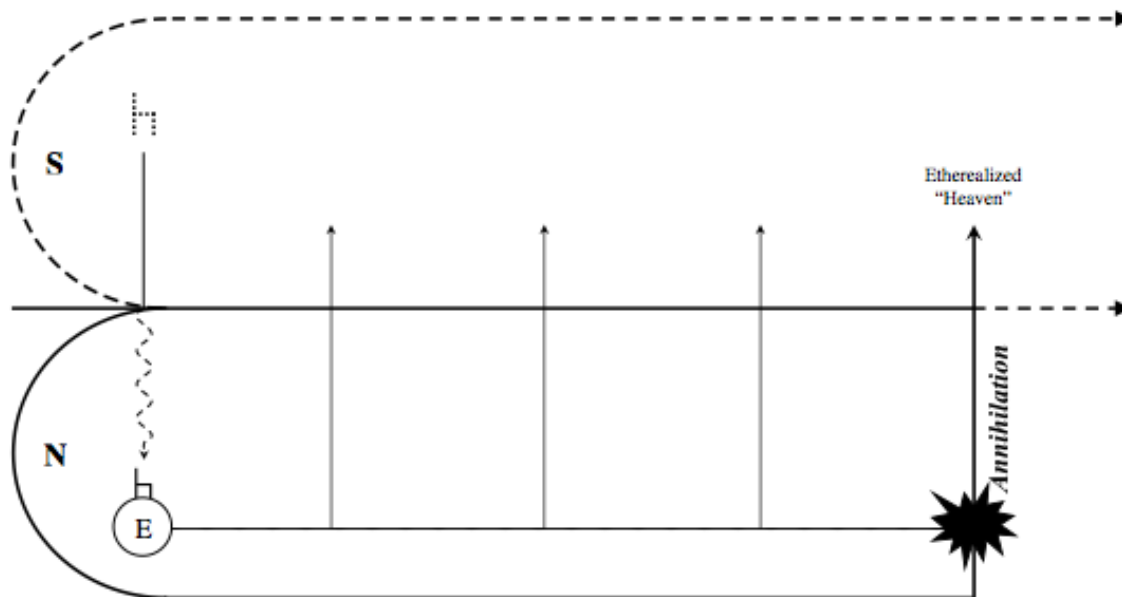


BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF MISSION

Class 5a: Cosmological Regeneration Vs. Annihilation

John Harrigan

I. PLATONIC SALVATION: ANNIHILATION OF METAPHYSICAL CORRUPTION



- A. The foundation of salvation within the Hellenistic worldview is essentially the destruction of that which is existentially corrupt. The base of this existential corruption is the metaphysical construct itself.
- B. The logical conclusion of modern metaphysical dualism is the destruction of the natural realm. Though many will acknowledge their hope in the eternal existence of the soul, few realize that the base of this hope is the destruction of the natural realm which harbors the existence of their corrupt body.
- C. This has led to the fundamental soteriological misunderstanding that the ultimate end of redemption is an etherealized "Heaven," resulting in popular sayings, such as, "If you died tonight, where would you spend eternity: heaven or hell?" This soteriological conclusion practically disconnects people from reality and destroys "the blessed hope" (Tit. 2:13) of restoration and resurrection within the human soul.

II. SALVATION: REGENERATION VS. ANNIHILATION

- A. Often the following scriptures are presented in isolation to validate the underlying assumption of Platonic annihilationist salvation. However, these scriptures need to be viewed as *figurative language* concerning the Day of the Lord and judgment upon the wicked.

Lift up your eyes to the heavens, look at the earth beneath; the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies. But my salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail. (NIV Isaiah 51:6)

For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. (ESV Isaiah 65:17)

For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make shall remain before me, says the LORD, so shall your offspring and your name remain. (^{ESV} Isaiah 66:22)

In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. ²⁶ They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. ²⁷ But you remain the same, and your years will never end. (^{NIV} Psalm 102:25-27)

For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away (Gk. *parerchomai*), not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. (^{ESV} Matthew 5:18; cf. Lk. 16:17)

Heaven and earth will pass away (Gk. *parerchomai*), but my words will never pass away. (^{NIV} Matthew 24:35; cf. Mk. 13:31; Lk. 21:33)

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, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare... That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. ¹³ But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. (^{NIV} 2 Peter 3:10-13)

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. (^{NIV} Revelation 20:11)

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away (Gk. *parerchomai*), and the sea was no more. (^{ESV} Revelation 21:1)

- B. Many scriptures directly state the perpetuity of Earth. Based on God's covenant with creation (Gen. 1:3-2:25; Jer. 33:20-26; Ps. 119:88ff; etc.), these should be interpreted as "literal".

Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness; ³⁰ tremble before him, all the earth; yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved. (^{ESV} 1 Chronicles 16:29-30)

He built his sanctuary like the heights, like the earth that he established forever. (^{NIV} Psalm 78:69)

The LORD reigns; he is robed in majesty; the LORD is robed; he has put on strength as his belt. Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved. (^{ESV} Psalm 93:1)

He set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be moved. (^{ESV} Psalm 104:5)

Your word, O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens. ⁹⁰ Your faithfulness (to your word/creation) continues through all generations; you established the earth, and it endures. ⁹¹ Your laws endure to this day, for all things (i.e. the heavens and the earth) serve you ("are your servants" NASB/KJV/NKJV/ESV/NRSV). (^{NIV} Psalm 119:88-91)

Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever. (^{NIV} Psalm 125:1)

Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his heavenly hosts. ³ Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars... ⁵ Let them praise the name of the LORD, for

he commanded and they were created. ⁶ He set them in place for ever and ever; he gave a decree that will never pass away. (NIV Psalm 148:2-6)

Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever. (NIV Ecclesiastes 1:4)

I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that men will revere him. (NIV Ecclesiastes 3:14)

Hear, O mountains, the LORD's accusation; listen, you everlasting foundations of the earth. (NIV Micah 6:2)

- C. Other scriptures indirectly state the perpetuity of the Earth by declaring the perpetuity of the heavens, which were created in direct relationship with the Earth.

He (royal son) will endure as long as the sun, as long as the moon, through all generations... ⁷ In his days the righteous will flourish; prosperity will abound till the moon is no more... ¹⁷ May his name endure forever; may it continue as long as the sun. (NIV Psalm 72:5-17)

His (David's) offspring shall endure forever, his throne as long as the sun before me. ³⁷ Like the moon it shall be established forever, a faithful witness in the skies. (ESV Psalm 89:35-37)

If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night will not come at their appointed time... (ESV Jeremiah 33:20)

III. RESTORATION: THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF BIBLICAL SALVATION

A. Redemptive Etymology

1. Inherent in the concept of redemption is regeneration and renewal, not destruction and annihilation. A theology of redemption itself requires the rejection of the doctrine that the earth is annihilated on the last day.
2. God has never given up on His original creation. An entire biblical vocabulary makes this point clear. Reconcile. Redeem. Restore. Recover. Return. Renew. Regenerate. Resurrect. Each of these biblical words begins with the "re" prefix, suggesting a return to an original condition that was ruined or lost.
3. For example, redemption means to buy back what was formerly owned. Reconciliation means the restoration or reestablishment of a prior friendship or unity. Renewal means to make new again, restoring to an original state. Resurrection means becoming physically alive again, after death. These words emphasize that God always sees us in light of what He intended us to be, and He always seeks to restore us to that design.

B. Redemptive Motivation

1. God's ultimate purpose and desire has always been to dwell with man on the earth.

Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. (NIV Genesis 2:8)

...the LORD God...was walking in the garden in the cool of the day (^{NIV} Genesis 3:8)

2. Because of man's sin, this purpose has been disrupted, but not discarded. This earthward soteriological orientation is seen throughout scripture.

And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. (^{NKJV} Exodus 25:8)

I will put my dwelling place among you, and I will not abhor you. ¹² I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people. (^{NIV} Leviticus 26:11-12)

I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever. ²⁷ My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people. (^{NIV} Ezekiel 37:26-27)

Shout and be glad, O Daughter of Zion. For I am coming, and I will live among you, declares the LORD. (^{NIV} Zechariah 2:10)

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. (^{NIV} John 1:14)

3. God will ultimately fulfill his plan to dwell on this earth with man.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. (^{ESV} Revelation 21:3)

4. Original creation was a suitable environment for this dwelling

- a) When God originally created the present earth, he deemed it "very good," the implications being that the existence of man was complete and whole within the processes of the original earth.
- b) The creation of a "new earth" needs no new existential processes to perfect the life of man. Why would God create a new earth to have the same existential processes of the original earth when he could simply renovate the present earth? Thus, the "new earth" (Is. 65:17; 2 Pe. 3:13; Rev. 21:1) will be comparable to the original earth.
- c) If God had wanted to consign us all to Hell and start over, He could have. He could have made a new Adam and Eve and sent the old ones to Hell. But He didn't. Instead, He chose to redeem what He started with—the Heavens, Earth, and mankind—to bring them back to His original purpose.

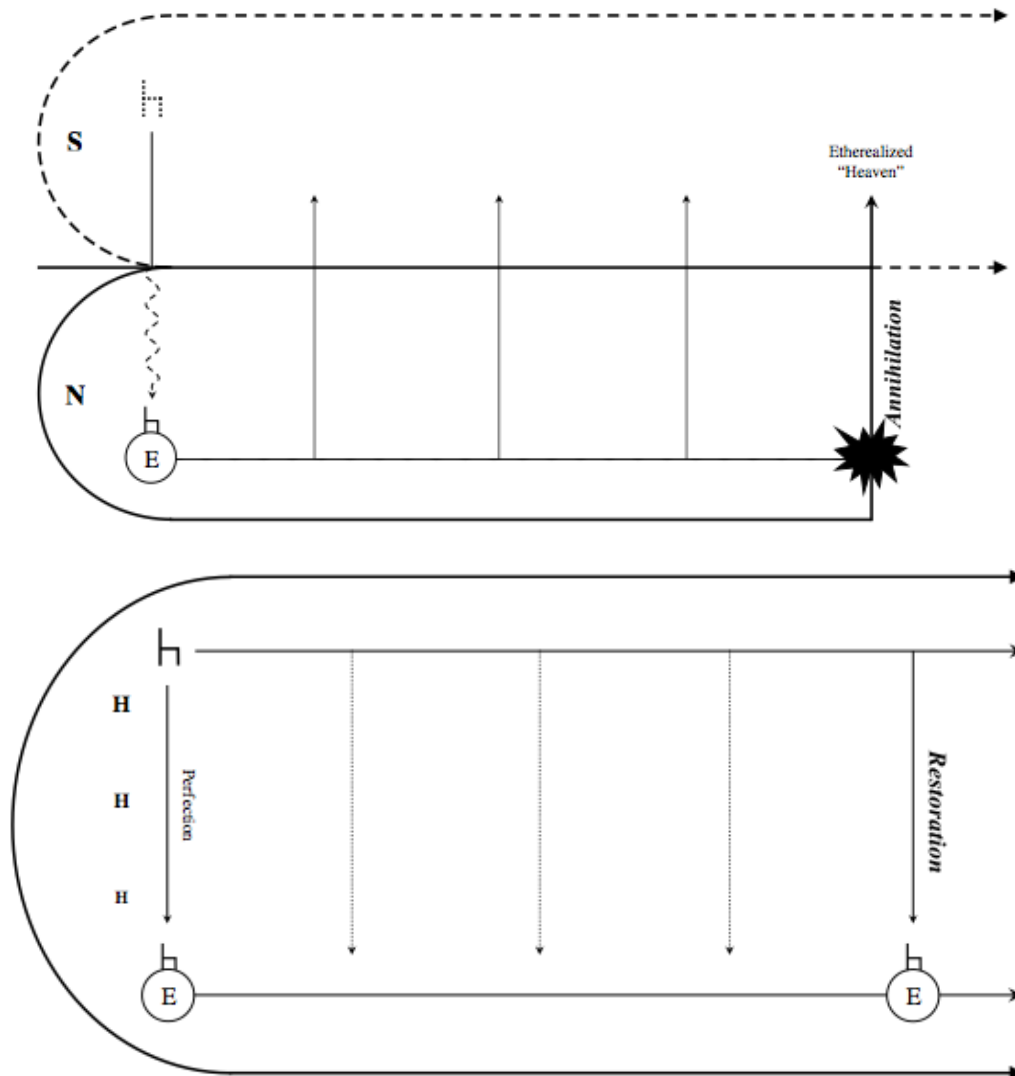
C. Redemptive Honor

1. God's honor and glory is significantly dependent upon His victory over fallen angels and men in His governance of heaven and earth. If God would have to annihilate the present cosmos, then it would *clearly reveal Satan's success* in utterly corrupting that which God had created. Rather, God has defeated Satan, and He will reveal the full dimensions of that defeat when He renews the very earth on which Satan has deceived mankind, fully purging it of all forms of wickedness.
2. God doesn't throw away his handiwork and start from scratch—instead, He uses the same canvas to repair and make more beautiful the painting marred by the vandal. The vandal doesn't get the satisfaction of destroying his rival's masterpiece. On the contrary, God

makes an even greater masterpiece out of what His enemy sought to destroy. Satan seeks to destroy the Earth. God seeks to restore and renew the Earth, rule it, and hand it back over to his children. *God will win the battle for us and for the Earth.*

D. Redemptive Covenants

1. God made a covenant (i.e. agreement) with creation (cf. Gen. 1:3-2:4), and He will never break it. The covenant with Abraham and his descendants is thus referenced to the covenant of creation, since its destiny is directly tied to the sons of Adam (cf. Rom. 8:18-24).



Thus says the LORD: If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night will not come at their appointed time, ²¹ then also my covenant with David my servant may be broken... ²⁵ Thus says the LORD: If I have not established my covenant with day and night and the fixed order of heaven and earth, ²⁶ then I will reject the offspring of Jacob... (ESV Jeremiah 33:20-26)

The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. (NIV Romans 8:19-21)

2. The heavens and the earth will never be destroyed. God's creation is good, and He is faithful to it. He is *creation's God*, which means He will never give up on it, forsake it, or abandon it. Based on this, He makes a covenant to be the God of Abraham and his sons, who will be given authority, under the Messianic Seed, to liberate creation from its bondage to decay.

You are standing here in order to enter into a covenant with the LORD your God, a covenant the LORD is making with you this day and sealing with an oath, ¹³ to confirm you this day as his people, that he may be your God as he promised you and as he swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. (NIV Deuteronomy 29:12-13)

Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. ⁶ And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love (Hb. *cheded*) and faithfulness (Hb. *emeth*), ⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin." (NIV Exodus 34:5-7)

- <2617> ds,x, *cheded* {kheh'-sed}

Meaning: 1) goodness, kindness, faithfulness 2) a reproach, shame¹

Origin: from 02616; TWOT - 698a,699a; n m

Usage: AV - mercy 149, kindness 40, lovingkindness 30, goodness 12, kindly 5, merciful 4, favour 3, good 1, goodliness 1, pity 1, reproach 1, wicked thing 1; 248

Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God, ⁶ the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them-- the LORD, who remains faithful (Hb. *emeth*) forever. ⁷ He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry... ¹⁰ The LORD reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. (NIV Psalm 146:5-10)

- <0571> tm,a/ 'emeth {eh'-meth}

Meaning: n f 1) firmness, faithfulness, truth 1a) sureness, reliability 1b) stability, continuance 1c) faithfulness, reliability 1d) truth 1d1) as spoken 1d2) of testimony

¹ "The word is used only in cases where there is some recognized tie between the parties concerned. It is not used indiscriminately of kindness in general, haphazard, kindly deeds; this is why Coverdale was careful to avoid using the word 'kindness' in respect of God's dealings with his people Israel. The theological importance of the word *cheded* is that it stands more than any other word for the attitude which both parties to a covenant ought to maintain towards each other. Sir George Adam Smith suggested the rendering 'leal-love.' The merit of this translation is that it combines the twin ideas of love and loyalty, both of which are essential... God's loving-kindness is that sure love which will not let Israel go. Not all Israel's persistent waywardness could ever destroy it. Though Israel be faithless, yet God remains faithful still. This steady, persistent refusal of God to wash his hands of wayward Israel is the essential meaning of the Hebrew word which is translated loving-kindness." [Norman H. Snaith, *Theological Word Book of the Bible*, ed. by Alan Richardson (New York: MacMillan, 1951), 136-7.]

and judgment 1d3) of divine instruction 1d4) truth as a body of ethical or religious knowledge 1d5) true doctrine adv 2) in truth, truly

Origin: contracted from 0539; TWOT - 116k

Usage: AV - truth 92, true 18, truly 7, right 3, faithfully 2, assured 1, assuredly 1, establishment 1, faithful 1, sure 1, verity 1; 127

- ***Then the man (servant of Isaac) bowed down and worshiped the LORD, ²⁷ saying, "Praise be to the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned his kindness (Hb. checed) and faithfulness (Hb. emeth) to my master." (NIV Genesis 24:26-27)***

E. Eschatological Restoration

1. Man was created out of the dirt of the earth (Gen. 2:7), and he is cursed to return to the dirt of the earth (Gen. 3:19). Moreover, the curse on Adam has direct implications on the earth (i.e. "thorns and thistles," Gen. 3:18). Thus, the reversal of the curse on Adam (cf. Gen. 3:15) will likewise have direct implications on the earth—if the original "curse" was upon *this earth*, then the logical conclusion is that the reversal of the "curse" is from *this earth*.

***And there shall no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His bond-servants shall serve Him.* (NASB Revelation 22:3)**

2. Ultimately, everything achieved in Christ, the "last Adam" and "second man" (cf. 1 Cor. 15:45, 47), is simply the restoration and accomplishment of God's original purpose in creation. As creation was "good" in the beginning, so will it be made at the end.

***For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.* (ESV 1 Corinthians 15:21-23)**

Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification (unto resurrection). ¹⁷ For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ (i.e. resurrection, cf. 6:5). (NIV Romans 5:16-17)

3. This is the context for the well known passages in the New Testament that clearly assume that creation as a whole will be redeemed and reconciled to God (vs. alienated and annihilated).

And he made known to us the mystery of his will (for redemption) according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment-- to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head (not destroy and recreate), even Christ. (NIV Ephesians 1:9-10)

***For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven* (not alienate and annihilate), *by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.* (NIV Colossians 1:19-20)**

***For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay (i.e. redeemed) and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. ²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth (for release from frustration) right up to the present time. ²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies (implying that creation will also be redeemed).* (NIV Romans 8:20-23)**

F. Cosmological "Resurrection"

1. Thus, just as man experiences a resurrection, so will the earth. In both cases, there is continuity of identity between the old and the new. Thus, as the body experiences death, yet is resurrected from its destruction, so too will the present earth be resurrected from its destruction at the end of the age (cf. Mt. 24:29; 2 Pe. 3:12).
2. As Jesus' resurrected body was designed for this earth (cf. Jn. 20-21; Acts 1), so also will our eternal resurrected bodies will be designed for this eternally existing earth. As the resurrection of the redeemed who are left on the earth at the return of Jesus is a radical transformation (cf. 1 Cor. 15:51-53), so also will the resurrection of the earth be a radical transformation. As we are "changed," so will the earth be "changed."

***Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed (regenerated, not etherealized), ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.* (ESV 1 Corinthians 15:51-52)**

3. As the resurrection of man is by means of the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom. 1:1-4; Gal. 6:8; 1 Pe. 3:18-22), so also will the resurrection of the earth be by means of the Holy Spirit.

***When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.* (NIV Psalm 104:30)**

***Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more... ⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."* (ESV Revelation 21:1, 5)**

4. Thus, the "passing away" of the "old man" will be comparable to the "passing away" of the "old earth."

***Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away (Gk. *parerchomai*); behold, all things have become new.* (NKJV 2 Corinthians 5:17)**

- <3928> *pare,rcomai parerchomai* {par-er'-khom-ahee}

Meaning: 1) to go past, pass by 1a) of persons moving forward 1a1) to pass by 1b) of time 1b1) an act continuing for a time 1c) metaph. 1c1) to pass away, perish 1c2) to pass by (pass over), that is, to neglect, omit, (transgress) 1c3) to be led by, to be carried past, be averted 2) to come near, come forward, arrive

Origin: from 3844 and 2064; TDNT - 2:681,257; v

Usage: AV - pass away 12, pass 10, pass by 3, pass over 1, transgress 1, past 1, go 1, come forth 1, come 1; 31²

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away (Gk. *parerchomai*)... death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away (Gk. *aperchomai*). ⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." (ESV Revelation 21:1-5)

First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. ⁴ They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." ⁵ But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. ⁶ By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. ⁷ By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men... ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear (Gk. *parerchomai*, "pass away" KJV/NKJV/NASB/ESV/NRSV/NLT) with a roar; the elements (Gk. *stoicheion*) will be destroyed (Gk. *luo*) by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare (Gk. *heurisko*; "exposed" ESV, "disclosed", NRSV— MT Gk. *katakaio*; "burned up" KJV/NKJV/NASB). ¹¹ Since everything will be destroyed (Gk. *luo*) in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? ... ¹³ But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. (NIV 2 Peter 3:3-13)

- <3089> lu,w *luo* {loo'-o}

Meaning: 1) to loose any person (or thing) tied or fastened... 2) to loose one bound, i.e. to unbind, release from bonds, set free... 3) to loosen, undo, dissolve, anything bound, tied, or compacted together...

Origin: a root word; TDNT - 2:60 & 4:328,543; v

Usage: AV - loose 27, break 5, unloose 3, destroy 2, dissolve 2, put off 1, melt 1, break up 1, break down 1; 43³

- <2147> eu`ri,skw *heurisko* {hyoo-ris'-ko}

² Matt. 5:18; 8:28; 14:15; 24:34f; 26:39, 42; Mark 6:48; 13:30f; 14:35; Luke 11:42; 12:37 ("come forth"); 15:29 ("transgress"); 16:17; 17:7 ("go"); 18:37; 21:32f; Acts 16:8; 27:9; 2 Cor. 5:17; Jam. 1:10; 1 Pet. 4:3; 2 Pet. 3:10.

³ Matt. 5:19; 16:19; 18:18; 21:2; Mark 1:7; 7:35; 11:2, 4f; Luke 3:16; 13:15f; 19:30f, 33; John 1:27; 2:19 ("destroy"); 5:18; 7:23; 10:35; 11:44; Acts 2:24; 7:33; 13:25, 43; 22:30; 27:41; 1 Cor. 7:27; Eph. 2:14; 2 Pet. 3:10 ("melt"), 11 ("dissolved"), 12 ("dissolved"); 1 John 3:8 ("destroy"); Rev. 1:5; 5:2; 9:14f; 20:3, 7.

Meaning: 1) to come upon, hit upon, to meet with... 2) to find by enquiry, thought, examination, scrutiny, observation, to find out by practice and experience... 3) to find out for one's self, to acquire, get, obtain, procure

Origin: a prolonged form of a primary *heuro*...; TDNT - 2:769,*; v

Usage: AV - find 174, misc 4; 178

IV. THE EVERLASTING INHERITANCE OF THE SAINTS: THE “ERETS”

- A. God's Perpetual Covenant with the Land – The Hebrew word *erets* can be translated either “land” or “earth” according to context. In the Hebraic worldview, the *erets* is everywhere assumed to be the final sphere of redemption and the perpetual inheritance of God's people. Annihilationism fundamentally violates the covenants.

The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. ¹⁵ All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever... ¹⁷ Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you." (NIV Genesis 13:14-17)

I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. ⁸ The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God." (NIV Genesis 17:7-8)

Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and there he blessed me ⁴ and said to me, 'I am going to make you fruitful and will increase your numbers. I will make you a community of peoples, and I will give this land as an everlasting possession to your descendants after you.'" (NIV Genesis 48:3-4)

But Moses sought the favor of the LORD his God... ¹³ "Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self: 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever.'" (NIV Exodus 32:11-13)

So on that day Moses swore to me, "The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children forever, because you have followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly." (NIV Joshua 14:9)

That day David first committed to Asaph and his associates this psalm of thanks to the LORD... ¹⁵ He remembers his covenant forever, the word he commanded, for a thousand generations, ¹⁶ the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac. ¹⁷ He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, to Israel as an everlasting covenant: ¹⁸ "To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion you will inherit." (NIV 1 Chronicles 16:7, 15-18)

Now therefore in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of the LORD, and in the hearing of our God, observe and seek out all the commandments of the LORD your God, that you

may possess this good land and leave it for an inheritance to your children after you forever. (^{ESV} 1 Chronicles 28:8)

O our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend? (^{NIV} 2 Chronicles 20:7)

Therefore, do not give your daughters in marriage to their sons or take their daughters for your sons. Do not seek a treaty of friendship with them at any time, that you may be strong and eat the good things of the land and leave it to your children as an everlasting inheritance. (^{NIV} Ezra 9:12)

The LORD is King for ever and ever; the nations will perish from his land. (^{NIV} Psalm 10:16)

For the LORD loves the just and will not forsake his faithful ones. They will be protected forever, but the offspring of the wicked will be cut off; ²⁹ the righteous will inherit the land and dwell in it forever. (^{NIV} Psalm 37:28-29)

As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD Almighty, in the city of our God: God makes her ("Mount Zion," i.e. Jerusalem) secure forever. (^{NIV} Psalm 48:8)

He is the LORD our God; his judgments are in all the earth. ⁸ He remembers his covenant forever, the word he commanded, for a thousand generations, ⁹ the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac. ¹⁰ He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, to Israel as an everlasting covenant: ¹¹ "To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion you will inherit." (^{NIV} Psalm 105:7-11)

Praise the LORD... ⁵ He provides food for those who fear him; he remembers his covenant forever. ⁶ He has shown his people the power of his works, giving them the lands of other nations... ⁹ He provided redemption for his people; he ordained his covenant forever—holy and awesome is his name. (^{NIV} Psalm 111:1-9)

Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever. ² As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds his people both now and forevermore. (^{NIV} Psalm 125:1-2)

Although you have been forsaken and hated, with no one traveling through, I will make you the everlasting pride and the joy of all generations... ²⁰ the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end. ²¹ Then will all your people be righteous and they will possess the land forever. (^{NIV} Isaiah 60:15-21)

Instead of their shame my people ("those who grieve in Zion", v.3) will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace they will rejoice in their inheritance; and so they will inherit a double portion in their land, and everlasting joy will be theirs. ⁸ For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery and iniquity. In my faithfulness I will reward them and make an everlasting covenant with them. (^{NIV} Isaiah 61:7-8)

But if you are careful to obey me, declares the LORD... ²⁵ then kings who sit on David's throne will come through the gates of this city with their officials. They and their officials will come riding in chariots and on horses, accompanied by the men of

Judah and those living in Jerusalem, and this city will be inhabited forever. (NIV Jeremiah 17:24-25)

"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah..." ³⁵ Thus says the LORD, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night...³⁶ "If this fixed order departs from before me, declares the LORD, then shall the offspring of Israel cease from being a nation before me forever..." ³⁸ Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when the city shall be rebuilt for the LORD... It shall not be uprooted or overthrown anymore forever." (ESV Jeremiah 31:31-40; cf. 33:24-26)

This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone... ²⁵ They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children will live there forever, and David my servant will be their prince forever. ²⁶ I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever. ²⁷ My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people. ²⁸ Then the nations will know that I the LORD make Israel holy, when my sanctuary is among them forever. (NIV Ezekiel 37:21-28)

I will betroth you (Israel) to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. ²⁰ I will betroth you in faithfulness (to the covenants), and you will acknowledge the LORD... ²³ I will plant her for myself in the land; I will show my love to the one I called "Not my loved one." (NIV Hosea 2:19-23)

Judah will be inhabited forever and Jerusalem through all generations. ²¹ Their bloodguilt, which I have not pardoned, I will pardon.' The LORD dwells in Zion! (NIV Joel 3:20-21)

I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them... ¹⁵ I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them. (NIV Amos 9:14-15)

Therefore, as surely as I live," declares the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, "surely Moab will become like Sodom, the Ammonites like Gomorrah-- a place of weeds and salt pits, a wasteland forever. The remnant of my people will plunder them; the survivors of my nation will inherit their land." (NIV Zephaniah 2:9)

- B. The Perpetuity of the Covenants – The promise of the *erets* is a central theme in God's covenantal dealings with Abraham and his descendants. God is abundantly clear throughout the later developments of redemptive history that this promise is never annulled. If the promise to Israel is permanent, then the *erets* is likewise permanent.

You have established your people Israel as your very own forever, and you, O LORD, have become their God. ²⁵ And now, LORD God, keep forever the promise you have made concerning your servant and his house. Do as you promised, ²⁶ so that your name will be great forever. (NIV 2 Samuel 7:24-26)

Therefore I will praise you, O LORD, among the nations; I will sing praises to your name. ⁵¹ He gives his king great victories; he shows unfailing kindness (hesed, "covenantal faithfulness") to his anointed, to David and his descendants forever. (NIV 2 Samuel 22:50-51)

And who is like your people Israel-- the one nation on earth whose God went out to redeem a people for himself, and to make a name for yourself... ²² You made your people Israel your very own forever, and you, O LORD, have become their God. ²³ And now, LORD, let the promise you have made concerning your servant and his house be established forever. Do as you promised, ²⁴ so that it will be established and that your name will be great forever. (NIV 1 Chronicles 17:21-24)

When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the LORD above the temple, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying, "He is good; his love (Hb. checed, "covenantal faithfulness") endures forever." (NIV 2 Chronicles 7:3; cf. 1 Chr. 16:34, 41; 2 Chr. 5:13; 7:6; 20:21; Ezra 3:11; Psa. 100:5; 106:1; 107:1; 117:2; 118:1ff, 29; 136:1ff; 138:8; Jer. 33:11)

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love (Hb. checed) endures forever. ² Let Israel say: "His love (Hb. checed) endures forever." ³ Let the house of Aaron say: "His love (Hb. checed) endures forever." ⁴ Let those who fear the LORD say: "His love (Hb. checed) endures forever." (NIV Psalm 118:1-4)

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made. (NIV Ps. 145:13)

But Israel will be saved by the LORD with an everlasting salvation; you will never be put to shame or disgraced, to ages everlasting. (NIV Isaiah 45:17)

I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. ² God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. ¹¹ Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! ... ²⁸ As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, ²⁹ for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. (NIV Romans 11:1-29)

- C. The Perpetuity of the Dwelling of God – The perpetual promise of God is for the redemption of Israel in their *erets*. However, this is only unto the greater purpose of the restoration of the dwelling of God with man, which in the Hebraic worldview is always associated with the *erets*.

Then Solomon said, "The LORD has said that he would dwell in thick darkness. ¹³ I have indeed built you an exalted house, a place for you to dwell in forever. (ESV 1 Kings 8:12-13)

And the LORD said to him, "I have heard your prayer and your plea, which you have made before me. I have consecrated this house that you have built, by putting my name there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time. (ESV 1 Kings 9:3)

For David said, "The LORD, the God of Israel, has given rest to his people, and he dwells in Jerusalem forever." (ESV 1 Chronicles 23:25)

He (Manasseh) built altars in the temple of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "My Name will remain in Jerusalem forever." (NIV 2 Chronicles 33:4)

Why gaze in envy, O rugged mountains, at the mountain (Mt. Zion/Jerusalem) where God chooses to reign, where the LORD himself will dwell forever? (NIV Psalm 68:16)

Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place for the soles of my feet. This is where I will live among the Israelites forever... ⁹ Now let them put away from me their prostitution and the lifeless idols of their kings, and I will live among them forever. (NIV Ezekiel 43:7-9)

- D. The Perpetuity of the Messiah – The restoration of the dwelling of God with redeemed Israel on the *erets* is ultimately orchestrated by the coming Messiah. It is the Messiah who will perpetually reign on the *erets*; it is Abraham's descendants who will rule with him; and it is the land of Israel that is the locus of this redemptive activity.

When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you... ¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever... ¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever. (NIV 2 Samuel 7:12-16)

My heart is stirred by a noble theme as I recite my verses for the king... ² You are the most excellent of men and your lips have been anointed with grace, since God has blessed you forever... ⁵ Let your sharp arrows pierce the hearts of the king's enemies; let the nations fall beneath your feet. ⁶ Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. (NIV Psalm 45:1-6)

Endow the king with your justice, O God, the royal son with your righteousness... ⁵ He will endure as long as the sun, as long as the moon, through all generations... ⁸ He will rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth... ¹¹ All kings will bow down to him and all nations will serve him... ¹⁷ May his name endure forever; may it continue as long as the sun. All nations will be blessed through him, and they will call him blessed. ¹⁹ Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory. (NIV Psalm 72:1-19)

I will sing of the LORD's great love (Hb. *cheched*) forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. ² I will declare that your love (Hb. *cheched*) stands firm forever, that you established your faithfulness in heaven itself. ³ You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, ⁴ 'I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations.'... ²⁷ I will also appoint him my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth ²⁸ I will maintain my love (Hb. *cheched*) to him forever, and my covenant with him will never fail. ²⁹ I will establish his line forever, his throne as long as the heavens endure... ³⁵ Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness-- and I will not lie to David-- ³⁶ that his line will continue forever and his throne endure before me like the sun; ³⁷ it

will be established forever like the moon, the faithful witness in the sky." (NIV Psalm 89:1-37)

The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." ⁵ The Lord is at your right hand; he will crush kings on the day of his wrath. ⁶ He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead and crushing the rulers of the whole earth. (NIV Psalm 110:4-6)

Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. (NIV Isaiah 9:7)

This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone... ²⁵ They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children will live there forever, and David my servant will be their prince forever. (NIV Ezekiel 37:21, 25)

But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain ("kingdom", v. 39ff) and filled the whole earth. ⁴⁴ In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. (NIV Daniel 2:35, 44)

In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed... ²⁶ "But the court will sit, and his power ("little horn", v. 8) will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. ²⁷ Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him." (NIV Daniel 7:13-27)

In that day, declares the LORD, I will assemble the lame and gather those who have been driven away and those whom I have afflicted; ⁷ and the lame I will make the remnant, and those who were cast off, a strong nation; and the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion from this time forth and forevermore. (ESV Micah 4:6-7)

He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end. (NIV Luke 1:32-33)

The crowd spoke up, "We have heard from the Law that the Christ will remain forever, so how can you say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'?" (NIV John 12:34)

Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." (ESV Revelation 11:15)

V. CONCLUSION: THE END OF THE AGE VS. THE END OF THE WORLD

- A. Mistranslation of the Greek word for “age” (Gk. *aion*) has perpetuated the Hellenistic belief in the annihilation of creation and “the end of the world.”

As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end (Gk. sunteleia, “close” ESV) of the age (Gk. aion, “world” KJV)?" Matt. 24:3

- <4930> sunte,leia sunteleia {soon-tel'-i-ah}

Meaning: 1) completion, consummation, end

Origin: from 4931 [Gk. *sunteleo*: “to complete, accomplish”]; TDNT - 8:64,1161; n f

Usage: AV - end 6; 6

- <165> aivw,n aion {ahee-ohn'}

Meaning: 1) for ever, an unbroken age, perpetuity of time, eternity 2) the worlds, universe 3) period of time, age [Liddell-Scott: “1) one's lifetime, life 2) an age, generation 3) a long space of time, an age 4) a definite space of time, an era, epoch, age, period”]

Origin: from the same as 104 [Gk. *aei*: “perpetually...”]; TDNT - 1:197,31; n m

Usage: AV - ever 71, world 38, never + 3364 + 1519 + 3588 6, evermore 4, age 2, eternal 2, misc 5; 128

Usage: NASB - age(20), ages(6), ancient time(1), beginning of time(m)(1), course(m)(1), eternal(2), eternity(1), ever*(2), forever(27), forever and ever(20), forevermore(2), never*(8), old(2), time(1), world(m)(7), worlds(m)(1).

The field is the world (Gk. kosmos)...³⁹ The harvest is the end of the age (Gk. aion, “world” KJV), and the harvesters are angels.⁴⁰ As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age (Gk. aion, “world” KJV).⁴¹ The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil (i.e. regeneration)...⁴⁹ This is how it will be at the end of the age (Gk. aion, “world” KJV). The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous⁵⁰ and throw them into the fiery furnace (i.e. Gehenna), where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (NIV Matthew 13:38-50)

- B. Though we endure the tyranny of death in this age, we are not left alone in it. Jesus promised that he would be with us—that he would carry us through—to the end of this age. We will not be left as orphans during this age; we are given the Holy Spirit as an assurance of the age to come, leading us and strengthening us in our belief in the resurrection.

Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age (Gk. aion, “world” KJV).” (ESV Matthew 28:18-20)

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you (as a deposit initially, then fully forevermore). ¹⁸ I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live (resurrected as a firstfruits), you also will live (in the resurrection). ²⁰ In that day (of the resurrection) you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. (NIV John 14:16-20)