

THE END OF THE WORLD

Subject Block: The Plan of God

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Essential to understanding the plan of God is understanding what happens to the world as we know it. In approaching this topic we will learn:

- a. What the Bible calls “the world”
- b. The origin and destiny of “the world”
- c. How “the world” ends
- d. What follows the “end of the world”

A. What is it that the Bible calls the World?

2 Peter 3:1 – 7

Beloved, , I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder),²that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior,³knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,⁴and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."

⁵For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water,⁶by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.

⁷But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men

1. The Heavens and the Earth v 5 & 7

Heavens = place of power in the spiritual (unseen) realm.

- Ephesians 1:19 – 23 the authority of Christ in the heavens

- Ephesians 6:12 satanic power in the heavens
For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.
- Revelation 12:7 – 10 war in the heavens
- Job 15:15 heavens are not pure (clean) in his sight
Behold, He puts no trust in His holy ones, And the heavens are not pure in His sight

(2 Peter 3:12 heavens on fire - judgement and cleansing. looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?)

Earth = mans place (Genesis 1:26 - 28) where we live / walk

2. The World (v6).

by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water

The WORLD that existed in the time of Noah – it perished!

- Did the earth perish? No!
- What perished? Everything mankind had organised, arranged and imagined on the earth!

WORLD = KOSMOS - harmonious order, adornment, orderly arrangement or organisation. It is the orderly arrangement, the system that orders mankind, the arrangement of things on earth.

3. The Relationship between the Heavens and the World.

Ephesians 2:2 "The course (aion/age) of this world "kosmos/system" {lit}-‘the age that pertains to this world system’

Walking according to the world is the same as walking according to the prince power of the air (prince powers who according to Ephesians 6:12 are in heavenly places).

This introduces us to another word - "AION" = AGE (‘world’ AV). Kosmos refers to the harmonious system, AION refers to the PERIOD the system exists on the earth

2 Timothy 4:10 for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present **world**, and has departed for Thessalonica

Titus 2:12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present **age**,

Matthew 13:22.& 39 Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this **world** and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful . . . The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the **age**, and the reapers are the angels.

Luke 20:34 & 35 Jesus answered and said to them, "The sons of this **age** marry and are given in marriage. But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage;

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this **world**, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Galatians 1:4 who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil **age**, according to the will of our God and Father,

The meaning of KOSMOS and AION are quite different but their focus is exactly the same - they refer to 'the way things are on earth, their arrangement; overseen from the heavens, not everlasting but confined in time; it is that system that is coming to an end'.

4. The End of the World.

The end of the world or the end of the age is also represented by the expression "heaven and earth will pass away".

Matthew 24:35 - 39 just as it was in Noah's day

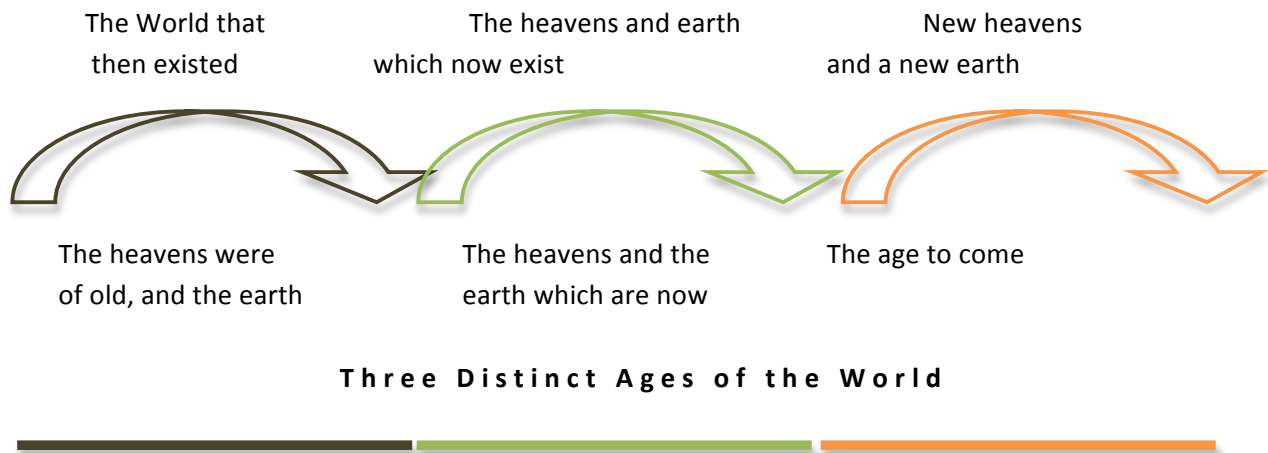
2 Peter 3:5 - 7, 10 - 13

v 6 "the world that then existed"

v 7 "the heavens and earth which now exist"

v 13 "new heavens and a new earth"

[This is God's promise - a new order, society, arrangement of things in which righteousness will dwell]



Because of all this, "what manner of persons ought you to be?" (v11)

5. Other uses of the word 'WORLD'.

(a) used to describe the physical globe. Acts 17:14 "the God that made the world".

Mark 16:15 "go into all the world"

(b) used to describe the inhabitants or people of the earth. John 3:16 "for God so loved the world". Hebrews 11:38 "of whom the world was not worthy"

But it is the WORLD as a system, the order of things in today's society that is our particular concern in this teaching.

6. What exactly is in the World?

1 John 2:15 - 17 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

(a) Politics

We're effected by it daily (vote, debate, makes us happy & sad), take it all away and what would we have? It consumes media interest and time. It's needed to keep this kosmos working.

Jesus said "My kingdom is not of this Kosmos, otherwise My servants would fight" - they'd contend, they'd get involved with fundamental change in mind. There will be no fundamental change until the end of the world.

(b) Education

Most everyone of us has had to face the question of how we are to provide an education for our children, let them touch what is essentially a thing of the world, and at the same time guard them from the perils of the world.

No matter how harmless the education system may appear to be, it has it's roots in the tree of knowledge and when we touch it we touch the kosmos.

(c) Commerce

All our lives are somehow touched by the commercial world. We buy, sell, invest, seek financial security, push for greater profitability and so on.

Take commerce out of this kosmos, and what do we have left? we are `unavoidably caught up in the commercial world, yet it is part of what constitutes the kosmos, it will come to an end.

(d) Science and Technology

Like most things there is that which is helpful and that which is hurtful. Science and technology whether good or bad, is a vital factor in the scheme of this worlds order.

(e) Art and Entertainment

Coupled with technology, practically everything that is in the world beams into where we live. Radio, television and the internet bring the best and the worst of the world before our eyes, ears, mind and soul.

Then there's law, sport, the military, religion, literature, music, agriculture, fashion

Many of them overlap, they intermesh, they undergird one another, they harmonise together ... together they are that harmonious system by which mankind attempts to live successfully without God.

This is the WORLD.

B. What is the Origin and Destiny of the World

1. It's Origin and Destiny that matters.

So much of the kosmos appears neutral, unconnected to either good or evil. Indeed, mankind has benefited enormously from worldly things. The question, though, is not one of good or bad, right or wrong, rather it is one of ORIGIN and DESTINY.

In John 8:23 Jesus says to some people from his day, "You are from beneath; I am from above: you are of this world; I am not of this world". He is speaking of ORIGIN.

To His disciples, "If you were of the world the world would love it's own: but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." (John 15:19)

It is ORIGIN that determines everything "That which is born of the flesh is flesh: that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" John 3:63. And it is the ORIGIN of the things of the world that determine their DESTINY this world is "kept in store, reserved for fire ...will pass away with great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat".

To have a proper view of the world it is origin that determines everything. Origin determines destiny, and origin determines the essential direction and nature of the things of this world, no matter how neutral they may appear.

2. The World's first City

Genesis 4:16 - 22

The world's cities are literally concentrations of all that is proud and lustful on the earth. As with the rest of the kosmos, it all began when: "Cain went out from the presence of the Lord"

All that follows is not at it's surface, evil. And we touch these things daily. What must be seen is that:

- (a) they originated in rebellion, outside of the presence of the Lord
- (b) they are man's attempt to accomplish life away from God
- (c) there is corruption and darkness somewhere in every one of them.
- (d) their origin will determine their destiny: the sentence of death is upon them; they will be destroyed with the rest of the system.

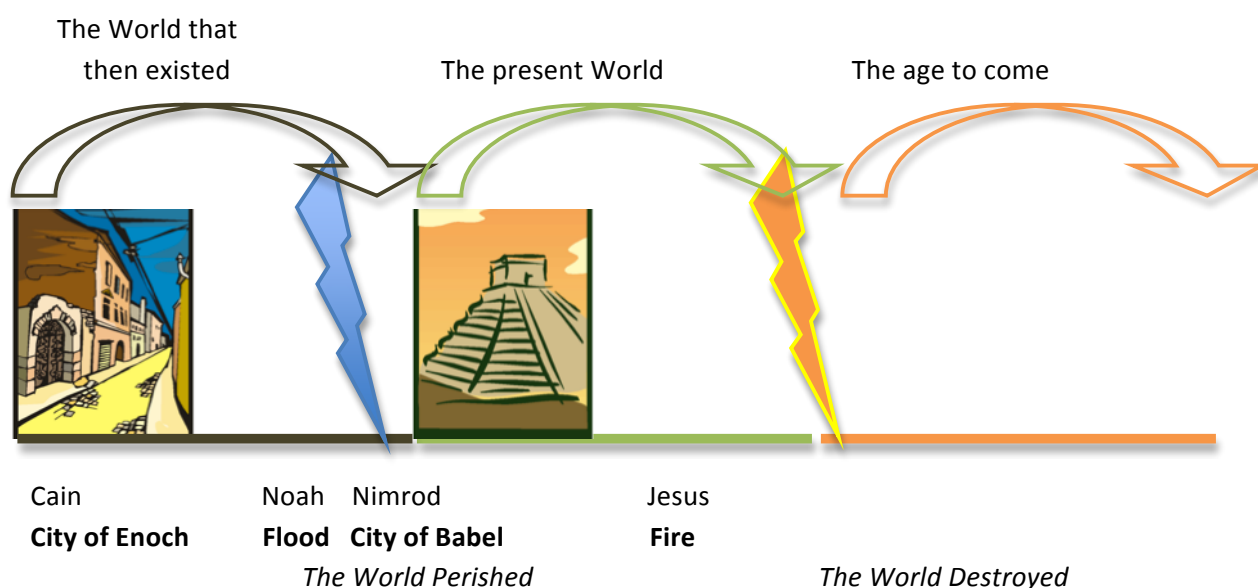
Genesis 4:20 Jubal the father of the world's AGRICULTURE.

Genesis 4:21 Jubal the father of the world's MUSIC and the ARTS.

Genesis 4:22 Tubal-Gain the father of the world's INDUSTRY.

And in Genesis 8:5 we read: "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent (imagination) of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

And then in 2 Peter 3:8: "... the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water."



3. The 'World' in Man's Heart.

Despite of the judgement and destruction of the world in the flood ... despite of that man Noah, who walked with God (Genesis 8:9), the 'world' was still in man's heart.

Genesis 8:18 - 21 God knew man's heart had not changed.

Genesis 9:20 - 25 Corruption in Noah's first project.

Genesis 10:8 - 10 Babel (Babylon) - the world's second great city.

Genesis 11:4 - 9 'world' religion – the dominant power in THIS world. The tower was an astrological observatory from which to guide their lives outside of God.

Note well the fall and destruction of Babylon (not the physical kingdom of Nimrod or Nebuchadnezzar - but the kingdom of man's heart, intent and imagination). Since Babel it had cropped up in every language, in every part of the earth to which they had scattered.

Revelation 18:1 - 24.

Babylon is the 'kingpin', look at what is destroyed with her fall:

- Merchandising (commerce, money)
- The sound of harpists and musicians (music and the arts)
- Craft (industry)
- Milling (agriculture)

Babylon is destroyed by fire (v 8, 9 & 18), exactly how Peter declares this kosmos ("the heavens and the earth which now exist") will be judged! 2 Peter 3:7, 10 & 12.

4. Who is "the God of this World"?

John was the Apostle who wrote much concerning the Kosmos in both his gospel and his letters. John was also the author of the book of Revelation which describes the fall of the kingdoms of this world.

He was the last of the Bible writers, writing at the end of the first century at a time when the church had spread to many nations of the world. He is the Lord's 'watchman' warning of the encroaching kosmos in the lives of the believer and in the ways of the Church as she came in contact with the powerful Roman Empire and the elements of its Godless society.

In both gospel and letters, John identifies "the God of this world"

John 12:31 Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. Satan cast out envisioned in Revelation 12, this victory fundamentally provided for by the "now" event of the cross.

John 14:30 I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. Prince or ruler of this kosmos - there was nothing in Jesus that gave him even a toehold.

John 16:11 when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: . . . of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. He, along with his kosmos, is under sentence of death. Condemned to perish.

1 John 4:4 You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. He who is in the world.

1 John 5:19 We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. The whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.

Make no mistake, **there is a mind behind the system.** That mind is the devil himself that deceiver, that father of lies, that one who comes as an angel of light.

Satan and his KOSMOKRATORS ("rulers of the darkness of this age" Ephesians 6:12) who through the whole circle of worldly goods, riches, advantages, pleasures, which though hollow and fleeting, stir our desire to seduce us from God.

5. The Footprint at the Scene of the Crime.

It only takes a few clues at a crime scene to get on the trail of the evil perpetrator.

SATAN'S FOOTPRINT IS ALL OVER THE KOSMOS!

- (a) There is death "What is a man profited if he gains the whole kosmos and loses his own soul?" (Matthew 16:26)
- (b) There is corruption "The corruption that is in the Kosmos" (2 Peter 1:4)
- (c) Defilement (2 Peter 2:20)
- (d) Ignorance (1 Corinthians 1:21)
- (e) Hatred (John 15:18) tells us of
- (f) Lust and Pride (1, John 2)
- (g) Evil (John 7:73)
- (h) Deception and Obstinacy (John 14:17)

This is the footprint, it tells us Satan is in it! And that is why God's judgement is upon the world.

As in Noah's day, the judgement came swiftly but not without warning. Babylon's fall "in one day", "in one hour" (Revelation 18:6, 10, 17 & 19). [Compare Matthew 24:35 – 37] Sudden destruction that catches them unawares and unprepared.

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

6. The Place of Escape and Safety

Hebrews 11:7 By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

- Noah warned by God
- This was FAITH – these were things not yet seen
- Noah moved with Godly fear (there will always be worldliness in the church where there is no fear of God)
- The ARK was his place of safety as the world went under
- God shut them in (Genesis 7:16). One year in the Ark
- Noah and his family walked out on a cleansed new earth

Galatians 1:4 “[Jesus Christ} who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father”

Jesus took the judgement for us to deliver us from the judgement that is coming upon the world ... he is our Ark, he is our only place of safety. “The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous run into it and are safe” Proverbs 18:10

They mocked and despised this “ark” (Jesus), just like the first. And the world carried on; eating, drinking marrying – until the flood came. We take hold of Christ, take hold of his cross, run into him in this hour, in this day, turn away from the world, its lust and its pride ... **Jesus is the only place of safety!**

7. To What do you Belong?

Paul uses the word "worldly" it means 'belonging to the world'. We can't belong to the world and belong to God. "If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in Him." (1 John 2:15)

... "the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." (v17)

There's only one way for a person to conquer the 'pull' of the world. The cross.

Galatians 6:14 (Phillips) "Yet God forbid that I should boast about anything or anybody except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, which means that the world is a dead thing to me and that I am a dead man to the world."

The paradox is that we can have 'the world' by dying to the world.

Matthew 4:8 - 11 A real temptation for Jesus to bypass the cross and receive all the kingdoms of the world. He could've had the world - its glory and its multitudes from the devil - but Jesus chose the way of the cross (thus he included you and I in Revelation 11:15).

Watchman Nee wrote this advice. 'Let me ask you: what is your occupation? A merchant? A doctor? Do not run away from these callings. Simply write down: Trade is under the sentence of death. Write: Medicine is under the sentence of death. If you do that in truth, life will be changed for you hereafter. In the midst of a world under judgement for its hostility to God you will know what it is to live as one who truly loves and fears Him.'

The question for believers is, to what do you belong? what do you love? Do you love the world? What are you of? To what do you belong?

C. How Does the World End?

"The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" Revelation 11:15

This angelic proclamation heralds the collapse of this world's systems and the complete victory of the saints ... the fulfilment of the prayer, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven".

1. What are the Kingdoms of this World?

Kingdoms are powers. In the Bible a kingdom refers to a realm of authority rather than a physical territory (Basilea ~ verb meaning royal rule). In this context they are the spiritual powers that control the people of the world.

Luke 11:20 If I by the finger of God . . .

Ephesians 2:1 - 3. And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ²in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

The angel's proclamation of Revelation 11:15 declares to us:

- (a) The powers that have held mankind in spiritual bondage are broken!
- (b) The object of Satan's bondage ~ mankind ~ experience an 'open heaven' no longer dominated by principalities and powers.
- (c) The realm of this world's rule is now the realm of God's rule.
- (d) An uncontested plundering of Satan's prize possession ~ the souls of men, women, boys and girls - takes place.

2. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream.

Daniel 2:31 ~ 45 This is an 'amplification' of John's revelation of the seventh angel and shows us the identity and nature of the kingdoms of this world ... their fall ... and God's great victory!

- Head of gold - Babylon "You are this head of gold" v38
- Chest & arms of silver - Medes & Persians "after you shall arise another kingdom" v39
- Belly & thighs of bronze - Greeks
- Legs of iron ~ Roman Empire
- Feet partly of iron & partly of clay ~ how the world has been ruled since Home fell (400 AD) [many attempted world rule: Charlemagne (800), Louis 14th, Napoleon, Kaiser Wilhelm, Adolf Hitler, Fabien Socialists. Communists ... without success.

Historically, one great empire displaced another. However, in this dream ALL these powers remained intact until smitten ... "were crushed together" v35. Hence they are not mere earthly empires, but spiritual powers that dominate and keep on dominating!



3. The Five Kingdoms of the Kosmos

Head of Gold ~ Babylon ~ The kingdom of man made religion. (700 years after the earthly Babylon falls, the Apostle John is still prophesying Babylon's fall ~ Rev 18)

- Gold = deity or wealth
- Head = of the mind (Jesus added heart dimension)
- Babylon = harlot (love w/o legitimate relationship)

Chest & arms of silver - Media & Persia ~ The kingdom of money.

- Second only to religion in its powerful influence over men
- Heart lay in the chest "Where your treasure is there will your heart be also"
- Silver = medium for exchange (Money is silver)
- Grasping hands and gathering arms (for self)
- Only God can set men free from the tyranny of the love of money

Belly & thighs of bronze ~ Greece - The kingdom of culture. (The Greeks gave the world: education, 'great philosophers, theatre, arts, sport, medicine ... all rooted in Greece)

- "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God"
- Belly & thighs = anatomical centre of human appetite/desire
- Today the 'leisure/pleasure' industry ~ multi-billion!

Legs of iron ~ Rome - The kingdom of politics & military power. (Rome had both - a dictatorial emperor backed by a powerful army, the fall of the Roman empire well documented BUT multitudes still gripped by the spiritual power)

- Iron = unbreakable strength
- Two legs = one supports the other / long reach & influence (only in the heart can men be free)
- Enslaved by "Six O'clock news" - 'must know what's happening'

Feet of part Iron & part clay

- Iron = power & politics (feet extension of legs)
- Clay = humanity - democratic voice - "rights" movements
- Perfectly describes mixture in world rulership today [SO IT WILL BE UNTIL ALL THESE KINGDOMS FALL]
- Issue for believers is 'laying down rights' 'laying down life'
- Humanism = belief in mans inherent good & self-guided success

4. Judgement by Fire

The destruction of this present world occurs by the toppling of the Kingdoms of this World: that is, the overthrow of **spiritual powers**.

This action removes their influence and hold on institutions and systems so that every ungodly aspect of those institutions and systems loose their standing.

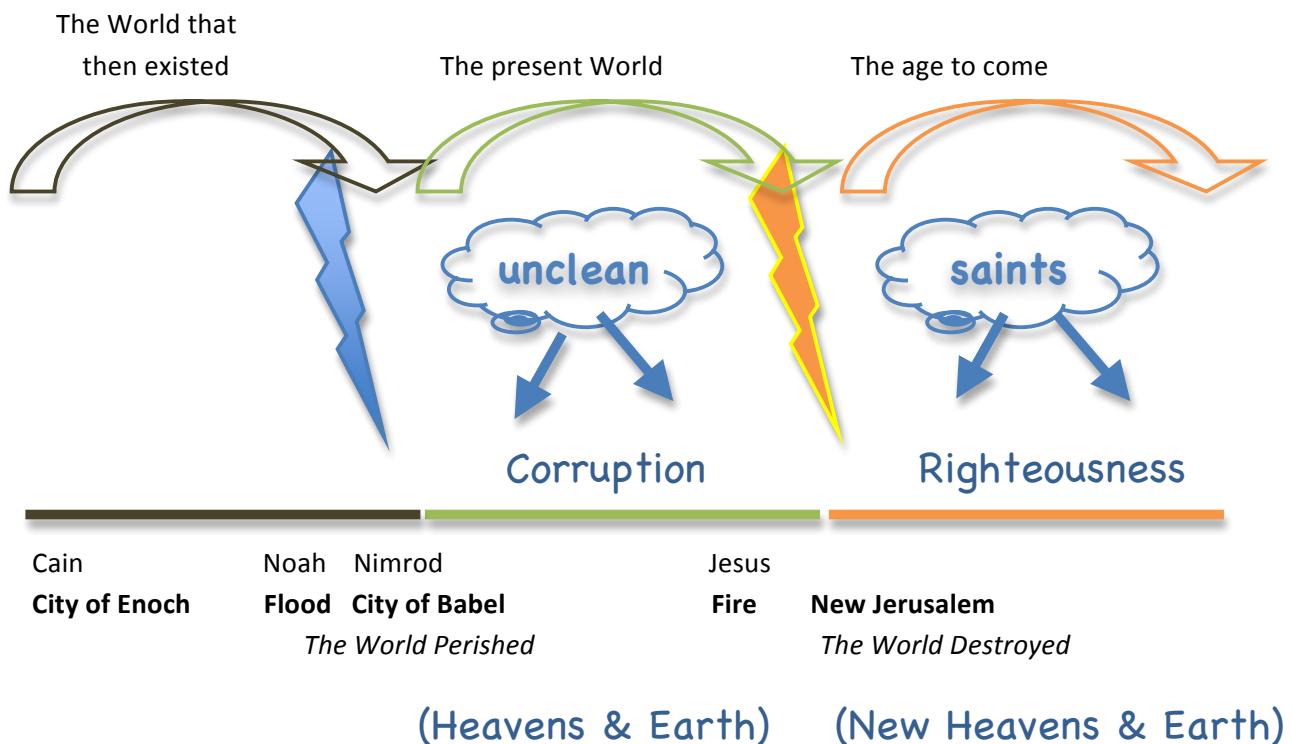
This is **judgement by fire**. It's a spiritual cleansing of the spiritual realm (the heavens). NB: Babylon's smoke.

It is not literal fire (as in the Great Fire of London) . . . you could have literal fire bringing destruction on earth, but that would leave the spiritual kingdoms untouched and able to re-introduce themselves.

D. What Will Follow The End of the World?

2 Peter 3:1 - 7

1. The world "then", "now" and "to come".



2 Peter 3:10 - 13 Psalm 37

2. The Third City.

Revelation 21:1 & 2 "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away ... then I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband"

Here is the third city. A glorious city that comes FROM God (origin)

- It is a HOLY city
- It is a bride (prepared in the 'heavens' - now appearing for all to behold)
- It is the city of the new heavens and new earth in which Peter told us would dwell righteousness that which we look "according to His promise" (2 Peter 3:13).

(a) Abraham looked for it - Hebrews 11:8 - 10, 13 - 16

(b) Paul wrote of it - Hebrews 12:22

(c) The Psalmist sang it is "the joy of the whole earth" (Psalm 48)

(d) God spoke through Isaiah "say to Zion, you are my people"

(e) Jesus said we are "the salt of the earth", "the light of the world", "A CITY set on a hill" (Matthew 5)

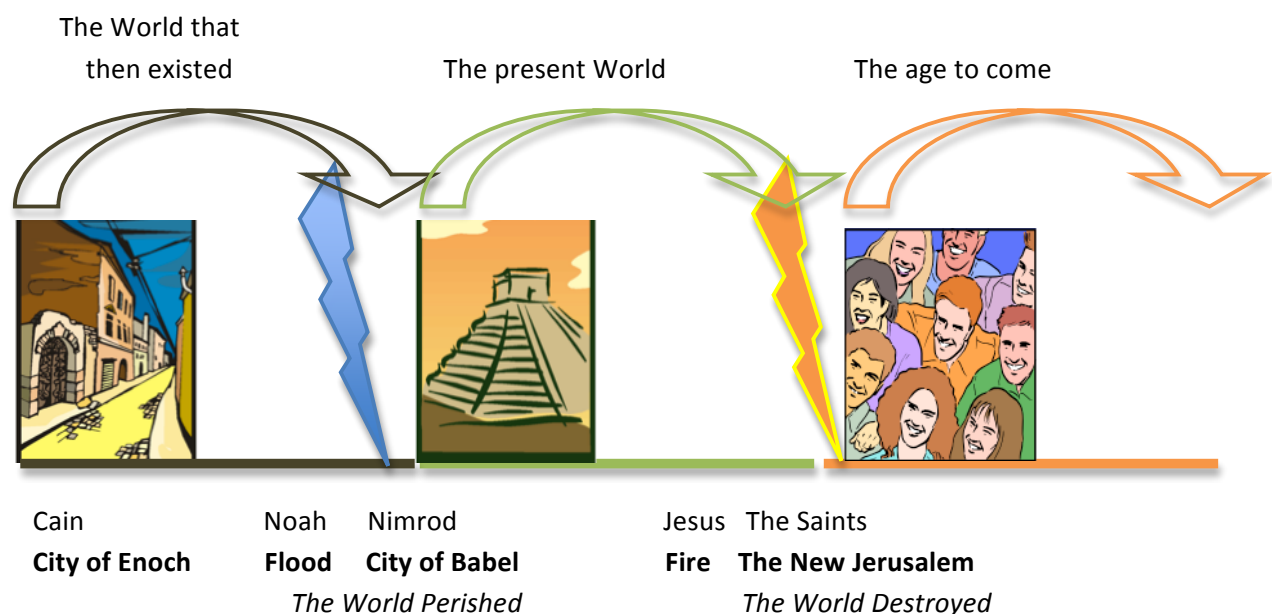
God is the maker of this city, and He doesn't build with brick steel, He builds with people ... God's building material is redeemed humanity.

Psalm 46:1- 11

Psalm 37:1 - 11

Revelation 21:23 - 27

2 Peter 3:14



3. Looking Forward to These Things.

Only a person who has made Jesus Christ their place of safety ... only a person whose vision it is to reign in heavenly places ... only a person yielded today to that hidden preparation of their life in the Spirit ... **that person will “look forward to these things”**

It matters that we are "without spot" (*true religion is to keep ourselves unspotted from the world* ~ James 1:27)

The beauty of God will be on His people "the beauty of holiness". A glorious attraction. It will be the wonder of God's new world.