

## **Look Forward to the New Heavens and the New Earth!**

Isaiah 65:17-25 November 17, 2019 Pastor Robert Hein

**Intro:** Take a look at screen picturing the beautiful Garden of Eden –

Is this a picture of our past or our future? Really both – dawn of creation and our future home in heaven

Understanding our past is the key to understanding our future!

The prophet Isaiah describes our future home for us in Isaiah 65. He uses picture language to give us a glimpse of the glory that awaits us with Jesus in Paradise

Through these words Holy Spirit leads us to look forward with eager anticipation to the new heaven and the new earth which awaits all who trust in Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

**Theme** - Look Forward to the New Heavens and the New Earth!

A big question is - What happens when we die? What comes next? What can we expect? What is heaven like, and how do we get there?

Different views – nothing, no afterlife, simply cease to exist

Hinduism – reincarnation - like a drop of water in the ocean, reach Nirvana, nothingness

Murky, fuzzy, cloudy, play harps in the fog

None of the people Jesus raised from the dead shared with us what they saw and experienced

The Apostle Paul had a vision – caught up to Paradise - inexpressible things, not permitted to tell

Bible doesn't tell us exactly what heaven is like – It remains still a mystery to be revealed

But God does give us some clues and some comforting pictures, and describes some glorious blessings to look forward to understand what is yet to come

Isaiah said, I will create a new heaven and a new earth. So to understand our future, we have to go back to the beginning

Understanding our past is the key to understanding our future!

Back to the Beginning – Creation

What was it like on day Six? It is good, it is good - Very good

– Adam and Eve in the image of God, no sinful nature

Harmony with God, with nature, in perfect working order, with each other

No death, no conflict, no disease,

It truly was Paradise and that is how Jesus described heaven to the penitent thief on the cross

Today, you will be with me in Paradise!

Why it is important to teach the Biblical creation account

Because the beauty and perfection God created in the past is a preview of the glory and perfection we will enjoy in the future in heaven

Paradise Lost will be Paradise Restored

We're not going to float around like phantoms in the fog. We are going to live in a real place with parks and trees and animals, like Adam and Eve did in Paradise.

Contrast this beautiful view of creation with the imperfect view of the world promoted by Evolutionists, primordial ooze, imperfect freakish creatures, struggling over eons to crawl out of the jungle

If God couldn't get creation right the first time or the 1 millionth time, I wonder what a mess heaven might be

No, God insists that the original world he designed for us was very good, and without sin.

FALL - Now, we know that God's perfect Creation was ruined when Adam and Eve misused

Ruined – Perfect creation ruined by sin

Adam and Eve lost image of God, and gained a sinful nature

Creation ruined, frustrated, contaminated by sin, subject to decay

Death, disease, conflict, death, doesn't work the way it is supposed to, harmony lost

Instead of contentment and satisfaction, we have discontent and dissatisfaction

Becomes clear this sinful world is not the end all and our final destination.

We are just travelers on a journey, heading to a better place

That's why God kicked Adam and Eve out of the garden and barred their way to Tree of Life

He didn't want them to live forever in this imperfect, sin infested world.

As our popular hymn puts it, "I'm but a stranger here, heaven is my home. Earth is a desert drear, heaven is my home."

Never have heaven on earth – heaven when we get to heaven

And so, the sin and evil we experience in this world, leads us to long for a better place, a perfect home, our eternal home – the new heavens and the new earth

Isaiah writes, **Isaiah 65:17-25** "See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. 18 But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. 19 I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more.

As you listen to Isaiah's words, keep in mind they have a double fulfillment

First of all they describe the peace and security we enjoy as members of the Holy Christian Church

And secondly he describes the peace and security we will enjoy forever in heaven

But to Isaiah, they are one and the same, from his vantage point, the blessings are combined

We call this Prophetic perspective – an event in the near future and an event in the distant future are combined into the same picture, even though they are separated by many years.

When I lived in California, I experience something similar

From a distance I could view the foothills and the mountain behind them, and they appeared to very close together, But as I got closer, I realized that there was actually a great distance between the foothills and the mountains behind them.

Isaiah describes the blessings we enjoy in Christ the same way.

He described the blessings we enjoy right now as members of God's kingdom of grace

And the blessings we will enjoy in the kingdom of glory both in the same sentence, even though they are separated by many years.

First Isaiah writes, "22 No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the work of their hands. 23 They will not labor in vain, nor will they bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them"

Exile – foreigners live in your home, work your field, take over your business

Picture of estrangement, living in the darkness of sin and unbelief.

God used his mighty power to bring his people back to Jerusalem – their homeland, live in their homes, rebuild their temple – picture of being called out of darkness into the light and life that Jesus offers.

These words describe the blessings we enjoy right now as members of the body of Christ.

Even though we live in a world corrupted by sin and evil, in Christ, we still enjoy peace, contentment, security. God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help even in times of trouble.

King David put it his way in Psalm 23, "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies."

In other words, God promises to bless us despite all the problems surrounding us.

Every day, we enjoy life as forgiven children of God. We are dearly loved and richly blessed.

At our Baptism- we are covered with the perfect robe of Christ's righteousness, a royal robe we wear every day of our life

In the Lord's Supper – We enjoy fellowship and communion with Christ as he offers us his body and blood together with the bread and the wine for the forgiveness of our sins.

That's about as close as you can get to Jesus this side of heaven – in fact, the Lord's Supper is offers a little foretaste of the peace and harmony we will enjoy with Jesus in heaven.

**Now as wonderful** as it is to walk as a child of the light, we also recognize that we are still living in a sinful world. We still have a sinful nature. The devil still tempts us, this sinful world still tries to lead us astray.

As so, we long for something better to come, the new heavens and the new earth which Jesus is preparing for all who long for his appearing

**Isaiah writes**, “See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. 18 But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. 19 I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. 25 The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, and dust will be the serpent’s food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain,” says the LORD.”

Here Jerusalem doesn’t refer to a geographic location in the Israel, but rather to the eternal home of all God’s people, all who put their trust in Jesus.

The former things will not be remembered – This present corrupted world will not last forever.

It will be destroyed by fire on the last day

So where will we live? Don’t worry! God is preparing a new heaven and a new earth

A New place to live, not floating clouds and the fog – but a real place,

The apostle John describes it this way in Rev 21, “Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

Our departed loved ones are in heaven right now – their souls are enjoying life with Jesus

At Jesus’ return, he will raise all the dead – bodies and souls will be reunited, and glorified

We will see our loved ones again in glorious perfection, and then Jesus will gather us all together to heaven, the new heaven and the new earth, the home of righteousness.

What will that be like?

Won’t be any tears or mourning or crying

We be joy with Jesus, eternal joy and continual happiness in Paradise

What comfort this rings us on Saints Triumphant Sunday

We think of the joy our departed loved ones in Christ are enjoying right now,

And we look forward to our joyful reunion with them forever

Are you going through tough times? Are you missing a loved one?

Hang in there, remember the best is yet to come

Our separation will only be for a little while, but our joy in heaven will last forever.

Paul says our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us in heaven.

Yes, Rejoice in the blessings you enjoy right now as members of God’s family of believers,

And look forward to the even greater blessings which await us in heaven

Look forward to the new heavens and the new earth!