

Heaven and the Land Promises

1 Peter 1:4-5

King of Kings! (Gospel of Matthew Series)

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“Abraham’s quest segues us into the New Testament’s eschatologizing of the Old Testament Land promises. The apostles refer to the Land in connection with the eschaton by the terms “inheritance,” “heavenly country,” and “times of refreshing” or “restoration of all things.”¹ - **Bruce Waltke**



pen your Bible to **1 Peter 1**. We are continuing our series on “Heaven.” This morning we are looking at a message entitled: “Heaven and the Land Promises.”

James Scott of Monmouth

I love genealogies. The problem is all the famous people I’m related to are the outcasts and the outlaws. My grandfather worked for Al Capone. My great uncle was married to the outlaw Belle Starr. If you go way back on my mother’s side, I found out I’m related to James Scott, Duke of Monmouth whose father was King Charles II of England (through Lucy Walter – via the VanStone / Butt families) Great Grandson of King James I (King James Bible fame). Duke James Scott of Monmouth was a Protestant, and he actually tried to usurp the throne from his uncle King James II, a Catholic. He was put into the London tower and later beheaded. He was a usurper.

Now just use your imagination with me this morning. Imagine King James II instead of executing this criminal, adopted him as his son. Though he was deserving of death, imagine he would have given him the inheritance of England and the throne.

That would be very much like what God has done for us! We were usurpers and rebels and criminals against His goodness and kindness. We stole all His good gifts. But He was merciful, and through Christ’s payment, He redeemed us and adopted us as true sons and daughters of the King of kings!

Heaven on Earth

Today we are talking about Heaven on Earth! We have an inheritance that we don’t deserve! That inheritance is that we are heirs of God and joint heirs of Christ (Rom. 8:17). Peter talks about it in 1 Peter 1.

1 Peter 1:4-5, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,⁵ who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

¹ Waltke, Bruce K.; Charles Yu (2011-04-19). An Old Testament Theology (p. 580). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

Our hope consists of the “inheritance” that is being “kept” for us “in heaven.” Evidently Peter finds it difficult to find words that do justice in capturing the greatness of this future inheritance. In describing it, he can do no better than use three words that tell us what it is not.

- “imperishable”
- “undefiled”
- “unfading”²

When our own bodies, long since expired, are reunited with Christ on that final day, we will be made incorruptible forevermore, restored, new, complete. The earth as well will be restored! The landscape and culture and people of every family, people, and nation will be there! What a day that will be. We will be His people, and God will be our God. It will be heaven on earth!

All of these New Testament promises come directly from the Old Testament promises to Abraham!

I. The Land Promises mean we have a **home!**

When God told Abraham in the Old Testament, leave your family and land, and I’ll give you a new family and a new land, he was talking about giving Him a new home. He wasn’t just looking for the Promised Land. He was looking for a heavenly New Earth that was beyond Canaan!

Looking Not Merely for Land of Israel, but the New Earth

And Abraham’s home is our home! **Hebrews 11:8-10**, “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. 10 For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.”

We are also looking for the same Promised Land. Not the merely the 100 by 50 mile strip of land in Palestine, but we are looking for Abraham’s “heavenly city” whose “designer and builder is God.” We are looking for the New Earth! All the land promises in the Bible are ultimately fulfilled in the New Earth.

The Land Promises are Fulfilled in the Eschaton

The apostles in the New Testament refer to the Land in connection with the eschaton by the terms “inheritance,” “heavenly country,” and “times of refreshing” or “restoration of all things.” And it is right to think of the Land Promises fulfilled this way.

The Meek Shall Inherit the Land (Earth)

We find that only time in all the Gospels that Jesus speaks directly about the land promises, and he actually changes the word from Psalm 37:11 from “land” to “earth.”

Christ Christ’s third beatitude in **Matthew 5:5**, “blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth [Heb. Gk. tēn gēn]” is a direct quote of Psalm 37: 11 concerning the land of Israel, “But the meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant peace.”

² Helm, D. R. (2008). *1 & 2 Peter and Jude: sharing christ’s sufferings* (p. 32). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

Abraham, Heir of the World

We see this again with the Apostle Paul's enlargement of the land promises in **Romans 4:13** is a key verse in understanding the land promises in the Bible. Look at Paul's comment: he says that "the promise to Abraham and his offspring [was] that he would be heir of the world." The word "world" is *cosmos*. Abraham is not only an heir to Palastine, but to the whole universe, to the entire New Heaven and New Earth!

The Inheritance Imagery

The imagery of "inheritance" derives from the Old Testament terminology associated with Israel's inheritance of the Land (Exod. 32:13; Lev. 20:24; Num . 26: 3– 56; Deut. 3: 28). In other words, **Israel's inheritance of the land of Canaan is a foretaste of the Christian's inheritance in the regeneration of all things on the New Earth.**³

Remember **Exodus 32:13** where Moses says to the children of Israel: "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.'"

This is a direct reference to the Abrahamic covenant. God's not only going to save Abraham and all who believe. He's going to give them the promised land, which is ultimately fulfilled in the New Earth.

God's Covenant with Abraham

By way of review, as we consider the land of the New Earth, we need to go back to God's covenant with Abraham. God told Abraham to leave his family and his land, and he would give him a new people and a new land.

Genesis 12:1-3, "Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'"

Again, the covenant was reaffirmed in **Gen. 15:5**, when God tells Abraham "Count the stars - see if you can number them - so shall your decendants be!"

And God reaffirms the covenant again in **Gen. 22:17**, "I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies."

So God promised Abraham a people through a barren woman and a man of weak faith.

The Promise of Land to Abraham

But he also promised a land. Look at Gen. 15:18, "On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, 19 the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, 20 the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, 21 the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites.'"

Has the Lord forgotten his promise to Abraham?

³ Waltke, Bruce K.; Charles Yu (2011-04-19). An Old Testament Theology (p. 580). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

Further Reiteration of Land Promises

In the Prophets, we hear further reiteration of the land promises, but they are greatly heightened. When we read the prophets, we notice that the land promises to Israel are connected to the earth's restoration to Edenlike qualities prophesied in many passages. Consider for instance:

Isaiah 51:3, "Indeed, the Lord will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places. And her wilderness He will make like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and sound of a melody."

Ezekiel 36:35, "They will say, "This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden; and the waste, desolate and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited."

Isaiah 35:1, "The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."

Abraham, Heir of the World

Romans 4:13 is a key verse in understanding the land promises in the Bible. Look at Paul's comment: he says that "the promise to Abraham and his offspring [was] that he would be heir of the world." The word "world" is *cosmos*. Abraham is not only an heir to Palestine, but to the whole universe, to the entire New Heaven and New Earth!

Heirs of God, Fellow Heirs with Christ

And Paul further says in **Galatians 3:29**, "if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise." And "In Christ, all the promises of God are yes and amen" (**1 Cor. 1:20**).

And Paul says in **Romans 8:17** that we as children of God are "heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ." We are all heirs of the cosmos!

Understanding the Land Promises

To understand the land promises, all we need to consider is that the land of Israel was a mere **shadow**. God has not forgotten his promises to His people. He will not only give them the land of Israel, but the whole *cosmos* (Rom. 4:13). And as Abraham's heirs, we believing Gentiles are heirs with Christ of the whole cosmos!

Jesus and His People are the True Israel

Galatians 3:16, 18, "Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ...¹⁸ For if the **inheritance** comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise."

Genesis 12:7, "To your offspring I will give this land."

GOD'S GIFT OF THE LAND IN GENESIS

God's Gift of Land

In Genesis, land is a gift from God from the beginning of creation. The appearance of "dry land" (Gen. 1:9) is given to man to have dominion over. Adam lost dominion of the land when he sinned, but God sought out a new beginning in Abraham.

In the Bible, the land represents a place where all people, and in particular the **descendants of Abraham**, can anchor their culture and nation. In this sense, land is seen as a

gift of creation in Genesis. It is a place God carves out of the world as an inheritance for His people.⁴

And though in Adam we all lost possession of the land, the earth was again promised by God to Abraham. Then it's borders were defined by Moses, and later possessed by Joshua. In fact, the covenant promises given to Israel include not only land, but also

- a prosperous and numerous seed, **Gen. 22:17**, "I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies."
- an everlasting throne, **Jer. 33:17**, "...thus says the LORD: David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel..."
- international supremacy
- possession of the whole earth, **Ps. 37:11**, "The meek shall inherit the land" cf. Mat. 5:5

The Land Promises to the OT Jew

The Old Testament believer had many expectations after reading the Old Testament promises:

- the visible conquest of God's enemies
- the vindication and restoration of His people to supremacy in the land
- the fulfillment of the promises of a Davidic throne and rule upon the earth in power and glory.
- that Israel's God would at last becoming King of kings.⁵

ISRAEL'S LOSS OF THE LAND PREDICTED

Loss of the Land Predicted

The main message of the prophets is that God's people will lose the land if they are without faith. They are reiterating what Moses said. Before Israel enters the land under Joshua's leadership, Deuteronomy records Moses' final words of encouragement and warning to the people.

"When you father children and children's children, and have grown old in the land, if you act corruptly by making a carved image in the form of anything, and by doing what is evil in the sight of the Lord your God, so as to provoke him to anger,²⁶ I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that **you will soon utterly perish from the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess. You will not live long in it, but will be utterly destroyed.**²⁷ And the Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the Lord will drive you." (Deut. 4.25– 27).

The Captivity of Israel

Israel would be cast out of the land. "Ichobod: would be written over the Temple and the land. They would be taken away by the Assyrians and the Babylonians. But God would bring them back.

⁴ Burge, Gary M. (2010-04-01). *Jesus and the Land: The New Testament Challenge to "Holy Land" Theology* (Kindle Locations 166-170). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

⁵ N.T. Wright. *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 204

The Jews knew even in captivity that God would bring them back. They remembered the promise of **Genesis 13:15**, "for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever."

Eighteen times the Book of Deuteronomy refers to the promise of the land made with the patriarchs, and all but three include the covenant language that YHWH gave it to them. This land was "a good land" (Deut. 1:25, 35; 3:23; 4:21-22; 6:18; 8:7, 10; 9:6; 11:17). It was filled with brooks, springs, wheat, barley, grapes, vines, figs, pomegranates, olives, honey, iron, and copper!

Not Just the Land but Also Nations Flooding into Israel

Yet the larger promises of God in the prophets include not only the expansion of the land but also the **nations flooding in** (as in **Isaiah 66:12**, "Behold, I will extend peace to [Israel] like a river, and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream.")

GOD'S RESTORATION OF THE LAND PREDICTED - A NT PROMISE!

The Restoration of the Land

In all of Israel's rebellion, God still promised to bring them back to the land and restore the kingdom. For instance in **Jeremiah 29:13-14**, "You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you, declares the Lord, and **I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations** and all the places where I have driven you, declares the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile."

Look as well at **Ezekiel 11:17-20**, "Thus says the Lord God: **I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered**, and I will give you the land of Israel.'¹⁸ And when they come there, **they will remove from it all its detestable things and all its abominations.**¹⁹ And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,²⁰ that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. **And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.**"

God Began to Gather His People at Pentecost

These promises are fulfilled in the New Testament! First at Pentecost. God promised to gather the Jews from every nation under heaven. We see this in **Acts 2:5-13**, "Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷ And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, ¹¹ both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."¹² And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"¹³ But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."

What did Peter say this was a fulfillment of? He says in Acts 2:14, "But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them:

16 This is what was uttered through the prophet Joel."

This is the fulfillment of Israel's salvation! And in Acts 2:29-36 the Apostle says that Jesus whom they crucified is the promised Davidic King that would rule on David's throne forever. Acts 2:36, "Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

They were all cut to heart, and 3000 of them were saved and began evangelizing the world!

The Nations Flow out of Jerusalem

God began to regather his people at Pentecost. But what land would they fill? According to the Prophet **Habakkuk 2:14**, "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea."

Isaiah 2:2, speaking of Christ gives this prophecy, " The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

² It shall come to pass in the latter days
that the mountain of the house of the Lord
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be lifted up above the hills;

and all the nations shall flow to it.

³ and many peoples shall come, and say:
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths."

For out of Zion shall go the law,
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

⁴ He shall judge between the nations,
and shall decide disputes for many peoples;
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore."

What are we to think of these land promises? We must go to the New Testament. Specifically we see this in Romans and Ephesians.

Land Promises for the Uncircumcised in Romans

When you hear these promises as you read your Old Testament, you need to put your name there. Romans is a wonderful place where Paul demonstrates that the land promises are for us, not only the Jews but also the Gentiles. The apostle Paul says the promises are for the **uncircumcised**, just as when God promised Abraham the land when HE was uncircumcised.

This is what Paul says in **Romans 4:11-12**, "[Abraham] received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well,¹² and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised." This would have been scandalous to the Jewish mind.

Land Promises (Inheritance) in Ephesians

But as he says in Eph. 2:14, the wall of hostility between Jew and Gentile has been torn down.

Eph. 2:12, "Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world."

Eph. 2:19, "So then you [Gentiles] are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." Members of God's family! That means we get the inheritance.

Abraham's Seed

In **Genesis 15**, God reaffirms His covenant with Abraham. He says "Count the stars, number the sands of the sea... so shall your seed be." And what does Moses say about Abraham? "Abraham believed God... and it was counted to Him for righteousness." And God would bless not just his seed, but all the families and nations and peoples of the earth through Christ, Abraham's Seed.

Speaking of Genesis 15, Paul says that seed was not many seeds, but one Seed, which is Christ. Abraham believed God would bring Christ through his descendants. **Gal. 3:16**, "The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ."

Pauline References to Land and Inheritance

What does Paul say about the land promises? Look back at Ephesians

Eph. 1:11, "In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will."

Eph. 1:13-14, we were "...sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory."

Eph. 1:18, Paul says we have had "the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints."

The ultimate inheritance of the Abrahamic Covenant according to the New Testament is far more than Palestine. It is Israel and Palestine. But it is "the riches of Christ's glorious inheritance" (Eph. 1:18).

John's References to Land and Inheritance

Remember Ezekiel's reference to the land in Eze. 11? **Ezekiel 11:17-20**, "Thus says the Lord God: I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel."

^{Verse 19} And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,²⁰ that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. **And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.**"

The fulfillment of this promise is found by the Apostle John in Revelation 21. These land prophecies are interpreted by the Apostle John as pertaining to the new earth in the book of **Revelation 21:1-3**, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first

earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, **the dwelling place of God is with man**. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God."

II. The land promises mean we have a victory!

As Abraham's promised son, and David's promised royal son, Christ, in gaining salvation, becomes heir not only of Israel, but of the Cosmos! We NT believers, Jews and Gentiles are Abraham's children. And in the end, the true Seed of Abraham conquers the evil one. Christ conquers the god of this world. He conquers His enemies.

Revelation 20:11-21, "Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.¹² His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.¹³ He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.¹⁴ And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

¹⁷Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God,¹⁸ to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great."¹⁹ And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army.²⁰ And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.²¹ And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh."

Johan Sebastian Bach

Ye foes of godly men, your might is shaken;
No more in me dismay ye waken
My strength, my shield, is ever near.
What though with fear ye strive to fill me;
And threaten in your rage to kill me;
Behold, my Savior dwelleth here.

Revelation 21:1, 27, "Then I saw a **new heaven and a new earth**, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...²⁷ But **nothing unclean will ever enter it**, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Arthur W. Pink said it well: “One of the best evidences that we are truly seeking Heaven is the possession of hearts that are weaned from this world. None will ever enter the Father’s House on high in whose soul the first fruits of heavenly peace and joy does not grow now. He who finds his satisfaction in temporal things is woefully deceived if he imagines he can enjoy eternal things. He whose joy is all gone when earthly possessions are snatched from him, knows nothing of that peace which “passeth all understanding.” And yet, if the auto, radio, newspaper, money to go to the movies, were taken away from the average “church member,” what would he then have left to make life worth living?”

Let us focus each day on the victory Christ has for us!

III. The land promises are seen in the new creation.

The New Covenant with Greater Land Promises

I have an inheritance through Christ. We are Abraham's offspring if we are Christ's. But you may say, haven't we all broken the covenant God gave Israel in **Deut. 4:25-27**? Have we not "provoked Him to anger" through our idols in our former lives? Yes!

But remember the book of **Hebrews 9:15** (referring to Jer. 31:31): "Therefore [Christ] is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant." We've all broken the standards of the first covenant. Try and keep just the preamble, which is the 10 commandments! And then try to keep the over 600 laws God gave in the first covenant.

We will inherit the earth, not because of the Old Covenant. The old covenant was a shadow. It was limited to the land of Israel (a tiny strip of land 100 miles by 50 miles). Surely that land is up for dispute today. In 1948 the United Nations famously declared that Palestine belonged to the nation of Israel.

Earthly Beauty will be Even Deeper

I can't wait to see the new creation. What will it be like?

The earthly beauty we now see won't be lost. We won't trade Earth's beauty for Heaven's but retain Earth's beauty and gain even deeper beauty. As we will live forever with the people of this world—redeemed—we will enjoy forever the beauties of this world—redeemed.

The Continuity of the Earth

In becoming new, will the old Earth retain much of what it once was? Yes! Theologians call this the idea of “continuity.”

The New Earth in Scripture is pictured to be very much like the old Earth, yet completely redeemed. One theologian put it this way: “The world into which we shall enter in at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ is... not *another* world [entirely]; it is this world [renewed], this heaven, this earth; both, however, passed away and renewed. It is these forests, these fields, these cities, these streets, these people, that will be the scene of redemption.”⁶

⁶ Edward Thurneysen, quoted in J. A. Schep, *The Nature of the Resurrection Body* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 218–19.

Shadowlands

You see our current world is just the broken “shadowlands” of what we once had in Eden.

The Beasts Are Now Gentle

We get a picture of the New Earth in Isaiah 11 where the beasts lose their beastliness. The wolf and the lion lie down in peace together. Look at **Isaiah 11:6-9**,

“The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,

and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,

and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together;

and a little child shall lead them.

7 The cow and the bear shall graze;

their young shall lie down together;

and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8 The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra,

and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.

9 They shall not hurt or destroy

in all my holy mountain;

for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”

Children and Animals

People often ask me whether animals will be in Heaven. Their second question, is whether they’ll ever see their pets again. To some people, these are merely sentimental questions. To others, they are very important. Children especially want to know the answers. What do we tell them when they ask?

First of all, mankind and animals will enjoy the New Earth in perfect harmony and submission to God, and man will once again have dominion over the earth. It seems that perhaps we may even be raising the infant children that died so young here on earth.

And now mankind will have such dominion over the earth that even a child that is barely weaned from his mother will be able to demonstrate that dominion by playing in the dens of snakes and not being harmed!

Pets in Heaven?

As to the question of pets in heaven, there is nothing of course in Scripture, but as he makes “all things new” it may be that we do indeed see our pets in heaven. The heart of God is so great that I think it is very possible.

Animals were to be the servants of man and to be in the service of God.

- Think of the whale that swallowed Jonah.
- Or the fish that had a coin in its mouth for Peter to pay taxes.
- Or what about Balaam’s donkey! Even a donkey can do the work of God!

Cities in the New Earth

And of course there will be cities in the New Earth. We’ve already spoken of the New Jerusalem, but there will be local governments and cities as well. We read in **Revelation 2:26**, “The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations.” And in **Luke 19:17**, Jesus says to some on the Last Day, “Well done, good servant!”

Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.” And so it seems that there will be cities, populations, and architecture throughout the New Earth.

City and Country

Perhaps you are a city dweller, or perhaps you are from the country. Both will be featured in the New Earth.

IV. The land promises ultimately point us to Jesus as King of heaven and earth.

Pentecostal Fulfillment

We find some interesting words from Peter at Pentecost in **Acts 3:19-21**, "Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out,²⁰ that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus,²¹ whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago."

Jesus Will Restore All Things (According to the Holy Prophets)

The most important part of the New Creation is Jesus! He is waiting in heaven right now, ready to restore all things in a New Creation. When he comes he will bring to pass all the promises "which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago" (Acts 3:21b).

The True Country

Christ didn't come to deliver the land of Palestine to us. He came to deliver the whole world to us. We are "heirs of God" and "joint-heirs with Christ" (**Rom. 8:17**).

Augustine said, “Why do we not know the country whose citizens we are? Because we have wandered so far away that we have forgotten it. But the Lord Christ, the king of the land, came down to us, and drove forgetfulness from our heart. God took to Himself our flesh so that He might be our way back.”

Creation's Exodus

And Jesus will lead us back! He will redeem the whole earth! Our inheritance will be granted when all of creation experiences its Exodus from slavery and shares the freedom of the glory of God's children (Romans 8:18-25). Romans 8 thus explains what Romans 4 had promised.

Jesus & Believers Reign

Revelation 22:3-5, "No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.⁵ And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever."

And now Jesus will reign, and all of His saints will reign with him! Paul says to his fellow shepherd Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:11–12a, "The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him."

We may not often think of ourselves as **kings and queens** who will rule over creation, but this consequence of our redemption flows directly from who the Lord made us to be and what salvation accomplishes in repairing His broken images. God made us to have dominion over creation, to rule it for His glory (Gen. 1:26–31). We forfeited our ability to fulfill this vocation in Adam, but Christ has succeeded in reigning over creation as the last Adam. In Him, we are now able once more to achieve our original purpose as **righteous rulers of the world** (Rom. 5:12–21; Eph. 2:1–7).

Our reign with Christ will involve us judging even the **angels**, as Paul tells us elsewhere (1 Cor. 6:3). We should all be looking forward eagerly to that final day, but let us not forget that we are even now reigning with our Savior in many ways.

Sin no longer has dominion over those who believe in Jesus, for we live in the gracious era in which we have been adopted as God’s children (Rom. 6:14; Gal. 4:1–7). **By the Spirit**, we can **now conquer sin and grow in holiness**. We are also free from the tyranny of the Law over guilty consciences. Forgiven in Christ, we may fulfill the royal law of liberty in serving our Creator (1 Peter 2:16; James 1:25).

Irenaeus Quote

Church father Irenaeus said, “In the messianic kingdom the martyrs will reclaim the world as the possession which was denied to them by their persecutors. In the creation in which they endured servitude, they will eventually reign.”

Jesus Christ Second Adam. Church-Second Eve

God created Adam and Eve to be king and queen over the earth. Their job was to rule the earth, to the glory of God. They failed.

Jesus Christ is the second Adam, and the church is his bride, the second Eve. Christ is king, the church is his queen. Christ will exercise dominion over all nations of the earth:

“He will rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. . . . All kings will bow down to him and all nations will serve him” (Psalm 72:8, 11).

As the new head of the human race, Christ—with his beloved people as his bride and co-rulers—will at last accomplish what was entrusted to Adam and Eve. God’s saints will fulfill on the New Earth the role God first assigned to Adam and Eve on the old Earth.

“They will reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 22:5).

Richard Mouw writes, “Over and over again the Scriptures make this plain: the political power which has been so corrupted and twisted in the hands and hearts of sinful rulers must be returned to its rightful source.”

The Land Promises in Daniel’s Rock

The Kingdom that God will bring to Earth will crush the last of Earth’s kingdoms. Daniel prophesied in Daniel 2:35 and 44, “The rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the **whole earth**. . . . In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever” (Daniel 2:35, 44).

Human kingdoms will rise and fall until Christ sets up a kingdom that forever replaces them, where redeemed new humanity rules with Christ in righteousness. “He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped

him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed” (Daniel 7:14).

Conclusion

On earth we do a lot of studying of worship. But we ought to not just study and learn about it. We need to worship, because that’s what we will be doing for all eternity!

In the New Earth and Heaven we will be learning constantly about our king and our God, and at the same time all we do, whether work or travel or fellowship – all that we do will be worship.