

# The World Is Not Disposable

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Date: 15 November 2020

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Hello Table Church, I'm Pastor Anthony, lead pastor here, and it is good to be with you. We are diving into a new series called Apocalypse, a how-to guide, because if it's not the end of the world already, then why not figure out how to deal with it when it comes? So let's jump right in, and this is kind of the main idea that we're going to be talking about this week and next, and this is what the main idea is, what we think about the end affects how we think and what we do right now. What we think about the end affects how we think and what we do today. How many of you have ever put together some furniture from Ikea or something similar, flat pack? Yeah, yeah, yeah.

The helpful thing about Ikea furniture, even if the directions are like so, so helpful, I actually think they're fine, but it's nice to know what it is you're building. Imagine if someone handed you a piece of Ikea furniture, but you didn't know what it was, you didn't have a picture of it, and you just had to go for it. And you could follow directions a little bit, but it's really nice to know like, oh, it's supposed to look like this at the end, okay, I need to do this, this, and the other thing.

Or like, how many of you watch Bake Off, Great British Bake Off? Anybody? A couple of you? And so like, British Bake Off, the second challenge is the technical challenge, and they don't get a picture of it, they don't get time to practice, they just get handed a sheet of directions that are very vague, and if you don't know what the thing is that you're making, like some sort of tart crumble thingy that they make in England, you don't know what it is, you just have to go for it and hope you get it right. And everybody's kind of like looking over their shoulder to see like, is that what it's like? Is that what it's like? Or imagine like putting together a puzzle, but you don't have the box, so you don't have the picture, and you're just like trying to figure it out. Imagine that all, like there are no edge pieces, it's all just like rough pieces. It'd be really, really difficult to get that done. So what we think about the end, the goal, the picture, the piece of furniture that we're making, the crumble tart that we're supposed to be baking, what we think about the end affects what we do today. It gives us an idea of our direction, and our trajectory, and what we're going, and how do we get to what we, where, where we want to go.

Now, I don't know if you've heard, but there are some beliefs out there about where the world is going, what the end is going to look like, and what it's going to be like. And those ideas, I think, have dramatically shaped how Christians and believers behave today. I don't know if you've ever heard the name John MacArthur. He's a preacher out in California, and he recently gave a sermon on the, his words, not mine, false science of climate change. And this is what he said denouncing that fake science. He said, God intended us to use this planet and to fill this benefit for the, fill this planet for the benefit of man. Sorry, women. Never was it intended to be a permanent planet.

It is a disposable planet. Christians ought to know that, MacArthur said. And this is not like some fringe lunatic off on some coast somewhere. This is actually pretty common standard position for a lot of believers, that we live in a paper plate styrofoam cup planet that's meant to be thrown away, so do with it what you will. And this idea sprung from a verse, I would say one verse, that then kind of infected how folks read the Bible. Comes from 2 Peter chapter 3 verse 10. I'm going to read this in the King James, because I think this is actually where things for English speakers went awry. It says this, 2 Peter chapter 3 verse 10. It says, but the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away, the great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. And the earth also, and all the works that are therein, this is the important part, shall be burned up. Our planet, according to this verse, is disposable. You can throw it away. We can use it up in whatever way we have to, because, well, it's all going to disappear anyway. It's all going to burn, so we can do what we want. Now that's weird. It's a weird passage, because it's the only place in early Christian literature, the New Testament, that says anything like that. And like I said, this view, therefore, affects how you read the rest of scripture. And so if you get this verse wrong, then you're going to read the rest of scripture supporting this verse, that everything is meant to be burned up and gone and destroyed. So how did that happen? Based off of this one single verse, a whole theology has been built up, and all sorts of other scripture has been read through that lens, that the world would be destroyed. And therefore, based off of what we think of the end, the picture for the puzzle, the piece of furniture that we're building, an earth that's destroyed and gone and burnt up and just melted down to nothing, well, if that's what we think is going to happen, then why not just let it burn?

[ 5 : 45 ] So if you are into good old-fashioned Bible study, this is your sermon. If you do not want to hear about Greek words and ancient manuscripts, this would be a good time to go make yourself a latte or a cocktail and come back later for communion. Sorry, worship team, you don't get that option.

So we've got three things to talk about today. Number one, we're going to talk about some biblical manuscripts, ancient papyrus documents, and how that affects scripture. Oh boy, I bet you're excited.

Number two, we're going to talk about the word destruction. Number three, we're going to talk about the word new. So some manuscripts, destruction, new, that's our outline for today. So let's talk about manuscripts. When you are putting together a Bible, there are some steps that you have to take when you pick one off the shelf at a bookstore or from Amazon or from wherever you get your Bibles, handed down to you from your grandparents, whatever. There are some steps that have to be done to get you a Bible. For instance, it has to be translated. And so people have to make choices on, okay, there's Hebrew and there's Greek and there's Aimee, what kind of words am I going to use?

But okay, what are we translating it from? Where there are these languages, and those languages were written and spoken many, many years ago. Where do those come from? And so we have manuscripts, and those are the ancient documents that scholars collect from libraries and archaeology and all those kinds of things. You have the manuscripts, which are then translated into a version that you can buy at a store. Okay, but those manuscripts, where do those come from? Well, they're found across deserts and libraries and monasteries and cathedrals and old churches and buried in caves. And some people found them like behind like furniture and like they're found all over the place. And remember, prior to the 1500s, there was no movable type printing press in the West. China had something similar to it, but there wasn't a lot of Bibles in China prior to 1500, believe it or not. And so people had to make copies by hand. So you had a job, if you were like a priest or a monk or a nun or something like that, your job would be to take a piece of papyrus, and you wanted your buddy down the street to have a copy of the book of 1 John or 2 Peter, and so you would write it down by hand. It's a pain striking process, of course. Now, imagine you come across something that looks like a typo, a mistake, a word that seems out of place, or maybe somebody misplaced a letter or something like that. Do you copy it down word for word, jot and tittle for jot and tittle, or do you like, well, I'm guessing whoever handed me this papyrus must have made a mistake, so I'm going to fix that myself.

Different people did different things. And so what scholars do is that they research the different manuscript schools from like Alexandria, Egypt, and Antioch, and Syria, all these different schools of manuscripts where they can trace where, oh, somebody made a copy here, they changed a letter over there. It looks like somebody tried to actually fix a mistake, but by trying to fix a mistake, they added a different one. There's a whole work, job, career you can go into where you start comparing all these different versions. So something happens in 2 Peter chapter 3 where we get this phrase, and the earth, and everything done in it will be burned up. Because after the King James Bible was printed, we kept finding older and older and older manuscripts. And logically, the older the manuscripts are, you would think and you would hope the more accurate they would be because they would be closest to the original. And so we've got copies of like the book of John from really late like first century, like 90s, 100 AD. We've got copies of the book of 2 Peter from like 1 and 200 AD. So ancient, ancient, ancient manuscripts that we keep finding older ones and older ones and better ones that show us like, oh, somebody who wrote this, they got something, they made a typo or a right-o, I guess. And when we get to the older ones, we see what the original ones said. So after the King James Bible was printed, we find that the word, the earth was burned up, wasn't there. This is what it says. If you go to a modern translation, NIV, ESV, New Living, anything like that, it says this in 2 Peter chapter 3 verse 10, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. Now that's a surprise. Imagine you're the person writing out these manuscripts. Things are going to be burning with fire. Something's going to be destroyed. Fire destroyed. The earth and everything in it's going to be revealed? Laid bare?

[10:41] That's a surprise. And so you can imagine why someone would be like, somebody made a typo, I need to fix this. And that typo got copied and copied and copied and copied for many, many years, until you have John MacArthur many years later saying, the earth is disposable.

That's how things like this happen. Now modern translations have fixed this. If you use the King James or maybe even the new King James, it still says that. And even in modern translations, there's a footnote that says some manuscripts say be burned up. But our oldest and our best manuscripts don't say be burned up. It says be laid bare or revealed or disclosed. It's actually what the word apocalypse means. Apocalypse means a revelation for something to be revealed. And so the book of Revelation, John receives an apocalypse, a revelation, something revealed to him by Jesus. And so the same idea here, the earth will be destroyed by fire. We're going to talk about the word destroyed. The earth will be destroyed by fire. The elements will be destroyed by fire. The earth and everything done in it will be revealed, apocalyptic, revealed, laid bare. Now, the consensual Christian view is important here.

What do I mean by consensual Christian view? Meaning how Christians have talked about the end, the picture on the puzzle box, across centuries and geography and time and space, has not been that the earth would be burned up and destroyed. Rather, it has been that it will be revealed. Now, how does revealed make sense? How does that make sense in the context of fire? My two kids, Audrey and Wesley, age four and two, they love dinosaur oatmeal. Anybody have dinosaur oatmeal? Oh, oh, Jessica. Yes, yes, good.

So dinosaur oatmeal, you have a little packet of oatmeal, you pour it in the bowl, and there are these little tiny eggs that are in mixed in with the oats, and then you pour in your water or your milk, and you put it in the microwave, or maybe you preheated your water or milk or whatever, and you start to stir. And what happens is that that sugary little dinosaur egg becomes dissolved, and then it reveals a little tiny dinosaur made out of pure sugar that my children love to eat. So imagine the little dinosaur egg, and you just drop it in some water, and I've tried this to show my kids. Drop it in cold water, and stir, and stir, and stir, nothing really happens. Drop it in hot water, fire, and it dissolves, and it reveals something therein. And so what 2 Peter is getting at, it's saying that that fire is going to dissolve, is going to reveal what is actually true about God's creation. And so it's not that the world is disposable. It's not that everything is going to be destroyed and burned down, and so we're just going to abandon it. Rather, this fire is a revealing fire. It's going to show the dinosaurs hiding in the eggs, so to speak. So let's talk about the word destruction then. So we've talked about manuscripts, we've talked about this whole like being burned up, that's not the word that's been used. Rather, it's to be revealed. But the word destruction is used here. So if we go back to 2 Peter, we see destruction used a couple different ways. Verse 7, this is chapter 3, verse 7, by the same word, the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment, and destruction of the ungodly. So we're not going to lie, destruction has something to do with what is going to happen at the end, specifically the destruction of the ungodly. And I know some of you are dying for me to preach a sermon on hell and all of that. We'll get there, I promise. So the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment, destruction of the ungodly. And the day of the

Lord will come like a thief, and the heavens will disappear with a roar. The elements will be, here's this word again, destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. We see it again in verse 12. That day will bring the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. So okay, Anthony, yes, fine, there was a manuscript that somebody copied down wrong, it's not going to be burned up, it's going to be revealed. There's still an awful lot of talk of destruction in here, what's that about? So in the Greek, we've got two words for destruction, and reading our English translation here in the NIV, we're just getting one word translated from those two words. So let me introduce you to those two words. The first one is apoleia. Let me hear you say apoleia. Hey, good job. The people here did it. I believe in you, the people inside the camera.

[ 15 : 35 ] Apoleia. And apoleia is what we think of when we think of the word destruction. It's after it's been destroyed. It's gone. It doesn't exist anymore. Say goodbye. It's over. That's apoleia. Now there's a second word in the Greek for destruction, and that is luō. Let me hear you say luō. Hey, well done, luō.

Now *luo* can be translated destroyed, as we see here in 2 Peter, but it's usually translated as a loosening, to loose something, like when you untie your shoe, or you untie your robe and it falls open.

Sorry for the weird image, but it's how it's actually used in Scripture. It can mean something to be dissolved, like dinosaur eggs and oatmeal, or to be unwound, like a clock that's finally coming to a stop, or a string on a sweater to be pulled. And so the more you pull, the more the sweater actually dissolves, comes apart, is loosened, is *luoed*. So we see the word destruction in verse 7. The heavens and the earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment, and destruction, *apoleia*, the destruction, the say goodbye to the ungodly. But then when we get later into the passage, verse 10, the day of the Lord will come like a thief, the heavens will disappear, the elements will be *luoed* by fire, loosened, untied, undone, unwound, dissolved, what some translations say. The elements will be dissolved by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Verse 12, that day will bring about the *luo*, the loosening, the dissolving, the unwoundness, the tugging on the sweater until it's all pulled apart of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. So whenever you see that we're destroyed in verses 10 through 12, that's a different kind of destruction. Not a destruction, and therefore it's gone, but a taking apart, like a thousand Legos all taken apart and put back into the box. Think of a caterpillar in a cocoon. Caterpillar, you know, on Monday eats one apple and is still hungry. On Tuesday eats two blueberries and is still hungry. Yes, I read a lot of children's book in my spare time. A caterpillar eats and eats and eats and eats and eats and eats, and then he rounds a cocoon or a chrysalis around him or herself, and then in that chrysalis begins to release digestive enzymes until it turns into a goo.

It dissolves itself, actually. So the caterpillar gets into the chrysalis, dissolves itself. If you were to slice it open, it would just kind of pour out. It's a terrible thing to do to a caterpillar that's worked so hard. Don't do that. And then that goop reconfigures itself into a butterfly. Now here's something that's absolutely wild to me. Scientists would expose caterpillars to certain kinds of odors and scents, and when they got exposed, this just cracks me up, they got exposed to those odors and scents, and then it would give the caterpillar an electric shock to train the caterpillar to avoid those odors, okay? So then the caterpillar creates the chrysalis, turns into the goo, reconfigures itself into a butterfly. The butterfly comes out, and then that same butterfly remembers to avoid those odors. So this is important, friends. This is like the crux of what we're going to be talking about these two weeks. So what happened to the caterpillar in its first life has repercussions for its second life. The pain and the hurt and the electric shocks that these terrible scientists are giving to it, it remembers, even though it's been dissolved, *luoed*, brought back down to its elemental parts, and then rebuilt again. What happened earlier has repercussions for what happens later. This is important. So, so, so, so, so, we see the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with the earth. The elements will be *luoed*, dissolved, brought back down to its basic parts by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be revealed, laid bare, shown for what it really is.

And since everything will be *luoed* in this way, loosened, unwound, dissolved in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to be to live holy and godly lives. Verse 12, as you look forward to the day of God's speed, it's coming. This day will bring about the destruction, the *luoed*, the dissolving, the melting down of the heavens by fire, the elements, and the heat. But in keeping with this promise, we are looking forward to our new key word, a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness dwells.

[ 20 : 36 ] Okay, fine. It's not burnt down. It's revealed. Okay. It's not destroyed. It's dissolved like a caterpillar goo. Fine. But Anthony, it says a new heaven and a new earth. The earth is disposable.

We're going to get a new one. We're throwing away the old model. We're going to get something better. So just let the old one burn, right? No, no, no, no. So again, two words in the Greek, for the word new. Let me hear you say *neos*. *Neos*, N-E-O-S, looks like *neo*, like from the matrix.

Neos. And this is what we think about when we think of the word new, chronologically new. It didn't exist, and now it does. It wasn't there, and bam, it is there. It's new. That's neos.

Now, let me hear you say the word kynos. Kynos. Kynos. Now, kynos refers to the quality of something, not its timeline, not its chronology, not that it didn't exist, and now it does exist, so now it's new. Rather, it describes something that has already existed, and its quality, the somethingness about it. So verse 13, keeping with this promise, we're looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness dwells. This is kynos, not neos. It didn't exist before, now it does.

Kynos has the quality of being new. It's renewed and restored and refreshed and rebuilt. This is what Jesus in Revelation 21 says. See, I am making all things new. Jesus does not say, and never said, look, I am making all new things. That's different. It's not what Scripture teaches.

[ 22 : 33 ] Rather, Jesus says, I am making all things new. So let's read this again. By the same word, the present heavens and the earth, verse 7, are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and the destruction, here today, gone tomorrow, the destruction of the ungodly. But do not forget this one thing, dear friends, with the day, the Lord, a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promises. Some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. Something about the quality of God, his character, his goodness. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar. The elements will be destroyed by fire. The earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. And since everything will be loosened, unwound, dissolved in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God. And listen, and speed, it's coming. That day will bring about the loosening, the unwinding of the heavens by fire. The elements will be dissolved in the heat. But in keeping with his promise, we are looking forward to a renewed, restored, refreshed, and reconciled new heaven and new earth where what one translation says, justice makes its home. Verse 11, since everything will be loosened and undone and unwound in this way, what kind of people ought we to be? And this is the big question. Because for John MacArthur and many, many, many others just like Ken, this is the way I was raised as the way I was thought to believe. If the earth is disposable, if the world is just going to be destroyed completely someday, then we don't need to give a care. Climate change? Let the world burn.

Systems of oppression that keep poor people poor and rich people rich and marginalized folks marginalized? It's not our problem. This is the origin, in fact, of rapture theology. Rapture theology is a form of escapism that says the Christians, as long as they have, remember those banners we talked about, prayed the prayer, made a decision, etc. The rapture says we'll fly away to Jesus in the sky and go back and live in heaven while the world goes on to burn. But listen to verse 11 and 12 again.

What kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. Now wait a second, this is interesting.

Peter seems to be implying that the dissolving of the elements, everything being melted down and shown for what it is, brought back to its elemental parts. The caterpillar being turned to glue and the dinosaur egg being dissolved and revealing that magical little dinosaur within. It's in some way up to us how we live our lives. The decisions we make right now, today, in this moment, are in some way able to bring about the end of the world, or what I should probably call the beginning of a new world.

It's like a caterpillar and a butterfly. The way the caterpillar lived its life has actual implications for what the future is going to look like.

[ 26 : 15 ] So how do we skip to the end? How do we dissolve the elements and bring about the renewal of heaven and earth? That's what we'll talk about next week.

so thank you and that support you