

Dear Friends,

The current theology of Western Christianity is that there will be a time of great war and upheaval which will destroy our current world and God's creation of a new heaven and earth will be perfect for the rest of eternity. Over the first 500 years of Christianity, most thought the return of Jesus would not focus on destruction, for there were wars, earthquakes, and all the bad stuff happening already, but it would be a restoration of the world and relationships between all living things. Which one is the better one?

I lean toward the later one. When Jesus was resurrected, the gospels record that he still had his scars on his hands and feet and side. He wasn't regenerated into a new and perfect body, but the flesh he died in came to life once again. So, for me, I do not view the end times of great upheavals and dragons and stars falling from the sky, but rather, the world is in a struggle between love and fear. Love heals the planet, feeds all, and stands up for justice. Fear strips the planet, hoards their wealth, and believes that all people act just like them, wanting it for themselves and don't care about their neighbor or the planet they live on and are a part of.

In my theology, there is no Jesus descending on the cloud, snapping the fingers, and all is perfect. Rather, Jesus is present where two or more are gathered in his name. God is present wherever love is, healing is, and justice is strived for. The earth has recovered quickly in times and places when we, as humans, have stopped trying to strip its resources, and listened to what it needs, rather than what we want.

Earth Day is next week, and in all truth, every day is Earth Day. We, humans, have thrived because of the resources of this world. But it is time to stop seeing the world as a commodity, a store, something to be used. It is time to see that we, as humans, are part of the world and for the health and abundance of all, we need to learn to live in it and reconnect with all life and the planet itself. Then, and only then, will we find that restoration promised to the world.

Peace

Pastor Enno