

What Will New Creation Be Like? (Isaiah 65:17-25)

Big Idea: The new creation will be a place of joy and restoration, and we're made to look forward to that day.

When I was studying to be a pastor, I was invited to speak to a primary school class at a Christian school. The topic was heaven. I had to stand in front of a bunch of kids and tell them what heaven is like.

It was awful. I knew heaven would be good, but I had no idea how to describe it. The thing about kids is that you can't fake it in front of kids. They know if you don't know what you're talking about.

And so I bombed that day. I couldn't paint an accurate picture of what heaven is like. I couldn't answer any of their questions, at least accurately. I left from that experience devastated, because I knew that I should know better than what I did.

We need to understand what heaven is like. We are alive for only a short time here on earth. If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, you are meant to think a lot about heaven. It's supposed to get help get you through this life, which can be very hard.

But here's the problem: It's hard to hope for something we don't know very much about. So what I want to do is to give you a picture of heaven today, one that I hope will be exciting enough to give you hope no matter what you're going through today.

We're in a series through the entire Bible from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22. Right now we're in the part of the story in which we hear from a prophet named Isaiah, written some 2,700 years ago. Today we're in the latter part of Isaiah, which is significant.

The first part of Isaiah – chapters 1 to 35 – contain a lot of doom and gloom. The second part of Isaiah – chapters 40-66 – give us a lot more hope. Isaiah has a lot to say to Judah. He accuses them of sin. He calls them to repentance. He talks about God's judgment. But he also provides hope: hope that God isn't done with them, and that he will bring the restoration that we need.

We're in the hopeful part of the book of Isaiah today. In the passage we're looking at today, God gives us a glimpse of what we're waiting for. We need to hear this.

Two Descriptions

So what is our future like? You're going to like this. Two things:

It will be a place of joy.

*For behold, I create new heavens
and a new earth,
and the former things shall not be remembered
or come into mind.*

*But be glad and rejoice forever
in that which I create;
for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy,
and her people to be a gladness.*

*I will rejoice in Jerusalem
and be glad in my people;*

*no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping
and the cry of distress.*

(Isaiah 65:17-19)

I want you to notice a couple of things. First, Isaiah says that God will create a new heavens and a new earth. The new creation will not mean the end of the earth. It will mean the recreation of the heavens and the earth. We need to get rid of the idea of a disembodied, floating existence somewhere out there. Think about the recreation of the world, except as it should be.

The Christian hope is not merely that someday we and our loved ones will die and go to be with Jesus. Instead, the Christian hope is that our departure from this world is just the first leg of a journey that is round-trip. We will not remain forever with God in heaven, for God will bring heaven down to us. ([Michael Wittmer](#))

What is it like in this remade heaven and earth? Isaiah says that the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. "About five seconds into this new world, you and I will turn to one another and say, 'Cancer, terrorism—what were they? Hmmm. Can't seem to remember. No matter. Here we go!'" ([Ray Ortlund](#)). Now I can get behind that.

But that's not even the best part. It will not just be a place where bad things are forgotten, it will be a place of joy. Verse 18 envisions this new heaven and new earth with a new Jerusalem at the center, and that it will be filled with joy. In this new earth, we get what we want and need most: God, and it will make us very, very happy. It will be what we've longed for all this time. The new creation will be a place of inexpressible joy.

There's this idea – I don't know if you've heard of it – called the beatific vision. It's something we don't talk about enough. It's the joy we will experience when we finally see God. Think of it this way. When you love someone, and you don't see them for a long time, think about how you feel when you finally see them again. Simply seeing them can give you deep feelings of joy and satisfaction. Seeing them makes you so happy.

Imagine what it will be like to finally see God! We will see Jesus in his glory, and we'll realize it has been what our souls have ached for all this time. It will be profoundly satisfying. Jonathan Edwards writes, "After they have had the pleasure of beholding the face of God millions of ages, it will not grow a dull story; the relish of this delight will be as exquisite as ever." We will never get tired of looking at our Savior. It will fill us with continual joy. It will result in perfect and permanent happiness.

That's the first thing Isaiah tells us. What are we looking forward to? Joy. We won't remember any of the bad things that happened, and we will see Jesus, and it will make us permanently, perfectly happy for the rest of eternity.

But here's what else we see.

It will be a place of restoration.

Think about all the things that frustrate you and bring you pain. Think about infant mortality, short life spans, not being able to enjoy the things you thought you would, war and conflict, and more.

And then look at the picture that Isaiah paints for us. Isaiah takes the things that rob us of our joy and flips them. Isaiah uses aspects of life that we know about to help us understand what it will be like then. We probably can't fully understand what the

new heaven and new earth will be like, so Isaiah uses images that we can understand so we get a taste of what it will be like.

Premature deaths? Gone.

*No more shall there be in it
an infant who lives but a few days,
or an old man who does not fill out his days,
for the young man shall die a hundred years old,
and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.
(65:20)*

The power of old age and death will be abolished. Gone.

Premature ends to things? I hate how summer goes so quickly. I hate that I'm leaving this church. I hate that so much of life is temporary. That won't happen in the new creation.

*They shall build houses and inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
They shall not build and another inhabit;
they shall not plant and another eat;
for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
(65:21-22)*

Nothing we enjoy will be temporary. We won't have to try to hold on. The gifts that God gives us then will be ones we can enjoy without end. God's gifts will be durable.

Do you ever feel like your work is never as good as you want it to be? That nothing turns out quite as well as you'd hoped? Do you ever feel like things are really fragile?

No matter how good things are, we know that things can change quickly. Bad things come along and rob us of the things we love. Not then.

*They shall not labor in vain
or bear children for calamity,
for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the LORD,
and their descendants with them.*
(65:23)

Do you ever feel like God is distant? That he's keeping his distance from you? Not then.

*Before they call I will answer;
while they are yet speaking I will hear.*
(65:24)

Do you ever get sick of war? Russia and Ukraine, the threat of increasing tensions with China.

*The wolf and the lamb shall graze together;
the lion shall eat straw like the ox,
and dust shall be the serpent's food.*
*They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain,"*
says the LORD.
(65:25)

We'll have joy, fullness of life, security, rewarding work, fellowship with God, and peace.

Notice how many things we recognize in this new creation. Part of the reason why is because God gives us images we can understand. But another part is that the new earth will be a lot like our lives now, except restored; a whole lot better.

Just as a new car is a better version of an old car—but with all the same essential components (four wheels, an engine, transmission, steering wheel, etc.), so too will the New Earth be a far better version of the old Earth, but with the same essential physical components. ([Randy Alcorn](#))

There's so much more you could say about heaven, but those are the two things that Isaiah emphasizes. Heaven will be a place of joy and a place of restoration. Our desires will be fully satisfied. Everything that is wrong with this world will be fixed. We will enjoy God's gifts without threat or danger.

How Should We Respond?

The question is: how should we respond?

I've been challenged by a verse recently as I've thought about it. The verse is found in 2 Timothy 4:8, where Paul writes:

Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

Paul couldn't wait for that day. It was what kept him going with all of his troubles: being beaten, jailed, rejected, let down with friends. Paul kept his eye on the new cre-

ation. He couldn't wait for Jesus to return again. Paul couldn't wait to see Jesus and receive his crown of righteousness from Jesus on that day.

And Paul says something else: we get to enjoy the same hope. But look at the last part of the verse. "...not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing." The question is posed to us: do we love his appearing? Are we looking forward to the new creation? Isaiah and Paul are telling us: we should be! Our hope for the new creation should be what sustains us here and now. It's what we were made for. I can't wait for that day.

I did not do a good job at that primary school that day. I get it. It's hard to describe heaven. But Isaiah does a really good job of describing the new creation in a way that we can understand. **The new creation will be a place of joy and restoration, and we're made to look forward to that day.**

Do you? This is what Jesus came to give us: not just forgiveness but hope for a new heaven and earth. This is the work of restoration that Jesus does. Trust him. Hope in him. Live for that day.

Thank you, Lord, for Isaiah. Thank you for this hope. Thank you for Jesus. Help us trust in him and long for this day. Amen.