

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Church and Last Things, Session 20, The Eternal State, Eternal Punishment The New Heaven and New Earth

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This is Dr. Robert A. Peterson in his teaching on Doctrines of the Church and Last Things. This is session 20, The Eternal State, Eternal Punishment, The New Heaven and New Earth.

Gracious Father, we thank you for your Holy Word. We thank you for giving us the same Holy Spirit who wrote your word through the prophets and apostles of old. Illuminate us as we study, lead us in your truth, and we praise your holy name through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We finish our course on Ecclesiology and Eschatology, the Doctrines of the Church, and Last Things by again introducing the Eternal State in a summary fashion. Eternal Punishment is the final, not the intermediate state. The master of hell is God and no one else.

A description of hell. There are at least five prominent New Testament pictures, some of them with Old Testament background. Darkness and separation, fire, crying and grinding of teeth, punishment and death and destruction.

As I work with these, I'm not going to talk about pluralism, the view that everyone is saved, or even a chance after death. I lament that that is increasing among evangelical theologians and biblical scholars. I acknowledge difficult verses in 1 Peter 3 and then chapter 4 refers back to that one, but good grief.

How could that be the basis of a whole theology? It just grieves me. No, there's no chance after death. Twice in John 8, Jesus says, if you do not believe that I am he, you will die in your sins says once you die in your sin says once.

Is there a chance after death? The most powerful verse is Hebrews 9:27. Just as it is appointed for man once to die, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly, eagerly waiting for him. It's appointed for people to die once, and after that comes judgment, not an opportunity for salvation.

The opportunity for salvation is in this life only. But I will be dealing with annihilationism or conditionalism. It is the view, and I'll give the best view, the best

evangelical view, because some evangelical Christians hold this, and that number is increasing because they don't like eternal hell.

Well, our likes and dislikes cannot be our canon, our standard for determining right and biblical teaching. It must be sola scriptura, not our reason, tradition, experience, or likes and dislikes. The New Testament paints at least five pictures in hell, of hell, darkness, and separation from God.

I'm going to mention passages and deal with some great and some very important ones selectively. I will mention Matthew 8:12, Matthew 25:30, and Jude 13. Matthew 8:12, Matthew 25:30, Jude 13.

I'm going to deal with two, one in the Gospels and one in Paul's letters. Matthew 22:13, the parable of the banquet, the parable of the wedding feast. The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son and sent out invitations, but they wouldn't come.

Tell them what a great meal I prepared, but still they wouldn't come. King's angry sends out troops and destroys the city. Therefore, go to the main roads and invite as many people as you can to the wedding feast as you can, making it a free offer.

Those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good, so the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw a man without a wedding garment. Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment? The man was speechless.

The king said, bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place, there'll be weeping and gnashing of teeth, for many are called, but few are chosen. Cast him into the outer darkness.

There, ESV says, in that place, which is fine, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. They want to avoid two threes in a row. Where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

We'll get back to weeping and gnashing of teeth, but for now, the outer darkness must be interpreted in light of the feast. Being at the feast speaks of love, fellowship, joy, communion with one another, sharing. Being thrown into the outer darkness means the opposite of all that.

It means to be cut off from love, joy, peace, and sharing. It means to be rejected by one's maker, a horrible fate indeed. Jesus uses the word Gehenna every time, but once it appears in James three, where the tongue it is said is set on fire by hell, Gehenna.

Every other time in the lips of Jesus, Jesus is the greatest hell preacher in the Bible. I speak reverently. He's a scare preacher.

He so-called he preaches war. The savior of the world warns people about hell. 2 Thessalonians 1, Paul doesn't use Gehenna.

He uses wrath and death and other language like that. His Romans 2 has a little bit. 2 Thessalonians 1 is the place in Paul.

He writes about persecuted Christians. He tells them God's going to bring relief to persecuted Christians. I want to read from second Thessalonians one five and following.

This is evidence of their steadfastness while enduring persecution and suffering. This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God for which you also are suffering. Indeed, God considers it just to repay those who are afflicted with affliction.

The second coming of Christ involves judgment and blessing, covenant curses, covenant blessings, condemnation, salvation, and grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us. When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, yikes, inflicting vengeance. This is what we call retributive justice.

God brings justice to those who have shaken their fist in his face. Inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. It seems that they're both speaking of the same group.

They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction. That pertains to the fifth picture, but this pertains to the first one of hell. Away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints and to be marveled at among all who have believed.

I'll come back to destruction. I've pointed out retributive justice. It's also here in another way.

He's going to reply with a reply. God will repay those who have afflicted you with affliction. That paying back the evil is retributive justice.

This is not remedial justice. Oh, many people will go to hell, but God is going to remediate them, and they'll get out. That's not taught in the Bible.

The Roman Catholic notion of purgatory is a purging of sins of those who didn't qualify for immediate entrance into heaven when they die. Which is basically

everybody except so-called saints. They go to a place of purgatory, and they work their sins off.

Vatican 2 says they make atonement for their sins in purgatory. Ah, I just shake my head. The reformers were right.

This is a devaluation of the work of Christ, as in Hebrews. Ah, the so-called third-place purgatory does not exist. According to Roman Catholic traditional teaching, only Catholics went to purgatory, and they all got out.

It wasn't where the unsaved went. After Carl Rayner's anonymous Christianity took over Vatican 2, everybody became an anonymous Christian, and there was hopeful universalism. Man, that is misguided as well.

I'm so sorry to say it, but it is misguided, and it's going to lead people to the hell that that teaching denies. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might. I said before from Revelation 14 that God is present in hell, but I also said he's not present everywhere in the same way.

And here, hell is the absence of God. Well, how does that fit? Well, in Revelation 14, the presence of God is in glory, justice, holiness, wrath, and punishment. Here, the absence of God for the wicked is the absence of his grace, mercy, fellowship, and salvation.

It's not contradictory. They will be in the darkness, so to speak. Another, I put darkness and separation together.

Being thrown outside the feast is to be separated from the blessings of the people of God. Here, explicitly, this is a good proof text for the common notion that hell is an eternal separation from God. It is true, rightly understood, although it's only a part of the picture, but it's a powerful part of the picture.

Hell uses fire imagery. Annihilationism says that's right. It's a primary image and it speaks of consumption.

So, John Stott says, when you throw stuff in an incinerator, what happens to it? It's consumed. Does the Bible use that illustration? No. Does it talk about the fire of hell as consuming people so they no longer exist? No.

I'll give some passages and work with a few again. Matthew 18:8 and 9. Matthew 13:30, 40 to 42, 49 and 50.

Luke 16, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, 23, 24, 25, 28. That one does not speak of the final hell but intermediate hell. Nevertheless, the fire image, does the fire imagery change? Does it mean suffering or pain in the intermediate hell and extermination in the final hell? I don't think so.

As a matter of fact, we'll see otherwise. One more time. I'm not going to turn to Matthew 18, 8 and 9.

Matthew 13:40 to 42, 49 and 50. Be thrown into the fiery furnace, Jesus says at the end of a couple of his parables. Luke 16:23, 24, 25, 28.

Not going back there. It is talking about the intermediate state, but it shows. Fire imagery speaks of.

I am in torment in this fire. Three places because of its importance. Matthew 25:41.

You say, how many times have we been back to the sheep and the goat? I told you it's the most important passage in the Bible and eternal destiny. No apologies. As a matter of fact, 25, 46, there'll go away to eternal punishment, and the righteous to eternal life is the most important single verse in the whole Bible historically.

The same adjective, eternal, modifies eternal punishment, eternal life. As a matter of fact, you sometimes hear that nobody ever limited eternal life. Well, that's actually wrong.

When you become an expert in an area, you find out weird stuff like that. William Whiston, known as the translator of Josephus, was an early annihilationist, and he was consistent. Eternal punishment lasts until the wicked are burned to a crisp and exist no more.

I'm being a little facetious. Eternal punishment, eternal. Actually, he said they started to discover comments and stuff.

The wicked will be placed on a comment and I'm not making this up. They'll be burned up. Eternal life on the new earth lasts a long time, but not forever.

That's absurd. Nobody else in the whole history of interpretation has ever said something like that to the best of mine. No, of course, they say eternal life is the life of God.

Eternal means age-long, literally, doesn't it? Yes. I own his age. I have owned EOS for a long.

Oh, so eternal punishment is age long, and eternal life is that? Yeah, that's right. But you have to be a little more specific. The age indicated by I own EOS is, and it doesn't always mean forever.

No, no. Philemon and, I want you to receive Philemon back. Let's receive Onesimus back.

Paul tells Philemon, not now as a slave, but as a brother forever. It means for the rest of his life in that context. Granted, I only also indicate a length of time and age.

That usually means a bigger thing in a lifetime whose age is circumscribed by the universe of discourse that is by the immediate context. What is the context of the age to come? It is characterized by the life of God himself, which, in the book of Revelation, is repeated forever and ever. Eternal punishment, eternal life have no end, but we're talking about fire.

Matthew 25, the King Jesus returning says, depart from me, you who are cursed into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Does the Bible ever tell us what that is? Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

Revelation 2010 tells us exactly what that is. What is the eternal fire prepared for the devil? Here's what it is. And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Absolutely unambiguous language. Depart from me, you cursed into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Revelation 2010, it means eternal means torment day and night forever and ever.

Case dismissed. Fire doesn't mean consumption in that, in that context. Revelation 1410, we've already looked at this.

The idolater will drink. It's an Old Testament image. Jeremiah 25, for example, a couple of Psalms, which I forget.

In the last days, the idolater will drink the wine of God's wrath poured full strength into the cup of his anger. He'll be tormented with fire and sulfur. What? He'll be consumed by fire.

No, no, he won't be consumed. He'll be tormented. The word means sorry, torture, torment.

He'll be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the Holy angels, and the presence of a lamb and the smoke of their torment will go up forever and ever. Aha. The annihilationist says they're exterminated.

They don't exist anymore. And their smoke goes up forever and ever. Really? I don't think so.

Where there's fire, there's smoke. Where there's smoke, there's something being burned. It's not a picture of consumption.

My goodness. How about this? Smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest day or night. You know, the annihilationists say, oh yes, as long as they exist, you're adding to the Bible to make it fit your theory.

No, I'm sorry. I don't even like it especially. Oh, I do like what God says, but it's not my human instinct to like it.

I submit to what God says, whether I would choose it or not. I have to give us a little, a little, a little tidbit here. We are not God.

We don't make the rules. We don't create the heaven and the earth. We're not the judge in the last day.

We don't make atonement on the cross. Good grief. Who do we think we are? Oh, I don't like this.

Well, get your likes in harmony with the word of God. Do you really want to make up your own religion? Another, so the fire image does not mean consumption. It means the infliction of terrible pain and suffering for all eternity.

If I say it right, I weep, and that means I can't lecture, so I'm not saying it right. Crying, weeping, and gnashing of teeth. Crying and grinding of teeth is used, interestingly, with reference to fire.

Matthew 13:42 and 50. I'm not even going to turn. The crying and grinding of teeth is used with reference to fire.

They'll be thrown into the fiery furnace where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Does that sound like consumption? No, it sounds like people are in shock. They're weeping.

They're gnashing their teeth to try to cope with what can't be coped with: fire and darkness. We already saw it in Matthew 22:13. Throw him, bind him hand and

foot, and throw that rascal out into the outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Do I see a continuity here? Yes, you do. Matthew 8:12. Matthew 22:13.

Matthew 25:30. Luke 13:28. He says there's a lot of crying and grinding of teeth, and in case somebody says, oh, this is literal.

The darkness is literal. The lake of fire, how do you have darkness and fire literally? Maybe you can make that one work. I want to see you make this one work.

Matthew 24:51. Nobody takes this literally. What are you trying to say? Don't you believe in hell? I do believe in hell, but just like so-called heaven or new heavens and new earth, God paints pictures in the case of that heaven to delight us with the best things from our world to speak of another world we can't fully imagine.

Contrary-wise, concerning hell, he takes pictures, throwing a millstone around somebody's neck and throwing him into the Sea of Galilee or the Dead Sea. That isn't such a terrible one for us, really. Apparently, it was for them.

Fire that's terrible at any age. Outer darkness. Spelunkers tell me that if you ever get down far enough in the earth with no light sources, it is right frightening.

They bring so many light sources that they don't run out. Anyway, this one cannot be literal. Matthew 24:51.

It speaks of the lost being drawn and quartered, being cut in pieces. Does anybody really think people are cut in pieces in hell? If they were, would they even continue to? It's absurd. 24:51.

What's going on? God is scaring the gibbers out of us. That's the point. Ferocious images from our world of, guess what? Real, everlasting punishment and pain in the next world.

Bodily, they're raised to go to hell. The master of that servant, Matthew 24:50, will come on a day when he does not expect him. And at an hour, he does not know.

And he'll cut him in pieces and put them with the hypocrites in that place where there will be, you guessed it, weeping and gnashing of teeth. The images are not especially literal. Maybe there will be some fire.

I don't know. I'm not prepared to give the chemistry or physics of hell, but I'll tell you what, it's real, it's eternal, and it is terrible. Punishment.

Matthew 25:46 is the most important verse. These will go away to eternal punishment.

Same word as in 1 John 4, kolosis. God's love cast out all punishment. People cast by God into hell suffer eternal punishment.

John 5, they'll be raised to a resurrection of judgment. 2 Thessalonians 1, those terrible, terrible language of retribution by God. Jude 7 speaks of fire speaks of punishment.

Revelation 14:10 to 11, we've seen it multiple times, speaks of terrible punishment. Death and destruction, annihilationists assume or argue, must be taken literally. The second death means the extinction of a being.

No, it doesn't. Death in the Bible never means extinction. What is the death sentence of Adam and Eve? Were they extinguished? No, they weren't extinguished nor extinguished.

They were separated from God. Death is separation. Separation from his fellowship.

Then, separation from the garden out of mercy cast him out. Lest they exist forever in, we'll call it a state of justification, without being totally glorified, still being sinners. Not good.

What is physical death? Annihilation? No, it's the separation of body from soul. What is eternal death? It's a lake of fire. It is eternal punishment, eternal separation from the blessing, glory, mercy, grace, fellowship of God.

Revelation 20 repeatedly speaks of more than once. 20:10, this is the second death, the lake of fire. 20:14-15, I mentioned this before real fast.

John Stott claims that destruction means exactly what it says. Oh, come on, John. You are a worthy handler of the Bible.

That ain't worthy of you. And he even cites this verse. That's a problem because it shows the opposite of what he claims.

Revelation 17, twice in Revelation 17, the apollosis, the destruction of the beast is prophesied. I'm just going to give the verses. 17-8, he's about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction, apollosis.

Apollomi is the verb, apollosis is the noun. Verse 11, the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth, belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction twice. Extermination, right? No, not at all.

In 19:20 we read, chapter 19, verse 20, and the beast was captured and with it the false prophet who in its presence, the beast's presence, had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who had worshipped his image. These two, the beast and false prophet, were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burned with sulfur. Destruction of the beast prophesied twice in Revelation 17:8 and 11.

19-20, they're thrown into the lake of fire. 20-10, the devil joins them. Notice this, and the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were.

Devil, beast, false prophet. You can't just make this speak of the devil because the verb is plural, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. I forget if it has a pronoun.

I don't think so. No, there's no pronoun. Basanizo is that word for to torment or torture, also used in 14.

They'll be tormented day and night until the age of the age. It is a figurative language for forever and ever. Nobody disagrees with that.

Enough. Everybody's not going to be saved. It's fool's gold to believe something like that.

And people who are lost are not going to be exterminated so that they suffer no more as if they could pay the penalty of their sins. No, Jesus paid the penalty for any sins that are to be paid for in terms of salvation. The lost will pay the penalty of their sins for all eternity.

I don't say it out of any kind of liking this notion, but we do not make up our own religion. The Lord God Almighty is the one who reveals himself. The new earth.

Finally, the new earth. The eternal state is not a disembodied spiritual existence in heaven. It is a resurrected holistic existence on the new earth.

Biblical passages, Isaiah 65:17. I have little time left to do much more than to read the passages and discuss a debate, which seems to me is largely now settled. But Deuteronomy 65 and 17.

For behold, the Lord is speaking, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind, but be glad and rejoice forever in what I create. For behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy and her people to be a gladness. That goes all the way to the end of that chapter.

It does use imagery of people dying at a very old age, that kind of a thing, which leads pre-millennialists to say, aha, this speaks of the golden age, not the platinum age of the new heavens, new earth. This is a millennium preceding the new heavens and new earth. What do I say to that? Greg Beale shows effectively, in my estimation, that Revelation 21 quotes this very passage.

And it speaks not of a millennial kingdom before the new heavens and new earth. That's supposedly just above it in Revelation 20 but it speaks of new heavens and new earth. That is the language of living for as old as the tree or whatever it is metaphorical and not literal language.

Revelation, Isaiah 66:22. 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 from new moon to new moon, from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, declares the Lord. And they shall go out and look on the dead bodies of the men who rebelled against me, for their worm shall not die.

Their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh. These words are quoted by Jesus in the gospel of Mark to speak of eternal punishment, the very last verse. As a matter of fact, in liturgy in the synagogue, they can't take it.

They just can't leave it alone. In the last verse in Isaiah, they take the verse up above about new heavens and repeat it. They can't let it end on such a negative note.

Well, that's how Isaiah's prophecy ends up. And furthermore, in case I forget to say this, the last three chapters of the Bible, the last two chapters, and the last two and a half chapters are about new heavens and new earth. But in chapter 20:21 and 22, there are references to hell.

In order for universalism to be true, universalism and annihilationism founder because they don't fit in the Bible story. The good Lord ended with Revelation 21 and 22. There's no Revelation 23 that says, and then everybody entered the city.

And everybody says, no, there's no Revelation 23. It says that the wicked were finally put out of their misery and exist no more. There's no such thing.

The last two and a half chapters of the Bible their theme is positive: new heavens and new earth. Glory to the lamb. But every one of them contains a reference to hell.

We can't change the story to make it fit our likings or dislikes. 66 of Isaiah as the new heavens and a new earth that I make shall remain before me. Jesus speaks briefly of the new heavens and new earth without using that language in Matthew 19, 28.

Peter says, look, Lord, the rich can hardly be saved. I think maybe he's thinking about Proverbs, where God promises prosperity to the wise man who walks in the Lord's way. Maybe that's what's in their mind, but what, who can they be saved with men?

It's impossible with God. All things are possible. Lord, we left everything, and we follow in you.

Is there for not truly, I say to you in the new world, ESV, literally in the regeneration, when a son of man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel. I wouldn't translate in a regeneration. The same word is used in Titus two; by the way, usually, the doctrine of regeneration is taught without that word.

The concept is given, but not that word here. It's a cosmic notion. The, the new world, the regeneration, the rebirth of the creation.

So, Jesus does speak about it in this one place. Acts three 21, just another mention. Peter speaks about the restoration of all things about which God spoke about by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.

Another reference to the final state of affairs, new heavens, new earth Romans 8:20 to 22 might be the most important passage. Doesn't use that language, but the concept is there. You heard me say earlier that our human bodies are a microcosm of the cosmos, and the cosmos is the macrocosm of our bodies.

That is, whereas, with our bodies, there's both continuity and discontinuity between the present body and the resurrection body. It's the same way for the creation. There's continuity between the present creation and the new creation, which is underlying and most important in my estimation.

I'm taking one side of the debate that I'll talk about in a moment. Oh, here's the debate. One view.

Will God destroy the present heavens and present earth and then make a new one? Do you know, though, as he did in the very beginning, ex nihilo out of nothing, or will he rather transform the present heavens and earth into a new heavens and earth? The first view is compatible with an understanding of 2 Peter 3. I don't think it's the right understanding of 2 Peter 3 compare. Tom Shriners's commentary on 1 and 2 Peter, Doug Moo's, NIV Application Commentary, my wife love those on 2 Peter, where it is possible to take it.

And this brings it into harmony with the other passages as a, what I call a deep, poor cleansing of the creation that does not involve its actual destruction. But it is its regeneration. It's cleansing.

It's an awesome renewal. Romans 8 puts our bodies, the microcosm, and the cosmos into the macrocosm together. I consider that 8:18 of Romans, the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

You could translate it for us. I don't know which is better, for the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God, for the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him subjected it, God, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. Notice how the two are merged.

The creation's redemption involves them participating, as it were. It's a personification of the creation in our redemption, the freedom of our glory. It's all of grace for us to know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

Man, that's a long labor. I don't mean to overdo the imagery. Not only the creation, but we ourselves watch who has the first fruits of the spirit grown inwardly.

The two are linked. Good verb. The cosmos and the believers are linked.

Creation groans. We groan. A little bit later on, the Holy Spirit even groans as we wait eagerly for the adoption of sons. Wait a minute.

Aren't we adopted now? Yes. Is that not our final adoption? No. We're adopted already; you haven't even seen the not-yet adoption yet.

God's going to give us the greatest hug you ever could experience on the last day. We eagerly await our adoption of sons and redemption of our bodies, for in this hope, we were saved. Now, hope that is seen is not hope for those who hope for what they see.

But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. The words new earth are not used. The concept is plainly here.

The creation will be delivered from its bondage to decay. Revelation 22 early on, there'll be no more curse. The earth itself will be delivered from its curse.

I don't want to neglect the second Peter passages. 2 Peter 3:7, by the same word of God, which brought the creation and the flood, the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up, not for water, but for fire being kept until the day of judgment and the destruction of the ungodly. Could not annihilationism be read into that word? Yes.

Should it be? No. You have to take the whole Bible into account. I can't describe a word.

But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord, one day is as a thousand years, a thousand years as one day. Lord is not slow to fulfill his promises. Some count slowness, but it's patient toward you, not willing that any of you should perish my reading, but that all should reach repentance.

Does that pertain to the heretics in chapter two? I don't think so. Compare Richard Bauckham's commentary on 2 Peter. He doesn't wish for their salvation.

He damns them to hell, and he's glad because they're so terrible. Oh, my word. But do I believe in God's universal free offer to God? Yes.

Yes, I do. The proof texts commonly used aren't so good. This one's not so good in my estimation, but I do believe that there's a sense that God wills for everybody to be saved.

Yes. Another topic for another time. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.

Then the heavens will pass away with a roar and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved and the earth and the works that are on it will be exposed, ESV. Some manuscripts say we'll be burned up. That really fits the destruction recreation view.

Greek says we'll be found. Moo in his 2 Peter Commentary says it means found in the sense of made visible, exposed, reduced to its basal elements. In other words, that's where I get the deep pore cleansing, cleanse to its roots, or something like that.

We're to live a godly life in light of that hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn. This sounds like prophetic language of God's visitation in judgment. According to his promise, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

If you use Shriner's commentary and Mu's commentary, they'll point you to articles and so forth. There have been some studies on this, and I don't have the bibliography on the tip of my tongue. Revelation 20:21, and 21:1.

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. I'll mention that. Is that literal too? No, no, it isn't.

The beast comes out of the sea. In both testaments, the sea is used as a symbol of the turbulent, dark, threatening waters. Do you think new Heaven and new Earth are literal? Yes.

The sea isn't? Yes. This is the book of Revelation, my friend. As it unfolds, you get language from Isaiah 65:17, and following the language here is of God's ultimate fulfillment of his covenant promise to be the God of his people and to be with his people.

Even as we said of the intermediate state, what makes it better is mainly being with the Lord. What makes the new heavens and the new earth is that I will be with them. I will be their God.

They will be my people. I will wipe every tear from their eyes. And again, Isaiah 65, I make all things new.

Is the present earth renewed or destroyed and recreated? I agree with Hezekiah, and I'm not saying every evangelical exegete and theologian, but a great majority. And I think they're right. 2 Peter 3 is difficult.

I admit it. We don't want to miss its exhortation to live godly lives. I commend to you, Calvin's commentary on 2 Peter 3.

In that regard, he says things like, in the institutes, we are so focused on this life that we miss the glory of God. And we're just earthlings, and we need to be more heavenly, having Ling, who is heavenly-minded while we live our lives on earth. This, brief introduction to the new heavens, new earth, we'll conclude our course.

I commend Anthony Hoekema's *The Bible in the Future*, and his outstanding chapter on the new heavens and the new earth. Thank you for your patience in watching and listening to these lectures.

May the Lord bless you and increase in you both a love for Jesus church and a vibrant hope in the second coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. In whose name we conclude. Amen.

This is Dr. Robert A. Peterson in his teaching on Doctrines of the Church and Last Things. This is session 20, The Eternal State, Eternal Punishment, The New Heaven and New Earth.