

New Heavens and New Earth

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.—Revelation 21:1

Many Scriptures in the Bible use symbolic language. In this text *heaven* represents the various religious or spiritual powers, *earth* is symbolic of the lower or social order of things, *mountains* represent earthly governments, and *seas* are the restless and discontented masses of the people of the earth.

When John was given a vision of the new earth, he saw the same physical earth with a new social order—a better way of life based on God’s righteous rules and principles.

When John saw the vision of the new heavens, he was not seeing God’s throne in a new place. The heavens here referred to are the religious systems in the world all claiming to be the “right” religion. Eventually these will give way to the establishment of Christ’s kingdom of truth and righteousness.

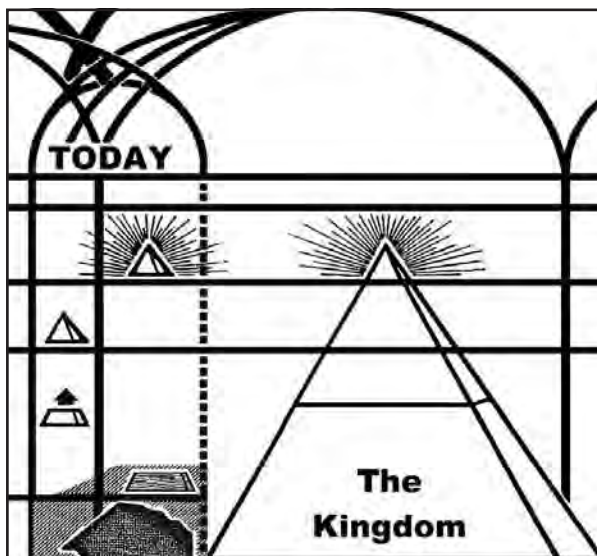
Christ’s kingdom is the third “heavens and earth” or “the world to come.” The first was the world that was flooded with water in Noah’s day (2 Peter 3:6). It had been under the rule and influence of the angels.

The second world or social order then started and it will end in the great time of trouble. This world is also called the “present evil world” because of Satan’s power and influence; indeed, he is called “the prince of this world” (John 12:31). The new heavens and the new earth in the world to come will be based on love and

justice rather than might and oppression; righteousness will prevail.

The blotting out of evil will be gradual and it will take a thousand years of Christ's kingdom before it will be accomplished. This will be a time when "the righteous will flourish" (Psalm 72:7), and "the willing and obedient will eat the best from the land" (Isaiah 1:19). Eventually all evil men will be cut off (Psalm 37:9).

Mankind has been hoping and praying for these conditions since our Lord walked this earth and taught his disciples to pray: "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). This is a wonderful promise and is yet to be fulfilled!



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