**Nextlife: Part Five**

* What do you think the term New Earth is in reference to?
* If eternal Heaven and New Earth are not the same place, why is there references to a New Earth in the Bible?

We ended our last session by discussing how we, humanity, indeed all of creation are homesick for Eden. We are longing for things to be as they were. The idyllic world of Genesis strikes a chord deep in our hearts and we sense that is how we were intended to live, that is the existence for which we were created. We long for what the first man and woman enjoyed-a perfect and beautiful Earth with free and untainted relationships with God, each other, animals, and our environment. Every attempt at human progress has been an attempt to overcome what we lost in the Fall. Our ancestors came from Eden, we are headed toward a New Earth. Meanwhile we live out our lives on a sin-corrupted Earth, between Eden and The New Earth. What we must continually keep in mind is this;

**Our existence now is not our natural state.**

Sin, death, suffering, disease, war, racism, violence, and poverty are not natural. They are the results of mans rebellion against God. We long for an existence without these things. We want the best of this world without the worst of this world, and what we are promised is actually better than that. The good and beauty of the New Earth far surpasses the best of this world. In the words of the Apostle Paul, all that is are just the seeds of what is coming. And none of the bad of this world will be allowed there. We will live in a perfect world, without the corruption of sin, where God walks with us and talks with us. Because we are human beings we desire something that is physical and tangible, something that will not fade away. And that is what God promises us;

A home that will not be destroyed

A kingdom that will not end

A city with unshakeable foundations

An incorruptible inheritance

Adam was formed from the earth. **(Genesis 2:7)** Forever establishing our connection to the earth. Just as we are made from the earth we are made for the earth.

Some may object that Jesus said He was going to prepare a place for us and would take us there to live with Him forever. **(John 14:2-3)** This is true. But *what and where is that place?* **Revelation 21** makes it clear…it’s the New Earth. That is where the New Jerusalem will reside when it comes down out of Heaven. Only then will we be home.

And what will that home be like? Too many think we have no clues. But if the Eternal Heaven will be the New Earth we have an abundance of clues, both from what Earth was before the fall, and even to a degree, what it is now.

Scripture gives us images full of hints and implications about Heaven. Put them together, and these jigsaw pieces form a beautiful picture.

We are told Heaven is a city **(Hebrews 11:10 / 13:14)** We know then that Heaven will have buildings, culture, art, athletics, parks, goods and services, events of all kinds. Cities have people, engaged in activities, gatherings, conversation, and industry.

Heaven is described as a country. **(Hebrews 11:16)** We know about countries. They have territories, rulers, national interest, pride in identity, and citizens who are both diverse and unified.

We cannot possibly think about our present Earth without rivers, mountains, trees, and flowers. Why would we think about the New Earth without these things? We wouldn’t expect a non-earth to have mountains and rivers. But God does not promise us a non-earth, He promises us a New Earth. If the word *earth* means anything, it means we can expect to find earthly things there. **(Revelation 21-22)**

We are told we will have resurrection bodies. **(I Corinthians 15:40-44)** We can imagine what they will be like. We all imagine ourselves as being thinner, with more hair, younger, stronger, more muscular. There is a web site where you can email them a picture and they will send you a modified picture back showing what you will look like at a different weight.

In Heaven we will rest. **(Revelation 14:13)** We know what it means to rest, and to want to rest. **(Hebrews 4:10)**

We are told we will serve Christ and work for His glory. **(Revelation 22:3)**

The problem is not that the Bible does not teach us much about Heaven. We just don’t pay enough attention to what it does teach. Most people cannot resist spiritualizing Heaven. They portray Heaven as a state of being rather than a place. What did Jesus say it was?

***John 14:1****Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

Jesus uses ordinary, earthly, spatial terms to describe Heaven. There word *where* refers to a place, a location. If Heaven isn’t a place would Jesus have aid it was?

In an earlier session we studied and learned that God’s redemption is not confined to the spirit of man, but to our bodies as well. Lets take it a step further, it is not confined to humanity, but to all of God’s creation.

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

***Isaiah 66:22*** *For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.*

***II Peter 3:13*** *Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

***Revelation 21:1*** *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away;*

The redemptive plan of God does not climax at the return of Christ, but on the New Earth. Only then will all wrongs be made right. Only then will there be no more death, crying, or pain.

Consider this: If God’s plan was merely to take mankind to the present Heaven, or to a Heaven that was the dwelling place of spirit beings, there would be no need for new heavens and a New Earth. Why remake the stars and the continents? Why not just scrap it all and be done with it. When God made the Heavens and the Earth He declared it was *“very good”*. He has never renounced His claim on what He made. He is not going to abandon His creation. He is going to restore it. We are not going to Heaven and leaving Earth behind. Rather, God will bring Heaven and Earth together in the same dimension. There will be no wall of separation, no armed Angels to keep Paradise from sinners. God’s perfect plan is to bring all things together.

***Ephesians 1: 9****Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:* ***10****That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:*

God is not about to give one thing to Satan and sin. He is not going to accept defeat in one square millimeter of His creation. The Biblical vocabulary makes this very clear…

Reconcile

Redeem

Restore

Recover

Return

Renew

Regenerate

Resurrect

Each of these words are Biblical and begin with a re- prefix, suggesting a return to an original condition that was ruined or lost.

***Redemption –*** Buying back what was formerly owned.

***Reconciliation –***Reestablishment of a prior friendship or unity

***Renewal –*** To make new again, to restore to an original state.

***Ressurection*** – Becoming physically alive again after being dead.

God always sees us in light of what He intends us to be, and He always seeks to restore us to the original design. He also sees the earth in terms of what He intended it to be, and He seeks to restore it to it’s original design. The restoration, redemption, and renewal is inclusive of everything lost in the Fall.

***Acts 3: 20****And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:* ***21****Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.*

***Revelation 21:5****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.*

The New Earth is the Old Earth restored.

Peter referenced the holy prophets. When you read the prophets it becomes clear, they were never concerned about some far off realm of disembodied spirits. They were concerned about the land, about the inheritance, about the city of Jerusalem, and the earth they walked on.

When Jesus spoke of the renewal it was not understood to be a renewal of spiritual supremacy alone, rather, a complete victory involving everything lost in the Fall.

***Matthew 19: 27****Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?"* ***28****Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of*

*Israel.*

*“Whatever sin has touched and polluted, God will redeem and cleanse. If redemption does not go as far as the curse of sin, then God has failed. Whatever the extent of the consequences of sin, so must the extent of redemption be.”* ***- Steven J. Lawson***

Another feature of and on the New Earth is worth exploring. The physical heavens are even now constantly declaring the Glory of God.

***Psalm 19:1****The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.*

And even now, on Earth under the curse the Glory of God is displayed. **(Numbers 14:21)** But the glory that is now is not to be compared to the Glory of God seen on the New Earth when it is filled with redeemed men and women, redeemed nations, and the Earth itself is redeemed. It is on Earth that God promises this…

***Isaiah 40:1****Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. 2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins. 3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: 5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,* *and all flesh shall see it together:*

That the glory of God will be revealed and God will be glorified on Earth is central to numerous passages…

***Psalm 85:9*** *Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land.*

***Ezekiel 32:2*** *And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory.*

To understand why Peter preached that God promised through the prophets that He would *“restore everything”* look at just a few passages that promise that God’s glory will be manifested to all the nations of the Earth.

***Psalm 102:15****The nations will fear the name of the Lord, all the kings of the earth will revere your glory.* ***16****For the Lord will rebuild Zion and appear in his glory.*

***Isaiah 11:15****The nations will fear the name of the Lord, all the kings of the earth will revere your glory.* ***16****For the Lord will rebuild Zion and appear in his glory.*

***Isaiah 66:19*** *They will proclaim my glory among the nations.* ***20****And they will bring all your brothers, from all the nations, to my holy mountain in Jerusalem as an offering to the Lord--on horses, in chariots and wagons, and on mules and camels," says the Lord.*

Gods kingdom and dominion are not about what happens in some remote, unearthly place; instead they are about what happens on the earth, which God created for His glory. God has tied His glory to the earth and everything connected with it. **(Isaiah 6:3 – earth is filled with His glory...)** The earth is not disposable, it is essential to God’s redemptive plan. The redemptive work of Calvary bought and paid for our future and the earths.

One of the best descriptive passages about the New Earth aside from **Revelation 21, 22** is **Isaiah 60.** This passage does not contain the term *New Earth* like chapters 65 and 66. But we can be certain this is what Isaiah intended because his precise language is used in John’s depiction of the New Earth in Revelation 21-22. This passage is the best Biblical commentary on Revelation 21-22.

***Isaiah 60:1****"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.* ***2****See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you.* ***3****Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.*

 ***4****"Lift up your eyes and look about you: All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the arm.* ***5****Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come.* ***6****Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah. And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the Lord.* ***7****All Kedar's flocks will be gathered to you, the rams of Nebaioth will serve you; they will be accepted as offerings on my altar, and I will adorn my glorious temple.* ***8****"Who are these that fly along like clouds, like doves to their nests?* ***9****Surely the islands look to me; in the lead are the ships of Tarshish, bringing your sons from afar, with their silver and gold, to the honor of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendor.*

You are seeing a world with nations, in harmony. Enormous wealth and prosperity. Rejoicing and celebration. We are not used to thinking of nations, rulers, civilizations, and culture but this passage demonstrates that the New Earth will be *earthly…*

***11 Your gates will always stand open, they will never be shut, day or night, so that men may bring you the wealth of the nations-- their kings led in triumphal procession.***

This are the same words John uses to apply to the New Jerusalem.

***13****"The glory of Lebanon will come to you, the pine, the fir and the cypress together, to adorn the place of my sanctuary; and I will glorify the place of my feet.* ***14****The sons of your oppressors will come bowing before you; all who despise you will bow down at your feet and will call you the City of the Lord, Zion of the Holy One of Israel.*

Think of the attitudes of people toward God’s people in this Earth.

***15****"Although you have been forsaken and hated, with no one traveling through, I will make you the* ***everlasting*** *pride and the joy of all generations.* ***17***  *I will make peace your governor and righteousness your ruler.* ***18****No longer will violence be heard in your land, nor ruin or destruction within your borders, but you will call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise.* ***19 The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. 20 Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more; the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end.******21****Then will all your people be righteous and they will possess the land forever. They are the shoot I have planted, the work of my hands, for the display of my splendor.* ***22****The least of you will become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation. I am the Lord; in its time I will do this swiftly."*

Now this is what is interesting about this passage. Isaiah’s prophecies about the coming Messiah in 52-53 were fulfilled down to the last minute detail. There is no reason to believe that these prophecies about the New Jerusalem will not be fulfilled as literally and to the degree of detail that those were.