

The Old Made New

Scripture Reading — Revelation 21:1-5

*I saw a new heaven and a new earth ...
Revelation 21:1 —*

Martin Luther was once planting a peach tree in his backyard when a member of his congregation stopped to chat. Thinking that a great preacher could spend his time with more churchly things than planting a tree, he asked Luther what he would now be doing if he knew Jesus was returning tomorrow. Luther answered that he'd finish planting the peach tree so that it might become part of the new earth under a new heaven.

Luther obviously had a bigger view of God's renewing work than some others have had. That's because he took seriously John's vision in Revelation 21. History begins in a garden and ends in a city. History begins with a divine act of creation and ends in a divine act of re-creation. John looks to see an entire universe made new by the renewing grace of Jesus Christ!

This means there is more continuity than we often think between our present and God's future. In Revelation 21:26, John says that "the glory and honor of the nations will be brought" into God's new creation. The beauty of the arts, the discoveries of the sciences, the insights gained into human relationships—all that is good and honorable we will bring into God's new world.

Whatever is on your agenda today, if it's done in service to Christ and with an eye to the future, it's preparation for the day when all things will be made new.

Prayer

Lord, help us live today with an eye to eternity. Make us expectant people, as we look to the new world, where we will offer you perfect praise and obedience. Amen.

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