

Eternity and COVID-19

It is hard these days not to just think of the next step, the next hour or the next day. And the days seem to get longer with more and more restrictions being handed down. Losses are piling up, income is being stifled and disappointment seems to be a daily occurrence. Some are having to reschedule weddings, some may be missing their graduation, others are just feeling overwhelmed at all the changes.

In light of all of this I want to take the next five days to help lift our gaze higher to look at the future hope Jesus provides for us as His followers. My prayer is that you will experience what David said was true of God in his experience:

Psalms 3:3 But you, O Lord, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head.

When we talk about the gospel we are talking about the story of the Bible and it is like a play with four acts: Creation, Fall, Redemption and Restoration. The gospel is far-reaching, beyond what we ever imagined! The gospel is the future hope that things will not always remain this way. And the Bible has five ways of describing what God is going to do with this Earth and how for those in Christ we will experience a New Earth. We will spend this week looking at each of those five words and also have an application point to go along with each one. Those five words are renewal, resurrection, reversal, refinement and restoration. Today we will focus on renewal and our response to that truth.

Renewal

2 Peter 3:13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells

Revelation 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away

When Peter and John call it a “new” Earth, what do they mean? There are two Greek words *kainos* and *neos* translated in our New Testament by the word “new.” *Neos* is new as in nothing like the old, brand new. It would be like a Google self-driving car or a Smart car. These are cars that don’t have any older versions. They are different, new as in nothing like it before.



Kainos is new as in superior in quality or a new or updated version. The word Peter and John use to describe the “New Earth” is this word, *kainos*. This word is new as in a new 2020 Ford Mustang compared to a 1965 Mustang. The 2020 is a new, updated version of the old. They look alike, yet are different.



That is what Jesus is going to do with this Earth and with our bodies. He is going to renew them, make them like brand new and yet they will resemble what they looked like before. Imagine an Earth and our bodies with no decay, no death, no destruction. The Earth and our bodies will look like they do today minus sin! This is a wonderful truth and future hope for us to dwell on! How can we respond?

Perspective

Much could be said about our need for perspective. We so easily get caught up in our post-modern world where individuality and living for the moment reign as king and queen. We can go days, weeks, years thinking that life will just continue on as is and we don't even think about how short our life is until a tragedy occurs. This is one of the "good" things about this virus and time we live in. It forces us to think on both the fallenness of our Earth and our bodies, but also of the shortness of our lives.

Psalm 102:3 For my days pass away like smoke.

Psalm 144:4 Man is like a breath; his days are like a passing shadow.

James 4:14 You are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.

Your breath is in the hands of the living God and He can take that gift back anytime He pleases! It is this perspective of our life in light of eternity that helps us press on with the right perspective! In 1952, young Florence Chadwick stepped into the waters of the Pacific off Catalina Island, determined to swim to the shoreline of California (21 miles). She'd already been the first woman to swim the English Channel both ways. The weather was foggy and chilly; she could hardly see the boats accompanying her. Still, she swam for fifteen hours. When she begged to be taken out of the water along the way, her mother, in a boat alongside, told her she was close and that she could make it. Finally, physically and emotionally exhausted, she stopped swimming and was pulled out. It wasn't until she was on the boat that she discovered the shore was less than half a mile away. At a news conference the next day she said, "All I could see was the fog . . . I think if I could have seen the shore, I would have made it."

Randy Alcorn, commenting on this story, said: "For believers, that shore is Jesus and being with him in the place that he promised to prepare for us, where we will live with him forever. The shore we should look for is that of the new Earth. If we can see through the fog and picture our eternal home in our mind's eye, it will comfort and energize us." Our current day is quite foggy. It is hard to see our eternal home, but let's remember it is closer than we realize. Take hope in that truth today.

Practical

- Make a list of 20 aspects of the New Earth that excite you. It may be that you won't be sick. It may be that you will be reunited with loved ones. It may be that you'll see Jesus face to face. It may be that you will be able to explore and visit places you've always wanted to. Once you are done, share your list with others.
- Share your hope of a New Earth with someone today. Tell someone in your family or friends or post on social media.
- Draw or paint a picture of what you imagine a New Earth to look like. See if you can find other passages in the Bible that help you with that picture.