

## **The New Heavens and the New Earth**

Isaiah 65:17-25

The Resurrection of Our Lord, April 4, 2010

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

Behold! I am creating a new heavens and a new earth. It is the home of righteousness. The old heavens and the old earth will pass away. They are wearing out like a garment. They are rotting away. They will pass away. I will burn them in the heat. They will melt with the elements. Then I am creating a new heavens and a new earth. The new heaven and the new earth is the home of righteousness.

When I create the new heavens and the new earth the first things will not be remembered. They will not go up upon your heart.

The first things are the first heaven and the first earth. The first heaven and the first earth are the heaven and the earth that we are living in. Go outside and look at the ground that you till. It is the first earth. At night look up at the stars with a telescope. That is the first heavens.

These are the heavens and the earth that will pass away. This is the heaven and the earth that is passing away. Look at the earth. It is passing away. Pollution, blight, plagues, earthquakes, hurricanes, disasters of various kinds are all indications that the first earth is passing away. Famine, hunger, poverty and war are all indications that the first earth is passing away.

The heavens are also passing away. Galaxies are flying away from each other. Black holes are sucking matter out of the universe. Asteroids could strike the earth at any time and destroy it.

This earth and this heaven will melt in the heat of God's judgment and wrath. They will vanish like smoke. They will roll up like a garment. Once they are gone they will not come up upon the mind any more. They will not go up upon the heart any more. Once they are gone the first things will not be remembered.

Frankly who would want to remember the first things? Who would want to remember the former things and bring them up on the heart? Who wants to remember a world where people kill each other by the millions? Who would want to remember where terrorist and citizen alike fly airplanes into buildings killing thousands? Who would want to remember a world in which all of the flowers bloom and then wilt away and die? Who wants to remember a world with disease in it? Who wants to remember a world with hunger and poverty in it? Who wants to remember a world with nursing homes in it? Who wants to remember a world with funeral homes in it? Who wants to remember a world with death in it? Who wants to remember a world where everything from your pet to your grandparents die, everything from your children to your parents die? Who wants to remember a world of miscarriages and missed opportunities? Who wants to remember a world of divorce, a world where people are not speaking to each other any more? Who wants to remember a world where people sin? Who wants to remember sin? Who wants to remember how we have hurt each other? Who wants to remember what they have done? We try so hard to forget. Who wants to remember everything that has been done to us? We try even harder to forget that. Or if we are trying really hard to remember what someone else has done to us we lead a life of misery. Who wants to remember the misery?

In the new heaven and the new earth these first things will not be remembered. They will not come up on the heart. The guilt will be gone. The pain will be gone. The hurt will be gone. The violation will be gone. It will all be gone. They will not be remembered. They will not come up on the heart.

The inhabitants of the new heaven and the new earth will exult. They will shout. They will shout over everything that I am creating. They will shout because I am creating a new Jerusalem. They will exult because they are My people.

In the new heaven and the new earth, the inhabitants aren't the only ones who will exult. They are not the only ones who will shout. God will exult also. God will shout also.

I will shout in Jerusalem. I will exult in My people.

God will sing over you. God will rejoice over you. You will sing over Him and He will sing over you and there will be singing going around. God will delight over you. God will be happy with you. He will be happy that you are there. He will be happy that you are living with Him. He will be happy to have you live with Him forever. It will never end. The joy will never be over. It will continue always. It will go on and on and on.

Think of it. In the new heaven and the new earth, God is not angry with you. There is no wrath against you. God is not mad at what you have done. There is only joy over you. God looks at you and is happy. God looks at you and takes pride in what His hands have made. He says to the universe, "Look at these people, they are mine and I am proud of them."

I will shout in Jerusalem. I will exult in My people.

The voice of weeping and the voice of an outcry will no longer be heard.

No one will weep in the new heaven and the new earth. Any cause of weeping will be taken away. No one will get hurt in the new heaven and the new earth. No one will fall down and scrape their knee. No one will stand up and bump their head. No one will be in an accident and lose an ankle or a leg or a hand or a finger. No one will sprain anything. No one will fall out of a tree and break something. No one will poke an eye out.

No one will shoot someone else in the new heaven and the new earth. The sound of an outcry will not be heard. No one will strike someone else in the new heaven and the new earth. No one will burn someone else. No one will torture someone else. No one will deprive another of food and drink. No one will capture another and imprison them without food and water. No one will make fun of another. No one will bully another. There is no terrorism there. There is no violence there of any kind. No one is jealous of another. No one is hateful or spiteful toward another. No one commits crimes. There are no prisons there and no taxes to pay for prisons. There is no political dispute over where prisoners should be held. There are no police or military there. None are necessary. No one harms by force, therefore force for protection is unnecessary. Police officers do not risk their lives there. Fire fighters do not risk their lives there. EMT's do not exist there. The military is not there. Our young men do not go off to war in the new heaven and the new earth. They do not go off to die. No one kills there. No one gets killed there.

As a result no one will weep. No one will cry out to God for vengeance. They will not cry out to their politicians for justice. They will not need to.

No one will weep there because no one will die there. That is, in the end, the ultimate cause of weeping. No one dies in the new heaven and the new earth.

In fact people who are a hundred years old in the new heaven and the new earth are to be thought of as mere babes. They may as well be nursing at the breast to be only a hundred. That isn't very old in the new heaven and the new earth. In fact to be only a hundred years old in the new heaven and the new earth is to be accursed in comparison to everyone else.

Now don't worry, all of you will be thousands and millions of years old in the new heaven and the new earth. You don't have to worry about being accursed there. I am just saying that if someone were

there who was only a hundred years old, they would have been there so little a period of time in comparison to everyone else that they would be as good as accursed.

Amazing Grace is right, "When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun."

There are no funerals in the new heaven and the new earth. There are no cremations there. There are no crematories there. There are no funeral homes there. There is no embalming in the new heaven and the new earth. There are no caskets there. No tree will be cut down in order to make a casket out of it. There are no hearses there. There are no fancy funeral coaches in the new heaven and the new earth. There are no tombstones there. There are no cemeteries there. No one will be there to mow them. No one will be there to maintain them. There are no hospitals there. There are no doctors there. There are no nursing homes there, none whatsoever.

In the new heaven and the new earth you will have an indestructible life. You won't die. No one will weep. There will be no voice of an outcry there. No one will attend funerals. No one will go to visitations. No one will go to memorial services. And most blessed of all no one will have to plan them. No one will have to make arrangements for them and wonder what to say and where to have it. No one will have to stand next to the casket of the one they love and weep.

In the new heavens and the new earth, they will build houses and live in them. They will not build houses and have someone else live in them. They will plant vineyards and they will eat their fruit. They will not plant vineyards and someone else will eat their fruit.

One Sunday several weeks ago I advised all of you to be careful what kind of car you get in the new heaven and the new earth because they will never wear out. They will last forever. No recalls in the new heaven and the new earth. And then I observed that we wouldn't need cars. If we are going to live forever, we would have plenty of time to simply walk wherever we needed to go no matter how far away it was.

Well according to Isaiah here the same thing is true of your house. Maybe God would say it this way to us: They will build houses and not insure them. They will not build houses and have them insured. They will plant gardens and eat their produce. They will not plant gardens and have the bugs, the blight, the rust and the critters eat them.

Your house will never wear out. It will not be invaded by beetles. It will not be eaten by termites. It will not be taken by fire or by flood. Your house will not wear out. It will not fall down. It will not rot.

Your fields and gardens will always produce. Imagine a new heaven and a new earth without weeds, without pests. Pesticides are unnecessary. Herbicides are unnecessary. Everything will grow and produce. There will be no green movement in the new heaven and the new earth trying to convince us to reduce emissions and get our implements checked for the right emissions levels. We simply won't use implements. We won't need to. Our food will just grow. It will simply be available. Put the seed in the ground and it will grow. No weeding or cultivating is necessary. If you walk the beans it will be to enjoy the sunshine and the clouds. It will be to enjoy the light of God and of His Son.

Those days will be like the days of the tree. If you cut down a tree and leave a stump, the tree will come back. Trees are kind of annoying that way. I knew a fella once who cut down trees, but did not remove the stumps. In a few years he had the trees back again. They were as tall as they were before. They were shaped a little different, but they came back.

The days of the new heaven and the new earth are like the days of the tree. Everything gets cut off in God's judgment. His wrath melts everything in its heat. Then everything comes back. It is in a

different shape and form than it was before, but it all comes back. For example some people ask me how big the new earth is going to be since it will be holding a lot of immortal people. I don't know how big it will be, but it will be big enough to hold all the saved, everyone whose name is written in the Lamb's book of life.

The work of your hands will not wear out. One of the banes of being a janitor is that when you clean something it does not stay clean. It amazes me after working as a custodian myself that even though you realize that you would be out of a job if people did not keep making things dirty so that you would have something to clean up, it still griped me that I had to clean up after people. I just cleaned up this room. Couldn't you keep it clean for a day?

You work on something. It lasts for a while and pretty soon, you have to work on it again. You fix something and then pretty soon, you have to fix it again. You build something and then pretty soon you have to build it again. Everything keeps falling apart. Everything keeps wearing out. Everything keeps getting dirty again. Think about how much of our economy is built on people who labor for stuff that has to be done over and over again because things keep getting messed up. Mechanics are such a vocation. Doctors are also such a vocation. Doctors and mechanics and janitors are all in a profession where they are fixing something that is ultimately going to break again.

Well, not in the new heaven and the new earth. The work of your hands will not wear out. The work of you, God's chosen, will not wear out. What you build will last. Be careful what you build and you won't have to build much and take your time building. You have all of eternity to get it done. Why people who never finish things will have an excellent excuse in the new heaven and the new earth.

You will not be weary. Your life will not be vain. You will not give birth to sudden ruin because you are the blessed of the Lord. You are the blessed of the Lord. Each and every one of you will be in the new heaven and the new earth. You are the blessed of the Lord. It is your houses that will not wear out. It is your gardens whose fruit you will eat. It is the work of your hands that will not wear out. It is your houses that you will live in. You will exult in God and He in you. You will rejoice in God and He in you.

While you are yet calling upon God, He will answer. While you are yet speaking He will hear. You won't even be able to finish a sentence with God and He will have your prayers answered. While you are still thinking it, He will have it supplied. It will all happen instantly.

And this perfection, this wonder and this glory will extend into the creation itself. Jesus did not die on the cross to redeem only human beings. He died to redeem the creation of which we are a part. That is why Jesus is not interested in restoring only human beings. He is interested also in restoring the creation of which we are a part. After all the creation is His creation. He made it and declared it to be good. Jesus did not physically rise from the dead only to save the spiritual part of our lives. He physically rose from the dead to save us body and soul, not to merely take us to heaven in some kind of ethereal non corporeal sense, like He was after nothing more than a bunch of ghosts in heaven, but to give us the new heavens and the new earth. There we will live finally the way that we were meant to live. There we will treat each other finally the way that we were meant to treat each other. There we will receive from God what He always wanted to give to us.

And not only us but also the creation. The wolf and the lamb will pasture together. The wolf will not eat the lamb. The wolf will not kill the lamb. There is no death in the new heaven and the new earth. It will be a little like the saber toothed tiger in the movie *Ice Age*. He never eats anything, but manages to live clear through the whole film. It will be like that. The reason is that the lion will eat straw like the ox. There will be no more killing not even in nature. There will be no more death not even among the animals.

There will be only one animal left out: the serpent. The serpent will not enjoy the food of others in the new heaven and the new earth. The serpent will eat dust. Everything that God spoke in Genesis three will be reversed. The ground will no longer be cursed. The husband will no longer rule over his wife while her desire is for him. The ground will no longer produce thorns and thistles. People will no longer eat the bread of the earth by the sweat of their brow. They will no longer return to the dust of the earth. All of that is reversed except for the serpent. He will still crawl on the ground and eat dust. He will still be on his belly with dirt the only food he is permitted to eat. He will be powerless to tempt. He will be powerless to harm. He will be thrown into the Lake of Fire. He will experience the second death. He will die eternally.

They will not harm. They will not destroy on all My holy mountain. The Lord has spoken.

Now all of this is just fantasy and wishful thinking without something concrete to go on. Isaiah is just painting a nice picture of how the world might be if we try hard enough without some kind of evidence to go on that this is actually how things are going to turn out.

But God is so excited about the new heaven and the new earth that He simply could not help Himself, but to supply a little new heaven and a little new earth in advance.

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! There is your glimpse of your new life. Look at His. His new life is your new life. His indestructible life is your new life. He never dies. You will never die. He lives and eats and talks. You will live and eat and talk. He cannot die again. Once you die, you cannot die again. Everyone who abides in Jesus, abides in peace and hope.

This is why Jesus healed the sick. This is why Jesus gave sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf. This is why Jesus made the lame to leap like a deer. This is why Jesus fed five thousand people using nothing but His power to create in order to do it. This is why Jesus changed the water into wine and supplied celebrating people everything they needed to celebrate. The water into wine was not necessary by our standards. Oh sure we would agree that healings were necessary. We agree with the health care plan of Jesus. And notice Jesus doesn't charge premiums. There are no health insurance companies in the new heaven and the new earth. That is the way to do health care reform. Anyway, I digress. But even the water into wine, something that was unnecessary really in the grand scheme of things, even something relatively small, Jesus did it. He showed His glory. His disciples put their faith in Him. This is why Jesus raised the dead.

All along Jesus was bringing us the new heaven and the new earth. And when you come home from the hospital, when you are healed, you have experienced a little bit of the new heaven and the new earth in advance. When people gather together to shout and exult in God, you are seeing a little of what it will be like in the new heaven and the new earth. When husbands and wives finally confess their real sins to each other and forgive each other in the name of Jesus Christ, you have seen a little bit of the new heaven and the new earth in advance. When terrorists stop killing each other, when enemies live in peace, when people help each other to rebuild their homes and their lives after a natural disaster, you have seen a little bit of the new heaven and the new earth in advance. Or to put it another way Jesus has brought you a small vision of His resurrection. Either way will do.

The resurrection of Jesus is the first step toward a new heaven and a new earth. He is the first step toward that world in which everyone lives forever. Abraham owned only a couple of acres of the promised land, but his descendents inherited it as promised. Jesus is only one person with an indestructible life, but the rest of you will receive indestructible lives as well. It will come. Just you wait and see.

After all, Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

In His Name. Amen.