

The End of the World (2nd Sunday of Advent, Year B)

2 Peter 3:8-14—The End of the World and the New Creation

⁸ But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that *with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.* ⁹ *The Lord is not slow about his promise as some count slowness, but is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.* ¹⁰ *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up.* ¹¹ *Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness,* ¹² *waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be kindled and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire!* ¹³ *But according to his promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.* ¹⁴ *Therefore, beloved, since you wait for these, be zealous to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. (2 Peter 3:8-14)*

1. God and Time: God is not “slow”; though he seems so to us:

*For a thousand years in your sight
are but as yesterday when it is past,
or as a watch in the night.
You sweep men away; they are like a dream,
like grass which is renewed in the morning (Psalm 90:4-5)*

2. Day of the Lord = the “day of the Lord”; i.e., the final judgment (cf. 1 Thess 5:2)
3. End of the World: “heavens” and “earth” (Greek *gē*) = Cosmos is “burned up” (3:10)
4. New Creation = Paul uses “revelation” to refer to the *Second Coming* (1 Cor 1:7)

*For behold, I create new heavens
and a new earth;
and the former things shall not be remembered
or come into mind. (Isaiah 65:17; cf. 66:22; Rev 21:1)*

5. Holiness: *motivation* for living lives of “holiness” (3:11) and “blameless” (3:14)
6. Eschatology: preparing *now* to live in a new world of “righteousness” (3:13)

The Living Tradition

Catechism: At the end of time, the Kingdom of God will come in its fullness. After the universal judgment, the righteous will reign for ever with Christ, glorified in body and soul. *The universe itself will be renewed...* Sacred Scripture calls this mysterious renewal, which will transform humanity and the world, “new heavens and a new earth” (2 Peter 3:13; cf. Rev 21:1)... *The visible universe, then, is itself destined to be transformed,*

“so that the world itself, restored to its original state, facing no further obstacles, should be at the service of the just,” sharing their glorification in the risen Jesus Christ. (CCC 1042-43, 1047)

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (2nd Sunday of Advent, Year B)

1. Review the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* nos. 1042-1050. What is the Church’s official teaching on the hope for a “new creation”? How would you integrate this with the traditional catechetical framework of the “four last things”: Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell?
