

Heaven on Earth

God's Original Purpose

The rebellion has ended. Jesus Christ is the victorious King. The fires of hell have done their purifying work. Satan, sin, and sinners are no more; they have utterly perished from the face of the earth. Gone also are all the works of humanity. Every defiling and hurtful thing has been destroyed in the flames. The results of sin are past.

The destruction of Satan and all his followers will open the way for the complete establishment of Christ's kingdom upon the earth and the restoration of man to his paradise home.

It was God's original purpose that righteous people should dwell on the earth, and His purpose, though temporarily halted by the intrusion of sin, will finally be carried out.

". . . The righteous shall be recompensed in the earth . . ." Proverbs 11:31. This earth is the inheritance of the righteous. The promise to Abraham that he and his seed would be heirs of the world was not an idle promise. It is as certain of fulfillment as is the fact that God lives, for He is not slack concerning His promises. Not one of them will fail.

The apostle Paul exclaims in triumph: "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." Romans 4:13.

After describing the purification of the earth by fire, the apostle Peter exclaims: "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Peter 3:13.

A New Earth

The lake of fire is not to completely destroy the substance of the earth, but to melt and purify it. When the smoke has lifted and only ashes remain, the Lord will once more exercise His creative power by making it new again. This too is God's promise for: ". . . he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new . . ." Revelation 21:5.

The Bible is full of promises relating to a renewed earth in which God's people shall dwell.

"For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. 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. 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." Isaiah 65:17-19.

On the mount of blessing Jesus said: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." Matthew 5:5.

John tells us that he had a view of the home of the redeemed in its restored state: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." Revelation 21:1.

The glory of Eden will be fully restored in the new earth. It will be as it was before the curse of sin fell upon it. What a glorious place for the home of God's people!

And this is really what is in store for them. Christ will present the whole earth to His people. The promise is: "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts." Malachi 4:2, 3.

Yes, they will go forth from the City of God and will once more possess the earth. For "the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever." Daniel 7:18.

Isaiah in vision describes the new earth as it will be restored: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God." Isaiah 35:1, 2.

"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes." Isaiah 35:5-7.

"No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isaiah 35:9, 10.

This is humanity's long lost home. All that was lost in the fall will be restored in the new earth. There is to be a "restitution of all things" (Acts 3:21). The first dominion is to be restored to man through Christ (Micah 4:8); and this restoration will include the return of the garden of Eden to earth. Once again people will walk by the side of the river of life and drink of its sparkling, life-giving waters. Once again will there be free access to the tree of life, from which humanity has so long been exiled. Yes, Eden, the garden of God, the first home of God's created beings, will once more shed forth upon the earth the fragrance of its bloom and verdure.

The New Jerusalem

The new Jerusalem will become the capital of the universe. In vision, John saw it come down from heaven: "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. . . . And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. . . . And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." Revelation 21:2, 10-12, 3.

This city is large enough to provide a home for all the saved. John declares the measure of it to be "twelve thousand furlongs" which is many times larger than any metropolis we have

seen upon the earth. It will become the very center, not only of the earth, but also of the entire universe, for God Himself will dwell there.

“And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.” Revelation 21:22-25.

Thus the earth, the battlefield of the forces of good and evil, which for nearly six thousand years has been in the hands of Satan, will not only be restored to God’s kingdom but will be exalted above all the myriad’s of worlds and planets in God’s vast creation. The city of God, as a memorial, will be located on the very spot where Jesus was put to death by His enemies. At that time Satan thought the victory was his. He had succeeded in placing the body of the Son of God in the tomb and had sealed it with the Roman seal. But He who came forth from the tomb, a conqueror over the devil and death, will establish His eternal throne on mount Zion as an everlasting memorial of His complete triumph over all His enemies.

“And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one. . . . And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.” Zechariah 14:9, 11.

Homes for the Saved

The saints will not only dwell in the city but they will also establish homes in the country. The entire earth will be theirs, for “the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High.” Daniel 7:27.

In Eden, Adam was told to dress and keep the garden (Genesis 2:15). So will it be with the redeemed. Concerning this the Lord has spoken through the prophet Isaiah: “And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. 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. They shall not labour in vain.” Isaiah 65:21-23.

Peace on Earth

The saved will have eternity in which to enjoy the homes they build. No invading armies will march in to pillage and destroy. No thieves will break through and steal. The soil which was cursed for Adam’s sake will yield its strength once more. No chilling frosts or summer heat will destroy the fruit of the ground. The climate will be perfect. No destructive insects will attack the crops, for all these pests will have been destroyed. No pestilence will come, no storm will sweep over the land, no flood will inundate the crops; for the forces of nature, weakened as a result of sin, will have their full strength again, and everything will work to man’s interest and not against him as it is now.

The same kind of animals we have seen in this life will also be seen in the new earth, but none will be ravenous or cruel.

“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the

cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Isaiah 11:6-9.

Varied birds of this paradise will sing their sweet songs of praise to their Creator; rich verdure will cover hill and valley; majestic trees wave their proud branches in the breeze; and the entire earth will be a place of glory and beauty.

There will be no hospitals there, for the inhabitants of that land will never say, "I am sick" (Isaiah 33:24). There will be no graveyards and no funeral trains. All will enjoy the vigor of eternal youth for everyone will be physically perfect.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful." Revelation 21:4, 5.

But who can really picture the glory of that land? Who can estimate the value of eternal life? Even in our fondest dreams we cannot conceive it.

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." 1 Corinthians 2:9.

Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's love for His children, and this love will be made manifest in the reward that He waits to lavish upon them in the future life.

The Difference Between the Two Eden's

What makes the difference between the paradise before the fall and the paradise restored after the eradication of sin? It is the cross of Christ. It cost the life of the Son of God to bring sinful man again to his lost home. Christ is "the way" back to God and paradise. Only through Him can man regain his forfeited "right to the tree of life" that he may eat and live for ever.

"This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John 17:3.

Will you come to Him today? He waits to welcome you to His heart and home. He longs to take from you the filthy garments of sin and clothe you with the white robe of His righteousness. He will wash you in His blood and make your life as white as snow. Even now His voice is calling you saying: "My son, give Me thine heart." It was for you that He suffered, bled and died on Calvary.

For you He is even now preparing a crown of glory and a home in the city of God. Hear Him as He pleads, "Why will ye die?" It is to you He is speaking. Will you say "no" to Him and harden your heart against His great love? Will you say, "I am ashamed to own Him"? Oh, how can it be! How can we despise God's matchless love! How can we neglect His great salvation! Let each individual accept Him fully, and strive to be an overcomer.

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Revelation 2:7.