

New Heavens and a New Earth

Book of Isaiah

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Bible Text: Isaiah 65:17

Preached On: Sunday, July 21, 2013

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If you would, please, look with me in your Bibles to Isaiah 65 and I want us to consider together verses 17 through 25 and talk with you about "New Heavens and New Earth." Isaiah 65, beginning with verse 17,

17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. 18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. 19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. 20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. 21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. 22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. 23 They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them. 24 And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. 25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.

If I were to ask the question: is history linear or cyclical? You'd say, "What are you asking that?" Well, some philosophers and religions teach that it's cyclical and they like the idea that somehow when we die we come back to this earth and we are reincarnated in a different form and actually get another shot at it. There are others who like the linear view of history because they believe that everything began with a bang and continues to evolve and as time goes on, things are going to evolve into a better and better state of existence, and there are many that are driven with that thought. But scripturally if we were to answer this question, all of these other philosophies of men apart, I would have to

say that in history we have both: we have a linear perspective that is presented here in Scripture but we also have a cyclical.

You say, "Well, what's the linear?" Well, the linear is that God has set everything in motion and he's done so according to a purpose and we continue toward that end. Everything we find in Scripture is continuing toward a culmination. It began with a creation and even as we read here in verse 17, it foresees a new creation. It foresees new heavens and a new earth. It does not say here in verse 17 of our text, "I create a revised heavens and a revised earth or a reformed heaven and a reformed earth." What it says is, "For, behold," and that is to get out attention, this is God speaking, "I create new heavens and a new earth."

So we look to that time. Even as Isaiah spoke here, he was speaking prophetically, but also we know that history is cyclical in that we're to learn from history. If we have an idea that somehow on this linear progression that we're going to do better than those that came before us, we really have not learned our lesson and the more things change, the more they stay the same. You've heard the expression, "History repeats itself." Certainly, if we want to compare on this linear level a comparison between the United States of America and the Empire of Rome, the Roman Empire. I even heard a documentary this morning where they were going line by line to show that we are on the same path as that Roman Empire. Well, I could have told them that just because everybody in the United States is just as corrupt and evil as those of the Roman Empire. We're dealing with a long line of sinners here and so why we would think that somehow our society is going to endure based on man any longer than the Roman Empire did, is foolishness, or any other nation. It's the Lord that raises up, and it's the Lord that puts down. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Over in Ecclesiastes 1, if you'll look there with me, Ecclesiastes 1, we see this. Generation after generation has imagined that their generation or that century or that millennium is going to be the golden millennium. And they talk about a day conquering this disease or coming up with a cure for that disease, but will there ever be a time when man will be able to rid itself of the number one disease which is death? A life, even in the hands of the most skilled and experienced doctor, physician, or surgeon, they will tell you, "We just have to see what happens." Even if they don't believe in God. There is a power outside themselves that is directing in the lives of every single individual.

Here in Ecclesiastes 1, we see that. "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be." So every time there is a new baby born, as excited as we are about that new baby being born and how precious and how sweet and everybody is googling over this baby, guess what? That baby is going to grow up just like any other child and be a sinner. It's born in sin and progresses in sin.

"That which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun." And the reason I say that is when we read the history of Israel like we've been reading in Isaiah, sometimes there's a thought of, "If I had been there." Or go all the way back to Adam, "If I had been in Adam's place, I would have done differently." No you wouldn't

have. You would have done exactly the same thing. "There is no new thing under the sun."

"Is there any thing," verse 10, "whereof it may be said, See, this is new?" People get all excited about it but, "it hath been already of old time, which was before us. There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after." In other words, we're all going to die and we're going to leave this world exactly as we entered it and that is going to be in a fallen and corrupt state.

So that being said, coming back to Isaiah 65, for those who are the Lord's, this is good news. I don't put any confidence in this world. I don't put any confidence in politicians. I don't put any confidence in education systems trying to improve and make things better. It is what it is. There is always going to be that fallen, sinful, corrupt nature which drives everything that men do, but here we can see what as the Lord's people we can expect. This is why I read Revelation 21 a little while ago. The parallels between Revelation 21 and what we find here in Isaiah 65:17 are phenomenal.

The Lord says, "behold, I create new heavens and a new earth." Where are we headed? What should this truth that we read here cause us today to be about? How is it to be for our encouragement? But how is it also to be for us being sober minded? You know, you build a brand new house, you get all excited and you move into it or you buy that brand new vehicle and you drive it for a while and you just think, "Man, if the clean smell, the new smell could just last forever." Then you go and hop in and you start smelling something putrid and you think, "Oh, good night, what is that?" Maybe you forgot a pizza in the back or something and it has turned sour and now you're trying to get the smell out of it.

We always try to keep pristine what we presume to be pristine but in reality everything in this life is designed to come apart and fall apart, but our hope is, as described here in this new heavens and the new earth where it says, "and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." Now, I know in our earthly state that, and even in our fallen, depraved minds, even with the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf and knowing that our sins are forgiven and that we've been declared righteous and just before him, don't our minds often go back to certain sins and troubles, heartaches and realities that are a part of being in this fallen flesh? That's where our minds go and unless the Lord delivers our minds, we would quickly fall into a deep depression. We would fall into darkness and that's just part of our lot in this life, in this fallen world.

So it must be when he describes here, "the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind," there must be something that God is pleased to do in transforming this flesh and these minds to where there is no remembrance anymore of our sin. Now, God remembers it no more. The Scriptures say that when Christ paid the debt and put away our sin, he remembers that sin no more. They're all taken away. They're all take away. My sins are all taken away in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. He looks upon his own as absolutely righteous in that righteousness which Christ came, earned, established and

fulfilled and yet we remember these things. We remember that we're dust. We, our minds bring up just like a dirty pit, bring up these things to our remembrance and yet the Lord here declares that there's coming a time when he will make all things new.

Look in 2 Peter 3. Let me see if we can get some help here from this particular portion of Scripture, the Lord being our teacher. In 2 Peter 3:1-14, Peter writes, "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" or as we may be reading here in Isaiah 65 saying, "Yeah right, where is the promise of this new heavens and new earth?"

"For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." So there is that continuity. There is that cyclical history that we're talking about. Everything continues. It's in times and seasons but it continues as from the beginning of the creation.

"For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering," and there's the key word here, "to us-ward," to those of us that are his by his gracious choice and Christ's redeeming blood and effectual call of the Spirit, "to us-ward not willing that any," and there we have to understand it in the context of the us-ward. None of the us, "should perish, but that all," again, of us, those that he has chosen, redeemed and is calling, "should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night," here it is, "in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also," and notice, "and," or even, "the works that are therein shall be burned up." Any work of man. So it's not going to be a reformation. It's not going to be a revision or a restoration. It's going to be a new creation.

Verse 11 says, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness," and there I would tell you when it speaks of holy conversation and godliness, it's not holiness in here but, again, in that righteousness of Christ, living in that righteousness which he came and fulfilled and God imputed upon completion of his death. Those are the ones who have this hope. That is to walk in that holiness, not in any other because any other is not holiness. The Scriptures call it unrighteousness and ungodliness.

So it says, verse 12, "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" The Lord is going to destroy this first creation completely. "Nevertheless,"

notice, "we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." So link this up with what we read in Revelation 21, link it with what we've just read in Isaiah 65. It's saying the same thing and it doesn't surprise me. Whether it was the Apostle John in Revelation, whether it was Peter here, whether it was Brother Isaiah back centuries before the Lord raised these men up, they all declare the same thing, that this is God's purpose. You see, things aren't out of order. It's not organized chaos out here. Everything is going along on this linear perspective toward an end. We don't have to wonder. We may not know the time that this may be and we're not to speculate, we're not to guess or try to predict. We just know that all things are working toward this end, these new heaven and new earth.

Notice in verse 13, "wherein dwelleth righteousness." So, again, what righteousness? Well, it's the very righteousness of God that the Lord Jesus Christ came and earned as a man and established and upon completion of his death, God imputed, God the Father imputed that righteousness. It's a forever righteousness. And the only difference between now and then is that then we'll be able to enjoy it without the cumbersome nature of this sinful flesh. The last thing that we'll be delivered of is death, but even that is part of what Christ earned there at the cross and therefore a very hopeful end for those who are the Lord's.

So verse 14, Peter says, "Wherefore, beloved," this isn't everybody's hope. There is a world out there that continues to pursue a hope in this world but pursuing a hope in their politicians, a hope in their educators, a hope in science. All of these things they put their hope in, to live longer. And yet, "Wherefore, beloved," these are beloved of the Lord, "seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found," in him or, "of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." In other words, found in his righteousness. That's the only way we could be without spot and blameless is looking to his righteousness alone.

So this sets the foundation for our understanding, coming back here to Isaiah 65:17-25. What is this new creation? And how is the Jerusalem that is described here different from that old Jerusalem which we know has failed? It failed in the past and it continue to fail. If you turn on your TV, men continue to argue and to strive over that land and what it involves. Thank God that's not our hope of eternal life to wait for men to try to figure out what they're going to do with an earthly piece of land. No, here you can see in verse 17, it just says, "I create new heavens and a new earth," verse 18, "I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem and her people a joy." So what is this Jerusalem of which he speaks? Then, thirdly, I'd like us to just see in this new creation what is the hope and joy of the Lord's redeemed ones because he says there in verse 18, "But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create." Forever.

Well, what is the new creation described in verse 17? Some try to relate it just to what happened with the history of Israel after the Lord had taken them into captivity, brought them back again, and certainly there may be an aspect of that that would be true, that the Lord would begin again there with that people that he preserved through that captivity and establish them there in the land. But as I said, there is something more to this than

just a starting over or a turning over of a new leaf, particularly when it says here in verses 17 that, "the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind."

Now, we know, as I said, if you look in 2 Corinthians 5:17, let's just start there, there is a new creation that was accomplished with Christ's death on the cross. A lot of people miss this when they read the Scriptures. Just as in the beginning of the earth, the creation of the world, there was a first Adam, so in the new creation here in 2 Corinthians 5:17, it speaks of there being a new creation that was accomplished with the last Adam which is Christ. Scripture, the Lord uses these parallels to help us understand his working and in verse 17 it says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," he is a new creation, "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Now, when I was growing up, I was always taught that that's that new nature that's given to you and I remember right after having made a profession and I was taught that I needed to quote John 3:16 back to God and claim that salvation so that's what I did when I was 15 years old. I got disturbed in my mind about possible judgment, dying before I had made my decision and so I got down on my knees and I prayed back to God John 3:16. And I remember all the teaching that I had gotten that once you do that kind of thing, you become a new person. Well, that lasted probably for about an hour, if that. You know, you wake up, you stand up and you start shaking yourself and feeling, "Okay, what's new about this?" Then you have to go back and deal with your doubts, and that's what I was taught, "Don't doubt. You've driven the stake. Write the date in your book because Satan is going to tempt you, your flesh is going to tempt you, but you just keep coming back with this date." I'm thankful that the Lord did not leave me in that delusion but sadly, I was left under that delusion for the next 15 years of my life, where I pursued a path where I thought that I was doing everything I was supposed to, and yet as time went on, the Lord was pleased to show me that I was no better than I had ever been. That it was going to take a righteousness apart from whatever I was striving to establish, even under the guise of grace, and I'm thankful that the Lord stopped me in my tracks.

But coming here to verse 17 then, I know that's not what it's talking about. I mean, we are who we are and we struggle still in this flesh. There's not a day that I awake but what my awakening thought is, "I am a sinner and I need more than ever that blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ to be my portion."

But when it says here, "Behold, old things are passed away; all things are become new," it's talking about in our position before God. The old things that are passed away is the curse of that sin; it's the penalty of that sin has been put away. It is no more and that because of Christ's death, you know, there are some italics in here that are important. It says, "Therefore if any man be," be is in italics, "if any is in Christ," is the way that should be read. And that could be understood by way of our being elect in him; of our being redeemed; when he died, we died; being called by him. "If any are in Christ, he is," "he is" is implied, "a new creation." It's simply saying it's Christ that has made us so. This is not something that we have sought after, that we have come into and we've grown into. No, it's all his doing.

"Old things are passed away." Notice "things" is in italics. All what we were formerly in Adam, all of that condemnation. And this shows us that until Christ paid that debt, we were under that condemnation, but all that is old, all that pertains to that old Adam, that curse and that penalty, are passed away, "and behold, all are become new." In other words, in Christ that righteousness which is ours alone in him.

And you can see that in verse 18, "all things are of God." Notice, "who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given unto us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit," or namely, "that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." There "the world" means this wasn't just for the Jew, but for sinners from every tribe, nation and tongue that God has purposed to save, "not imputing their trespasses unto them." In other words, he put them to Christ's account and that key word there is "imputed." The sin of every one that Christ has saved by his death were put to his account and that righteousness which he earned was put to our account. It doesn't make us inherently righteous no more than our sin being put to his account made him a sinner. It didn't, but he bore that sin. It was imputed to him that his righteousness might be imputed to us, even as it says there in verse 21, "For he hath made him to be sin," he hath made him sin for us. The sin offering is what that word means, the sin bearer, "who knew no sin," in no way experienced the sin, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

You say, "Well, if it's been accomplished, then what is there that is left for us to do?" Well, to declare. Notice in verse 19, "and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." Notice "the word of reconciliation." I would venture to say you can make that a capital "W," the Word of reconciliation is Christ, the Word. One old preacher said that any message that is conceived without Christ being the subject, and preached without Christ being the subject, and concluded without Christ being the subject is a crime and there are a lot of crimes being committed right now even this hour when we meet around the world where preachers are standing up and declaring anything but or pointing men to another word of reconciliation based on their works and based on their confessing and based on their doing and all of this stuff that tomorrow they're going to have to come back and do again because it's no word at all.

But here is the Word of reconciliation, Christ, and verse 20, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." That's what we declare to sinners. You know, if I knew who the elect were, I would go up to them and say it to them specifically. We don't know so we declare it to sinners, be reconciled to God, but God is the one by his Spirit that draws those who are truly his, that Christ has redeemed, draws them to himself.

So there is that new creation beginning with the cross and yet we know that that's not all there is. There is that part of the cross which includes our final redemption, in other words, our being delivered from this body. The Apostle Paul wrote of this in Romans 8, if you'll look there with me. Notice in verse 18. Here in my Bible, the editors have put this title, "The Future Glory," and I truly believe that this is what Isaiah was looking to with regard to God's true people and the work that the Lord Jesus Christ would come and accomplish on their behalf. The new heavens and the new earth would be what would

flow out of that new creation which our Lord accomplished there at the cross, but until the end of time, until God is pleased to wrap this whole thing up, even as we read in Peter, until that last one of the Lord's redeemed is brought in. You say, "What's the Lord waiting on?" Well, there's a specific number whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life who must be brought in, enter in.

That's what we're waiting for but until then, notice here in Romans 8:18, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature," or the creation, "waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." Until the whole number is there, the manifestation. Until the last one is brought in, this creation waits.

Verse 20, "For the creature was made subject to vanity," that's talking about in Adam's fall, "not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope." God subjected all men under the curse, under the fall. But for those that are his, it's that we might hope, not in this life, but hope in this new heavens and new earth because verse 21 says, "the creature itself also shall be delivered," the creation shall be delivered, "from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

Now, here's where we have to stop speculation because most people are going to ask, "Well, what's that like? What is this new heavens like? What's the new earth like?" Well, all I know is the primary thing that's described here in verse 21 is that those who are privileged by God's grace to be a part of that will be completely delivered from the bondage of corruption. The entire creation will be. I can't imagine when it talks about a new earth and most people imagine we're going to be floating around with a little angel's wings throughout eternity. No, even in Revelation 22, it describes this heavenly Jerusalem coming down to earth. There is going to be a dwelling place, the new heavens and new earth. Some say, "Well, imagine what it was like before the fall." Not even that can be a touchstone in comparison, but think about how much you and I struggle with the bondage of this flesh. That's the cause of all of our distresses in life. You sit there and think, "As much as I know about Christ, why can't I go through a day worry free? As much as I believe in God's sovereignty and that he rules over all things, what is this distress that haunts me and drives me to depression and to crying and tears and I look within and I see nothing but corruption? I can't even point a finger out here to my neighbor because I see everything that's in here." And yet to be delivered, truly delivered.

I can say I've been delivered in Christ but, do you know what? This is part of this creation right now that groans and I truly believe that the Lord makes every one of his children in time, we might not have felt it when we first began, but in time the older you get and as time goes on, to long for being delivered because we understand that there is nothing new under heaven. No matter how I feel today, tomorrow I'm going to be down again. No matter if I feel that I'm standing now, tomorrow I'm going to fall. Fallen creatures fall because they're fallen.

So like Paul, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The next time you feel like the whole

world is caving in on you and just may the Lord grant you to remember this, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that's above." And the Lord causes these things to get us off of this earth. Not to put any confidence in this flesh, but to look to him and verse 22 says that, "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Until now is always until now so even when Paul wrote this, here we are several thousand years later and it's still true. There is nothing new under the sun.

"And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit." You see, it's the Spirit of God that causes us to look differently upon this life and this world and ourselves and not put any confidence in this flesh, not see any good in this flesh. That's the Spirit of God. That's the light of the Spirit.

"Even we ourselves groan within ourselves," notice, "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." So we're still waiting for this new heavens and new earth, but it is a part of that inheritance, the glory, which Christ has already purchased for his people. But we don't wait as those who have no hope, we wait with hope as described here.

In the meantime, in our infirmities, verse 26 says, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

I've just introduced the subject. Lord willing, we'll come back to it again next time, but I trust that the Lord would grant us hearts to truly look at Christ our hope, and all that he has accomplished for sinners such as we are.