

Earth: The Home of the Righteous

written by Tim Jennings, M.D. | December 17, 2010



Can you please prove to me where people will live when Jesus comes, will it be here on earth or in heaven?

I don't know if I can "prove" it, but I will walk through the evidence of Scripture as I understand it.

The Scripture tells us that the earth will be the possession of the righteous:

Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. Ps 2:8

His soul shall dwell in prosperity, and his seed shall inherit the earth. Ps 25:13

But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. 2:Pet 3:13

Jesus tells us that the meek will inherit the earth:

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Matt 5:5

The prophet Isaiah describes the place the righteous live as a safe place where there is no poisonous snake and where the leopard and goat and the calf and lion lie down together and will be led by children. And after this description the prophet states:

They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Isa 11:9

So the Bible is teaching that the earth will be renewed and the place where we live. What may cause some confusion regarding the eternal home of the righteous is the sequence of events in wrapping up sin on planet earth and Bible passages which speak of going to meet the Lord in the air. Basically, the sequence goes like this:

1. Christ returns and all the righteous living are transformed and taken into the air with Christ and go to heaven. All the righteous dead are resurrected and taken into the air and go to heaven. The wicked dead stay dead and the wicked who are alive when Christ returns, die.
2. Christ leaves earth with all the righteous from Adam down through history and goes to heaven for 1000 years.
3. The earth is a dark, void, what the Bible calls an "abyss" where Satan and his angels stay for 1000 years. No humans are alive on earth at this time.
4. After 1000 years Christ, the New Jerusalem, the Father, all saints and angels return to earth and the wicked from all time are resurrected.
5. Satan marshals the wicked and they assault the city and fire comes out from God and consumes them and then the earth is made new and will be the eternal home of the righteous.

What is the evidence for this sequence of events?

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. 1Thes 4:13-17

Notice at the second coming the dead in Christ rise first - then who rises second? Would it not be the wicked, those not in Christ? And when will these two groups rise in the sequence of events?

I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years. Rev 20:4-6

Notice that the righteous rise in the first resurrection which takes place at the beginning of the 1000 years. But the “rest of the dead,” which would be the wicked, don’t live again until the end of the 1000 years.

At the beginning of the 1000 years the righteous leave the earth with Christ and the wicked are all dead, in the graves and Satan is left here to contemplate his rebellion. The Bible describes this as throwing Satan into the Abyss for 1000 years.

And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time. Rev 20:1-3

Satan is bound by circumstances beyond his control. He cannot go to heaven and he cannot raise the dead thus he is bound and can do nothing but wait for Christ to return at the end of the 1000 years.

When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God’s people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. Rev 20:7-9

Notice when the 1000 years are over Satan is “released.” Why? Because the wicked are raised at the end of the 1000 years and thus the devil now has someone to again mislead. And notice he leads the wicked to attack the New Jerusalem. But it is at that time fire comes out from God and consumes them.

And after this the earth is recreated and made new and God dwells with His people here on 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. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. Rev 21:1-3

Since everything will be destroyed 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 speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. 2:Pet 3:11-13.

What a day that will be - all sin destroyed and the earth made new, free from disease, pain, suffer, no thorn, no poisonous plant, no death, living forever in perfect peace and love with our Friend and Savior Jesus Christ!