

Q10) Will the Earth be destroyed?

Question: If the earth is going to be burned with fire according to 2 Peter 3:7-13, why does the Bible say that *“the earth abideth for ever”* (Eccles.1:4)?

Answer: Perhaps we should take the opportunity to look at the various Scriptures which speak of the “world”, and this may help us to understand what God intends for the earth.

The Bible begins with the majestic yet simple statement, *“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”* (Gen.1:1). The question involves whether the material creation is eternal, or put simply, Is matter eternal? God created matter for His own pleasure. *“Thou hast created all things, and **for thy pleasure** they are and were created”* (Rev.4:11). In the New Testament there are four Greek words translated “world”.

1) The material world, the land, ground and territory, is the translation of the Greek word “ge”, which will be renovated by fire just as the world in Noah’s day was renovated (destroyed) by a flood. When Peter wrote about the **earth** (ge) being *“reserved unto fire”*, he was referring to this **material world** and likened it to the days of Noah when the earth was destroyed by water.

However, the world will continue in its new state for ever.

“But the heavens and the earth (ge), which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (2Peter 3:7).

*“Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? **Nevertheless** we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth (ge), wherein dwelleth righteousness”* (2Peter 3:12-13).

*“And I saw **a new heaven and a new earth** (ge): **for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea** (Rev.21:1).*

When Jesus said, *“Heaven and earth (ge) shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away”*(Matt.24:35), He spoke in the context of the Last Days and He also immediately likened those days to *“the days of Noah”* (Matt.24: 37). The physical world suffered tremendous destruction in the Biblical flood but it did not cease to exist, and God will change the conditions on the material earth which was created for His pleasure, such that there will no longer be any sea (Rev.21:1). All human life in the “new earth” will have a resurrection body.

2) The second word translated “world” in the New Testament means “the inhabited world” of mankind (“oikoumene”). John speaks of *“the kings of*

HERALD OF HOPE QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q10) If the earth is going to be burned with fire according to 2 Peter 3:7-13, why does the Bible say that “the earth abideth for ever” (Eccles.1:4)? (continued)

the earth (ge) and of the whole world (oikoumene) (Rev.16:14). The kings have geographic location but reign over **people**.

The gospel of the kingdom is to be preached in all the world (oikoumene) during the coming Great Tribulation. The gospel is preached to ungodly men, not to the material world.

3) The “world system of men” or the “world order” which is opposed to God, is translated from the Greek word “kosmos”, and John writes:

“Love not the world (kosmos), neither the things that are in the world (kosmos)...the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1John 2:15-16). *“And the world (kosmos) passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever”* (1John 2:17).

In Noah’s day, God *“spared not the old world (kosmos), but saved Noah...bringing in the flood upon **the world (kosmos) of the ungodly”*** (2Peter 2:5). *“Whereby the world (kosmos) that then was, being overflowed with water, perished”* (2Peter3:6). All mankind except Noah and his family perished.

Satan is the *“prince of this world” (system of men) (kosmos)* See John12:31; 14:30; 16:11). *“The whole world (kosmos) lieth in wickedness”,* or “in the lap of the wicked one” (1John 5:19). Like a helpless babe on the lap of its nurse, so the **world system** is receiving the constant attention of the “wicked one”, Satan.

The amazing thing is that *“God so loved the world” (kosmos),* even though the world of men were in opposition to Himself, *“that he gave his only begotten Son”* to be the propitiation for the sins *“of the whole world” (kosmos)* (1John2:2).

4) The fourth word translated “world” means the “age” in which we live and is translated from the Greek word “aion”, introducing a **time element**. Satan is the *“god of this world” (age)* (2Cor.4:4), and Jesus has promised to be with us *“even unto the end of the world” (age)*(Matt.28:20).

The disciples knew that the age (world) would not continue for ever and asked, *“What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world” (age)?* (Matt.24:3).

Thus we see that Satan is both the prince of this worlds system of rebellious men (kosmos), and the god of this world (age). The time will come when Satan will be confined to the “bottomless pit” during the 1,000-year reign of Christ, and finally to the lake of fire for all eternity. He will not be the god of THAT age (world), for his time will have passed. There ARE ages, or dispensations of time, in God’s dealings with mankind.

