

NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH
Isaiah 65:17-25

Intro: The Bible begins with the creation of the heaven and the earth, and it ends with the creation (the same word) of the new heavens and a new earth.

The first was created without sin, but with the possibility for sin. Sin entered, and all of creation has felt the effect of that sin. We cannot begin to imagine what must have been the glory of that first creation before Adam and Eve disobeyed God.

However, in spite of sin, there has been much blessing upon this world in which we live. It is amazing that there would be any, but there has been much. It has been all due to the grace and goodness of God.

But the prophet Isaiah in these last two chapters of his prophecy speaks of "new heavens and a new earth." See Isa. 65:17; 66:22.

Peter is the next one to speak of this some 700 years later. See 2 Peter 3.

The next we read is in Revelation 21 and the first few verses of Revelation 22.

It is clear from the NT passages that the new heaven and the new earth are descriptive of the eternal state when the old order, or the first order (as Rev. 21:1 indicates), now longer exists. The new order will be similar to the first in that there will be a heaven and an earth, but all of the influences and effects of sin will not be in the new order.

Now this emphasis on the eternal state faces a problem in the writings of Isaiah because Isaiah does mention death in Isa. 65:20. How can we solve this problem?

Perhaps it will help us if we see the way in which Isaiah joins two events which now are approximately 2,000 years apart. I speak of Isa. 9:6, 7 and his references to the first coming of Christ, and the second coming of Christ. It is no wonder that the disciples had trouble figuring out what the role of the Messiah was when He came the first time. Now we know that it is not unusual to have these two events listed together as a characteristic of the prophet's preaching.

So it is very possible that Isaiah has done this with the millennial reign of Christ and the eternal state. The one leads to the other. The first anticipates the second. They are like each other except for the fact that sin and death will still be present in the millennium, but they will be not be

present nor even possible in the eternal state: the new heaven and the new earth.

So much for that.

- But what was Isaiah directed by the Spirit of God to do in this section of his prophecy?

He was led to show us some of the great characteristics of those days which will finally be fulfilled in the eternal state. Many of our questions regarding the glory to come are answered here.

What will the millennium and the eternal state be like-- especially the latter?

I. THE SURPASSING GLORY OF THE NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH (Isa. 65:17).

The new will be so great that the first will not be remembered.

This may be spoken in a relative way, but nevertheless nothing that has taken place in this world will ever bother us or hinder our blessing in the eternal state.

- II. JOY TO THE EXCLUSION OF WEEPING AND CRYING (Isa. 65:18, 19).

The Lord's people will rejoice, and He will rejoice.

III. THE BANISHMENT OF DEATH (Isa. 65:20).

John said in Rev. 21:4 that there shall be "no more death." Could it be possible that, as in the beginning death made more and more of an effect upon the length of man's life, so in the end times death will be vanquished gradually also until in the eternal state it will no longer be?

What a wonderful day when children will not die, when people's lives will not be shortened by death! How much more wonderful when there will be no more funerals! We cannot imagine what that would be like. But when sin goes, so does death.

IV. THE FRUITFULNESS OF WORK (Isa. 65:21-23).

- No enemy will come to take over the labor of the people of God. People will live as long as a tree does. This is speaking of the people of God. Do you know that in the Garden of Gethsemane today there are trees which may have been there when the Lord was in the Garden?

How disappointing it is when crops fail, or when an enemy

either destroys a harvest, or carries it away. That will not be possible after the Lord comes.

And look what is said about . . .

— V. PRAYER (Isa. 65:24).

Perhaps we have all used this verse when God has met our needs in some way before we have even prayed about it. Or there have been times when our prayers have been answered immediately.

But that is not the usual way that the Lord deals with us, is it? Usually we pray, and wait, and pray, and wait--and after much praying and waiting, then the answer comes. But sometimes our prayers are not answered at all in the way we asked for them to be.

But for the time that Isaiah has in mind here there will be such perfect agreement between the prayers of the people of God, and the will of God, that prayers will be answered immediately, or before they are even prayed!

This speaks of a fellowship with God such as is unknown now.

Finally,

— VI. PEACE IN CREATION (Isa. 65:25).

This is an abridged form of Isa. 11:6-9. We have not seen this yet, have we? But it is coming!

Concl: How glorious all of this will be! We could not begin to understand now what it will be like when the Lord comes again, and then what it will be like when this old order is finished, and the new order is established, never to be ruined by sin and death.

If we have been happy here where sin abounds, and where death is on every hand, what will it be like when there is no sin, no sickness, no death, no tears?

— I do not know what our Lord meant, or all that He meant, when He told His disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you," but it surely indicated that where we are going will be so much better than where we are that we will never miss where we are now. Let us lift up our eyes and look; the coming of the Lord draws nigh. And not one jot nor one tittle shall pass from this prophecy until it is all fulfilled. Hallelujah! What a Saviour, and what a salvation!