




*ARE STUDY
THE LOGIC OF
ESCHATOLOGY*



THE EXEGETICAL LOGIC OF ESCHATOLOGY

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(A) THE END OF THE HEAVEN AND EARTH IS PROPHECIED IN SCRIPTURE AND PREDICTED BY SCIENCE

It makes little sense to say more than that scientific models from observing the universe lead scientists in the main to forecast that the earth and its accompanying solar system will end as a white dwarf – much as Peter prophesied in a liquefied and gaseous state. What scripture says is set out below in terms of the original text.

1. OUR LORD JESUS SAID THE OLD WORLD WOULD GO SPEED AWAY OR COME TO AN END (1)

Matthew 5.18 Ἀμην γὰρ λέγω ὑμῖν ἐὼς **αν παρελθῇ ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ** ἵνα ἐν
μία κερατῇ οὐ μὴ παρελθῇ ἀπὸ μου νόμου..the subjunctive + "until" speaks of
definite action in future time

(2) *Matthew 24.35*

ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ παρελευσονται οἱ δὲ λόγοι μου οὐ μὴ παρελθῶσι...The
indicative present a factual statement on "passing away" or "coming to an end" – so
nowhere to be seen – like a flight of birds it will disappear into the great distance.

(3) *Apocalypse 21.1*

Καὶ εἶδον οὐρανὸν καὶ γῆν καινὴν ὁ γὰρ πρῶτος οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ πρώτη γῆ
παρηλθε καὶ ἡ **θαλάσσα οὐκ ἐστίν ἐτι** The passing of the first heavens means the
end of sun and moon and tidal seas

*Irenaeus who learned from Polycarp who in turn sat at the feet of John the Apostle
and writer of the Apocalypse writes lucidly about the millennium and city of God
which follows. He says "None of these things can be taken allegorically but
everything is solid and true and substantial just as really as the resurrection is real
and not allegorical. Irenaeus in his "Apostolic preaching" section 69 refers to the
destruction of unbelievers as co-terminal with the "end of the world" – which is
accomplished immediately upon the "Great White Throne" judgment of Apocalypse 20
13-15 & 21.1*

The Hebrew writer confirmed their end:

Hebrews 1.11

*Scripture reads: You are before all, LORD, You laid earth's foundations-the heavens
are the work of Your hands – they will perish but You remain.*

Σὺ κατ' ἀρχὰς κυριε τὴν γῆν ἐθεμελίωσας καὶ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν σου εἰσιν οἱ οὐ
ρανοὶ αὐτοὶ **ἀπολύνται** σὺ δὲ διαμένεις and *Psalm 102 25-7* from which he
quotes with approval reads dm[t htaw **wdbay** hmh mymv Jydy hB[mw tdsy xr[h mynp]

In Psalm 102 the Spirit of God uses the word ABADDON-which means “destruction” and the Hebrew writer chooses APOLLUMI which means “perish”. Renewal is out of the question after the millennium

Peter in the “Parade of History” configured the setting in which they are dispensed with. 2Peter3.12

Παρουσια της του Θεου ημερας δι ην ουρανοι πυρουμενοι λυθησονται και στοιχεια καυσουμενα ρηκεται; καινους δε ουρανους και γην καινην κατα το ε παγγελμα αυτου προσδοκθμεν εν οις δικαιοσυνη κατοικει

(1) Peter speaks of the first **αρχης v.4** of creation. We might ask the "first what"? I believe it might simply read "The beginning of" but the phrase **αρχης κτισεως** balances the phrase **ημερα κρισεως** in such a way as to draw a contrast between the apparent steady state of the first day and the convulsive crises of the day of God or judgment.

(2) The "forgotten day" is that of "Noah" – but it was a day of former judgment

(3) In verse 4 Peter speaks of "the... from which the fathers fell asleep" **αφ ης** Again we are left to understand "the day or epoch in which" they died.

(4) Then, the day of the LORD and His Apostles v2.

(5) In v.10 the "day of the LORD'S Parousia" **ημερα κυριου**

He contrasts the “day of the LORD” with the "day of God" **της του θεου ημερας**

(6) In v.12. as spelt out at greater length in my commentary these epochs are quite different in nature – one begins with Christ's return and settling of the earth after the vials of the Apocalypse – the other is **the terrible day of fire dissolution and passing away of the present earth and heavens.**

(7) Peter concludes his Sabbaticon with a reference to the "seventh day" of the cycle of man's story – the "day of eternity" **ημεραν αιωνιος.**

This latter concluding expression is translated "both now and forever" so neutralising the intent of the apostle to put the finishing touch to his portraiture of man's story.

This general line-up is presented in the Epistle of Barnabas and reflected widely in patristic literature.

(2) THE RENEWAL OF THE MILLENNIUM-NOT TO BE MISTAKEN FOR HEAVEN AND TAKEN TO INTIMATE ETERNITY ON EARTH

It is in confusing the millennium with the eternal state that many earnest Christians plunge into terrible confusion. The Millennium is a period when those born still come to believe and when the curse abides and there is a form of punishment for sin which is described in Isaiah 66.24.

Why must there be a Millennium?

(1) Because the LORD promised it on 50 separate occasions.

(2) Because Ezekiel the prophet set out the temple to which the LORD will quickly come-there is to be a fourth temple era.

(3) Because “All Israel shall be saved” as the Apostle Paul prophesied in Romans

(4) Because biblical prophecy predicts a broken peace treaty in the last days and a serious war to which there is no solution for Israel but the return of Christ as her

Messiah nor indeed any hope for the Gentile peoples but the coming of Shiloh – the desire of all nations.(Haggai 2.7)

(5) Because the Church cannot bring about an era when no man shall need to evangelise his neighbour and the knowledge of God will blanket the earth as the waters fill the seas.

(6) Because God's sovereignty properly understood continues to develop a plan of salvation in accordance with His decrees and for His own glory from the Prediluvian or Adamic days through the course of the Noahic covenant via the Abrahamic revelation to the fathers and then against the background of indicative Torah in Christ who fulfilled the law. His Church amongst all nations would yield at His coming to the golden era long foretold when all would be subject to Christ and finally the Pantocrator (Sovereign victor) by the sovereign provision of the eternal city leads His own to a "new heaven and earth" the permanent home of righteousness. On the other hand through the final judgment of the great white throne the wicked and angels who have sinned are cast into the lake of fire which is the second death and simultaneously heaven and earth pass away in fiery immolation.

Why has the millennium been so vilified?

For two reasons – one historical – the other exegetical and theological

(1) THE MISCHIEF OF ORIGEN & AUGUSTINE (4TH -5TH CENTURIES) WHO SOWED CONFUSION

Augustine who saw the Jews as earthly minded and over-indulged in the long prophesied Millennium came to believe that **the church hierarchy might "reign" over the kingdom of God and the transfer was virtually made to replace the Kingdom of Christ in the millennium** with a then current millennium and the imminence of the Advent of Christ was lost in the consolidation of Gregory the Great who popularised Augustine and hailed the reign of the Pope. This in the light of time is totally disingenuous. The Reformers who dug us out of the enormities of mother church's sacraments and her doctrine of works did nothing to restore the original concept of the Kingdom of Christ but rather repeated the foibles of Alexandria and joined Plato to their thinking once again. The thought of a "mille"(Latin) "thousand golden years" way in the distance crumbled when the Constantinian era created its own substitute for the future Jewish theocratic prophecy and Augustine 354-430 taught instead that Satan was **bound at the first advent of Christ** and that the millennium was now associated with the Roman church and **would end in 650AD**. When **this date failed 1000AD was chosen** and **that was in turn spiritualised** and made to run till this day and the promises of the Kingdom are transferred to the Church. All this retrenchment gives the lie to a fundamental error in post Constantinian and Medievalist thinking. It was simply self-invalidating. Origen of Alexandria who allegorised scripture played havoc with the honest line of first second and third century literalists who stood in the stead of those the first Apostles and redrafted what is taught in the Apocalypse – despite the threat that his part in the Holy City would be forfeit through an attempt to redraft this book. (**Apocalypse 22.19**) Origen's method was to conserve and re-interpret. He kept every word but the words no longer meant what

they said. He changed the meaning of the whole book and made it a house of symbols to fit the whim of any and every future scholar.

(2) CALVIN THREW HIS WEIGHT AGAINST IT -HISCOMMENTARIES ON THE PSALMS SHOW WHAT CONTORTIONS THAT CREATED FOR HIM CALVIN'S PROBLEM

It would have somewhat helped the Pre-millennial cause amongst Reformed teachers today had John Calvin espoused this biblical truth. However we are not attached at the hip to the Reformer of Geneva.

Why did this young thinker of the Reformation who knew about the position of the early church reject that Pre-Millennialism? His statement anent the Millennium was "**their fiction is too puerile to require or deserve refutation**"(Institutes 2.250)

Calvin thought that Chiliasm subscribed the Eternal. He imagined that the millennial reign of Christ was **an abrogation** of divine sovereignty. He was mistaken. Thus, curiously, the ground where Calvin seems impregnable is the very point where he showed a critical weakness-in understanding at this vital turning point of the ages the divine sovereign purpose as clearly stated in biblical prophecy.

THE APOSTLE PAUL WRITES,

Then cometh the end when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and authority and power, for He must reign till he hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He (Shaddai) hath put all things under His (Christ's) feet. But when He says all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He (Shaddai) is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued under him, then shall the Son Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him that God may be all in all.

God's original purpose was to manifest his absolute sovereignty when Christ unites the earthly theocracy with the eternal kingdom of God. Nor should Calvin have needed or indeed any modern thinker suppose that Christ's reign is then at an end. There is absolutely no conflict with Messianic rule and the Kingdom of God. One cannot abrogate the other. It is alarming that Calvin should make such a cardinal mistake.

As **VAN FALKENBURG** corrected adduced "The Father was excepted when all things were put under the Son so also shall He (Christ) be excepted when all things are put under Him (the Father)." The dominion shall be rescued from His enemies and restored to the Godhead. Christ shall reign without end for "His dominion is an everlasting dominion and of His Kingdom there shall be no end". It is most assuredly the case that when the dominion is fully Christ's it is fully God's. Thus the eternal and heavenly state is one in which "The kingdom or sovereignty of the world has become the kingdom of our LORD and of HIS Christ and HE will reign for ever and ever. Chafer puts it well "**The distinction to be noted lies between the presentation to the Father of a restored authority and the supposed abrogation of a throne on the part of the Son. The latter is neither required nor intimated**" (Chafer Systematic

Theology 5 373-4) Do we not read in Revelation 22.3 of the New Jerusalem in the eternal state that "**the throne of God and of the Lamb** shall be in it". It is adequately clear that the dismissive remark of Calvin rather tarnishes that saintly theologian's record in a field where he is presumed to excel – that of defender of the **sovereignty of God**.

(B) THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

**Thus we have the end of the present earth and heaven plainly set out in scripture
Now we look at the millennial age that interposes between**

ISAIAH 60 3, 5, 19-20 AND THE GOLDEN ERA

(1) SINNERS ARE STILL BORN AND SAVED DURING THE MILLENNIUM

We are told in the Apocalypse that "Satan is bound for "a thousand years". Some associate his binding with the church – but it has already been on earth almost 2000 years. Clearly Satan is bound during the Millennium. Thus violent evil does not disturb – cf Isaiah 65 whilst sin remains.

Many restrict salvation to the church age – but it was afforded before the N.T Church existed and it will belong to the saints of the millennium too. For those who allege it cannot be true because it is not by faith during the 3 years of Christ's ministry it was offered when Christ was present – and refused. To those who object that the devil is not present to tempt and that is not fair – remember that the devil is released at the end of this era and tests the obedience of all who have lived through it so that they gain no unequal advantage in the matter of that hard choice.

And the city retained no use for the sun or indeed for the moon that they should shine on her for the glory of God beamed and transmitted light in her and the lamb was her illumination. [λυχνος] In its millennial role the city co-exists with the sun and moon. And the nations of those who were being saved [literally "getting themselves saved"] were walking in her light.

ISAIAH 65& THE GOLDEN ERA

(2) SIN REMAINS AND THE CURSE CHILDREN ARE BORN AND WILD & DOMESTIC ANIMALS REMAIN ON EARTH

*For behold me **creating from nothing** Jerusalem an object of exultation and my people an object of joy. I will dance in Jerusalem and rejoice in my people and the voice of weeping shall not be heard any more nor the voice of crying. There shall not be any more a suckling infant living but days or a senior who has not completed his days. They will live long beyond the three score and ten – and there will be no infant deaths. For boyhood at 100 years shall die and "the sinner" who is the son of one hundred years **will have been cursed**. They shall build houses and dwell in them. They shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit. For as the days of "the tree" shall the days of my people be and my chosen ones shall rejoice in the work of their hands. They shall not labour for emptiness or poverty or bring forth children for sudden destruction for they are a seed of blessed women of the Lord and their descendants (are) with them. And it will come to pass that before they call I will answer and while they speak I will hear. The wolf and lamb shall pasture as one.*

*The lion like the calf shall eat fodder or straw and the serpent dust for his meat.
They shall not do evil or destroy in all the mountain of my holiness says the LORD*

(C) THE ETERNAL SETTING OF THE HEAVENLY CITY CONCOMBITANT NEW EARTH AND HEAVEN

THE NEW JERUSALEM AND THE NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH IN ISAIAH

In a detailed study of the Millennium I have made exegetical comments on 24 separate references of this insightful prophet into conditions during that period. It is only in his final chapter that he speaks of the eternal state or the New Heaven and New Earth. In fact our best information on this subject is found in Isaiah and in the Apocalypse of John.

1. ISAIAH AND THE NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH

Isaiah's short reference in Isaiah 65:17-18 has to be studied with care. The prophet is speaking of two separate creative acts or "Fiats" of God. They are separated with a "But". Characteristically much more is said of the latter.

(1) The first is the "New heaven and earth" and –

(2) The second is an earlier rebuild of Jerusalem on earth for millennial felicity. Those who live in it will rejoice in it for "an age" – not eternally. The word מלחמה signifies also a "lifetime" but it is particularly apt since it can mean also a "Chronon" or "a thousand years" and people will survive in fitness right through this age.

What we do have to observe is that sinners remain in the second fiat referred to – the millennial era. (v.20) Those who enjoy the millennial Jerusalem of this prophecy live long to build plant and enjoy their natural food. They still use prayer although provision is comprehensive. Animal husbandry includes beasts of the wild.

To go back to (1) which is the interest of this section we are told that the "first heaven and earth" will not rise to be contemplated by the heart. We will have no desire to go back to planet earth or to its sunny days with the pain of sunburn or "moonlight nights" when bandits went abroad.

The LORD will act creatively at the beginning of the Millennium and people will behold what He does. The LORD speaks even the new earthly city into being and possibly its temple also. He certainly speaks the new world here foretold into being. It may well be that whereas man saw nothing of the creation of this world we are now living in man will see the new world arrive in its glory to merge with the eternal city.

The new heaven and earth are described as מַיְדֵי (New) and it is used of:

- (i) A new threshing wain to replace the old one had served its day 1Sam 6.7*
- (ii) A new King who succeeded the former Exodus 1.8*

- (iii) A new house to which to move from a former residence Deut 20.5
- (iv) New grain harvested as opposed to old *ἡ* Leviticus 26.10
- (v) Even new unheard of “gods” Deut 32.17
- (vi) A new song Psa33.3 40.4

I am quite bullish about the unprejudiced nature of the new heaven and earth given the biblical background of Isaiah both in the context and throughout the prophecy. He is saying what he means and means what he says. This is not like a new cart on the old wooden wheels – it is a “shining” new heaven and earth – the idea of “glow” and “polish” of that which is utterly unused and different is associated.

2. JOHN THE DIVINE ON THE NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH APOCALYPSE 21

1. And I saw a **new heaven and new earth** (Greek οὐρανὸν καινὸν καὶ γῆς καινὴν
2. Hebrew *hvdh xra* *mybdh*)-for a first heaven and the first earth **had passed away**. (Greek *παρελθε* Hebrew N.T. *¶rb*[])

The Greek word **καινός** shares with **νέος** the notion of *de novo* indeed it is the preferred word for "spanking new" because νέος technically means "fresh" or new as in "new moon" which is really the old moon in a new or fresh phase. KAINOS is the term employed for "newly invented" by Euripides and Plato. Xenophon speaks of Cyrus as introducing little that was really "new". Thucydides speaks of a "new stage in war; Demosthenes of "new suffering" or "pain"; ANTIPHO the orator highlighted the newest needs rather than the newest frauds.

In Dr. William Barclay's New Testament "Letters and Revelation" apropos Revelation 21.5 he makes this statement, "Greek has two words for "new". There is *neos* which is new in point of time, and there is *kainos* which is new, not only in time, but in character also. In a factory producing pencils the millionth pencil would be *neos*, new in point of time, but it would not be *kainos* because it would be exactly the same as all the others that went before. In an exact mirroring of the O.T.term HADASH the word KAINOS intimates something "entirely new".

The "New Jerusalem" confirms this without any etymological intricacies. Quite evidently the New Heaven which is described in great detail in 21.10 is not the Old Jerusalem nor even a recasting of it for millennial use such as again Isaiah does describe as referred to above in the interim context – ***this Jerusalem that “comes down from heaven” is a city spoken into being by God and has never yet been seen by mortals on earth. Its one sighting is in John’s vision.*** It would seem plain to any but the dullest that by parallel the New Heaven and New Earth are spoken into life just as the Old one was – and that, like the New Jerusalem, they are an absolute replacement not a renewing or renovation of any kind whatsoever.

John uses the term “passing away” and this term has essentially two uses. The first is *to fly away at speed like a group of pigeons* that fly rapidly into the distance and are seen no more. The second use applies to *great waves which roll in on the shore and are destroyed as they crash on the rocks* and so are no more. It is also used of the disappearance of a cloud or the passing of something without notice.

I rest my case for that which God has occasioned us to expect. Don't settle for less – for you won't get it.

Love in Jesus,

Bob Coffey