, blameless, that has to do with your relationship before God. And account that the long-suffering, that is the patience, of our Lord is salvation. Now he's referring back to verse 9 where he said, The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness, for he is long-suffering, he is patient toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

God's delay, Peter says, is not because of any slackness on his part to keep his promises, but rather it's because he's patient, and his patience equals salvation for many. That is, the longer he waits, the more opportunities there will be for more people to be saved. Therefore, his patience in not judging the world yet translates into opportunity for salvation for more people.

You should account that. When people say, Where's the promise of his coming? Since the father fell asleep, everything continues. He's not coming.

Just remember, No, that's not the way it is. This is God being patient. This is God seeking the salvation of more people.

He says, As also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you. As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which those who are untaught and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the scriptures. So, here we see that, and this is famously brought up to point out, that Peter supported Paul.

Now, on the one hand, he supported Paul, as his writings are scripture. He said that Paul agrees with what I'm saying. All of his letters are in sync with this.

He mentions this frequently. And, you should take him seriously, because his writings are scripture. He says his writings are scripture, when he says, the wrong kind of people twist Paul's writings to get the wrong conclusion, just like they do the rest of the scripture, which the wording suggests that Paul's writings are scripture, and then there's the rest of the scripture.

These people treat both of them the same way. Their treatment of Paul's writings is consistent with the way they treat the rest of the scripture also. They're irreverent.

Now, Peter's wording sounds like Paul's writings are scripture. And, if Peter says so, then who can deny that? Peter was appointed as an indisputed apostle. Paul's apostleship has been disputed by people over these centuries.

Even in his day, some disputed that Paul was an apostle, and some still do. Peter didn't. Peter accepted him as an apostle.

And, you might say, well, wait, he doesn't say he sees him as an apostle. The most he says about Paul is that he's a beloved brother. Okay, well, let's take it at that.

Peter knew Paul's letters. He could hardly be representing the contents of Paul's letters without being familiar with them. He's saying Paul's letters teach these things too.

He's read them. How do Paul's letters begin? Invariably, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ. Peter knew very well that Paul was not just a beloved brother.

Paul was a beloved brother who claims to be an apostle of Jesus Christ. The same title Peter and the other eleven had. If Paul was not an apostle of Jesus Christ, in Peter's opinion, he should have exposed him as a false apostle, rather than a beloved brother.

A man can't go claiming to be an apostle of Christ and get away with it unless he is one, at least in the sight of those like Peter. Peter accepts Paul's claims. He accepts his letters, his scripture.

He accepts Paul as a beloved brother. That's all that Paul could ever wish for in terms of an endorsement because the apostles were the most authoritative persons in the early church. They were appointed by Jesus to speak officially for him.

Peter was the most outspoken and easily recognized of the twelve apostles. If a man wanted to come up later and say, I'm an apostle too, why should anyone believe him? Well, if Peter says he is, then that's a pretty good endorsement. You can't follow Jesus and not follow Peter's teaching.

And Peter teaches that Paul's a beloved brother and his epistles are our scripture. So, we have very clearly an endorsement of Paul that no one can honestly get around without, well, some can, but St. Peter didn't write this letter. But as I said, the official view of the church after examining it very closely for a long time was it is Peter's letter.

Verse 17. You therefore, beloved, since you know these things beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked. So, here again, a warning just like you have in Hebrews.

You brethren, you Christians, beware. You could be led astray too, the same as the wicked. And he does not assume that if you are, you know, one of our beloved brethren that you don't have to be careful about the dangers of falling away.

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.

This growing in grace we've talked about before. Peter's letters both begin with him saying grace and peace be multiplied to you. An increase of the experience of grace in your life.

Having more grace to help in time of need. Having more grace in your character to extend to others. You may minister grace to those who hear you, Paul says in Ephesians.

Having been full of grace. Christ was full of grace and truth. And of his fullness we have all received.

John said in John chapter 1 verses 14 and 16. So, we are to increase in grace because that's increasing in the likeness of Christ. His nature is grace and truth.

We need to increase in that. So, grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord. We need to continue to growing in knowledge.

Now, this is not epigenosco here. This is just genosco. This is not full knowledge because he's describing something that can be increased.

Full knowledge by definition can't be increased. It's full. But there is learning still to be had.

There's deeper acquaintance to be obtained. And in so far as we can increase our knowledge of God, he exhorts us to do so. And the increase in grace and in knowledge are pretty much the balance of Christian maturity.

Grace is character. The character of Christ manifests in you. His grace.

Knowledge would have to do with more your understanding of Christian truth and so forth to become somewhat more sophisticated in your knowledge of the things of God as well as becoming more like Jesus. These are the things that will define Christian growth and maturity. And so, we reach the end of this epistle and with no time to spare, as a matter of fact.