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# Church in Campbell Weekly News

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## The New Heaven and New Earth

In eternity past God purposed to have a corporate expression that He might be fully expressed and glorified (Eph. 3:9-11; 1:9-11). For this, He created the heavens, the earth, and mankind. Since the creation of man, there have been four dispensations: the dispensation of the patriarchs, from Adam to Moses (Rom. 5:14); the dispensation of law, from Moses to Christ (John 1:17); the dispensation of grace, from Christ's first coming until "the restitution of all things" at Christ's second coming (Acts 3:20-21); and the dispensation of the kingdom, from Christ's second coming to the end of the millennium (Rev. 11:15; 20:4, 6). God has used these four dispensations to accomplish His purpose by perfecting and completing His chosen people that they may be His eternal corporate expression. All four dispensations belong to the old heaven and old earth. Although the dispensation of the kingdom will be the dispensation of restoration, it will still transpire in the old heaven and old earth, because God's perfecting and completing work in His chosen people will not be accomplished until the end of that dispensation. When God finishes this work, by the dispensation of the kingdom, the old heaven and old earth will pass away through fire and be renewed into the new heaven and new earth (2 Pet. 3:10-13), where the New Jerusalem will come for God's eternal expression.

After these four dispensations, that is, after the absolute perfection and completion of God's people, God will have no further use for the old heaven and the old earth. At that time, the old creation will be over. God will use many things to perfect His people: Satan, Antichrist, the false prophet, weakness, hardship, and various other difficulties. After we have been perfected, God will no longer need the negative things of the old creation; therefore, He can say, "Satan, I don't need you any more. Go to the lake of fire. Sickness, sorrow, and tears, because My people have been perfected, I don't need you either. I don't need anything old. I don't need the old heaven and I don't need the old earth. All the old and negative things were instruments used by Me to perfect My people. Now that My people have been perfected, all these things may be put into the universal 'trash can,' the lake of fire."

In building our meeting hall in Anaheim we had a use for many different utensils. When I was about to throw some of these utensils away, the brothers asked me not to do it, because they still had a use for them. Unhappily, I agreed to keep them. One day, the building was completed, and all those old utensils were thrown into the trash can. In like manner, when God's people have been thoroughly perfected, He will have no further use for the old heaven

and the old earth. Therefore, at that time, the old heaven and old earth will pass away, and the new heaven and new earth will come in. God will say to the old creation, "My people have been perfected. Because they are all matured, you need not remain any longer." Thus, the old heaven and the old earth will be put away.

There is one aspect of the putting away of the old heaven and the old earth that I find difficult to understand. According to Hebrews 1:11 and 12, the earth and the heavens will "become old as a garment," and the Lord "shall roll them up" and put them away. But 2 Peter 3:10-13 indicates that the heavens and the earth will be burned. According to these verses, the elements will burn and melt. Will the old heaven and the old earth be rolled up or will they be burned? Perhaps they will be rolled up first and then burned.

Another question I have concerns the nations on earth at the end of the millennium. When God rolls up the earth and burns it, where will the nations be? I cannot answer this question. My mentality, like yours, is too limited to know the answers to such questions. There are certain things we simply cannot figure out. Take, for example, the appearing of the resurrected Christ to His disciples on the evening of His resurrection (John 20:19). The disciples were in a room, and all the doors were shut. Suddenly, the Lord Jesus appeared in the room with a touchable, physical body. How did He get there? Furthermore, the prints of the nails were still in the Lord's body. Why did His resurrection body still have in it the marks of the nails? Just as we cannot explain this, neither can we explain the various matters related to the passing away of the old heaven and the old earth. Nevertheless, according to the Bible, the time is coming when the old heaven and the old earth will be rolled up and burned.

The old heaven and the old earth actually will be burned to become the new heaven and the new earth. By being burned, the old heaven and old earth will be renewed. Just as we have been renewed, so will the heaven and the earth be renewed. We are the new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). The fact that there will be a new creation does not mean that God will again create something out of nothing. Rather, it means that the old creation will be renewed to become the new creation. However, I cannot explain how God will do this. Nevertheless, we must believe in God's sovereignty.

Many scientists do not believe that God created everything. They say, "How could God just speak a word and cause something to come into being?" But the Bible says that God

“calls the things not being as being” (Rom. 4:17) and that “the universe has been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen has not come into being from things which appear” (Heb. 11:3). God is the creating God. As the creating God, He does not need any material; He can create something out of nothing. Likewise, God has a way to make the new heaven and the new earth. Eventually, not only will we, the people of God who have been born again, be the new creation; the entire universe will be renewed and become the new creation. As we have seen, this will take place after God has completed the perfection of His people. Everything is waiting for us to be perfected.

Few Christians pay attention to the matter of perfection in life. But, under God’s enlightenment, we have seen that unless we are perfected in life, God does not have a way to accomplish His eternal purpose. If you do not allow Him to perfect you today, He will be patient and wait until the next age, the dispensation of the kingdom, to complete His work in you. Do not think that when you die all your problems will automatically be solved. If you have problems when you die, you will also have these same problems when you are resurrected. You may be surprised and say, “Dear problems, I thought that by dying I had escaped from you. Now, after I have been resurrected, I must face you again.” This is correct. We all must finish our lessons; otherwise, we cannot graduate. Nevertheless, many Christians still mistakenly think that by dying they will be rescued from their problems. But the truth is, once you die, you lose the opportunity to be perfected in this dispensation, and you will have to be perfected in the coming dispensation. We all must pray to the Lord, “Lord, I want to be perfected before I die. Don’t let me die without this. If I die without being perfected, I am certain that I will be perfected in the next dispensation. Lord, keep me on earth and grant me the mercy and grace I need to give You the complete liberty to do everything necessary to perfect me today.” We must be desperate to be perfected before we die and to give the Lord the full liberty to perfect us today. This is a matter of great significance.

According to the clear vision in the whole Bible, we not only need redemption, forgiveness, and regeneration; we also urgently need perfection. We need to be brought on to maturity. If we are not completed, perfected, and matured in this dispensation, we shall be dealt with in the next dispensation so that we might mature. This postponed perfection will not be very pleasant. We all need to place ourselves in the Lord’s hand that we may be perfected today. As you find yourself in various circumstances, do not blame anyone or anything. Rather, you should say, “Lord, thank You for this situation. It is Your instrument and Your way to perfect me. Lord, thank You for the excellent wife and children You have given me. They are helping me to mature. Lord, I also thank You for the many peculiar, strange, and difficult brothers and sisters that surround me

daily in the church life. O Lord, I know Your purpose. All these situations and all these brothers and sisters are helping me to be perfected. Lord, how I thank You!”

There is only one place where we can be perfected today, and that place is the church life. In other Christian groups, if you are not happy with those around you, you can easily leave them and go elsewhere. However, once we have truly come into the church life, there is no exit, no fire escape. There is no way to get out. Instead, we must stay here and be burned and dealt with for our perfection. Praise the Lord, we can be perfected in this age!

Every divorce is an escape from the limitations of married life. When the worldly people are unhappy with their marriage, they simply seek a divorce and run away from their problems. By doing this, they escape the dealing, the burning, and the perfecting. But we, the children of God, should never divorce ourselves from the church life. After we have entered into the marriage of the church life, we must stay in the oven until we have been completely baked. The day is coming when we shall no longer need the oven, for we shall be perfected, and everything will be new. At that time, all the old things of the first heaven and the first earth will be terminated. Today we have many ovens—our husband or wife, our children, and the brothers and sisters in the church. In the church life we are burning and baking one another. We shall not be released from this oven until we have been perfected. How we thank the Lord that He is using the church life to perfect us in life! (*Life-study of Revelation, message 58*)

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### ***Burdens for Church Prayers***

- Pray for God’s economy present move: the increase and spread in Europe with many more golden lampstands.
- Strengthening of prayer in the church life on all levels: personal, husband and wife, vital group, church prayer
- Pray for the English-speaking testimony and gospel preaching on West Valley College campus.
- Pray for the burden of raising up next generation for building up of the body of Christ.
- For GOW training: Vital groups be raised up, attending prayer meeting, prophesying on Lord’s day by daily enjoying His word and pursue the truth.

### ***Announcement***

- Bible Reading Schedule of Revelations:

LD	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
17-1~ 18:8	18:9 ~ 19:16	19:17 ~ 20:10	20:11~ 21:8	21:9 ~ 21:21	21:22 ~ 22:11	22:12 ~ 22:21

- 1/22/13 prayer meeting at Campbell meeting hall, starting at 7:45pm.
- 2013 International Chinese-speaking conference, 2/15 – 2/17, at 2431 W. La Palma Ave, Anaheim, CA.
- Young people spring retreat 3/15~17.