

Paradise Restored

Isaiah 65:17-25

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Introduction

As we come near the end of the book of the Isaiah,

- I want to remind you of the overall scope of this great whole prophecy.
- From the very beginning, the prophet labours to show God's covenant people their sins and to warn them about the coming judgement.
 - First, he tells them that God will send Assyria to destroy everything except Jerusalem...
 - This happened during his life time and certainly should have given him a lot of credibility in the eyes of the people.
 - Then he tells them that God will send Babylon against them, and that Babylon will even destroy Jerusalem and the temple and take the nation into exile.
 - It was a dreadful judgement.

But all the way through, Isaiah uses these coming judgements to tell of the coming of Jesus Christ whom God will send in the latter days to restore all things!

- He tells of a kingdom of righteousness that God will establish upon the shoulders of Jesus—a kingdom that will have no end.
- He tells of the complete forgiveness of sins that will come through His sufferings as He dies in the place of His sinful people.
- He tells of a kingdom that will encompass the entire earth so that even the nations of the world will enter in.
 - Many of Isaiah's prophecies have been remarkably fulfilled!
 - How could he ever have known that Babylon would come and destroy the nation in 150 years after his time in which Babylon was not even a threat?
 - And how could he ever have known that when Jesus came, He would suffer for His people's sins and that the nations would then turn to God?
 - It is very foolish if we do not believe what Isaiah says about that which is yet future to us!
 - Namely, that the kingdom of Jesus Christ will result in the utter ruin and misery of all His enemies and the absolute blessing of all His elect from every nation of the world.
 - In chapter 61-63, Isaiah spoke of this ultimate jubilee that would result in total blessing for His own and total cursing for His enemies.

We saw in chapter 63 & 64 that Isaiah, seeing these things, lifted up his voice in prayer to God that it might be so—

- that He would rend the heavens and come down to do His great work in the earth!
- And now in the last two chapters of this prophecy,
 - We see how the LORD Himself speaks, declaring that He will indeed do all that Isaiah has spoken.
 - He will rend the heavens and come down,
 - His kingdom will come,
 - His people will be blessed and
 - His enemies will be cursed in the most ultimate sense.

Last week, we looked at chapter 65, verses 1-16...

- And the Lord declared that He would make Himself known to the nations that had neither known Him or sought Him so that they would come to Him for salvation.
 - And He told them that those among Israel who had forsaken Him would be judged with the wicked,
 - Yet He promised that in mercy He would preserve a remnant among them for blessing.
 - And then He began to contrast the great distinction that would be made between those who were blessed and those who were cursed...
 - those who refuse His call and those who come to Him for salvation.
 - In verse 15, we saw that all the curses of God would fall upon the wicked,
 - And in verse 16 that all of His promises would be brought upon the redeemed...
 - Namely, that they would swear by Him as the God of truth (the God of Amen)...
 - The God who did every single thing that He had promised.
 - In Christ, all of God's promises would be yea and Amen!

And today as we move into verse 17-26 of chapter 65,

- we see that the LORD goes on to describe the great blessing that He will bring upon His people through Jesus Christ.
 - Although the LORD does not expressly mention Christ here, the former prophecies have made it absolutely clear the blessing comes through Him.
 - He is not expressly mentioned here because it is not now His intent to tell us how these blessings come to us,
 - but rather to describe the blessings that will come!
 - Let us then feast upon these words that describe what our gracious Lord has for us all if we are in Jesus Christ.

I. First, see how complete the blessing will be for God's people!

A. Three things show us the completeness of the blessing in verse 17...

- that it involves a total renovation of everything—a complete remaking.

1. First, that He refers to it as a **creation**, for He says,
 - **Isa 65:17: For behold, I create a new heavens and new earth.**
 - a. The word **create** translates the Hebrew word *bara* which only speaks of a work that God does by divine power.
 - something that only He *can* do—that only He is capable of doing.
 - b. The word *bara* is also only used of that which is fundamentally new...
 - The thing that comes forth by *bara* creation is so radically new that it did not exist before.
 - The word “**behold**” is used to emphasise this.
 - What was not there is now there to look upon—“behold!”
 - Behold, look at what God has created!
2. Secondly, the completeness of the blessing is seen in that what is created is referred to as nothing less than “a new heavens and a new earth!”
 - a. This, of course, is the language used in the creation account—
 - in Genesis 1:1 where it says,
 - **“In the beginning God made the heavens and the earth.”**
 - The words, “heavens and earth” to emphasise that everything without exception was created by God in the creation week.
 - b. Now, in Isaiah, when the LORD speaks of the creation of a new heavens and a new earth, it tells us that everything is going to be created again!
 - Nothing will be lacking!
 - Everything that can be called heaven and earth will be newly created by God.
 - The changes that Jesus brings will be so full and so complete that they can only be referred to as the creation of a new heavens and new earth.
 - Everything will be restored for God’s elect people.
 - As Peter says, the very elements will melt!
 - The renovation will be total! It will encompass everything because everything has been affected by the fall.
 - The whole creation groans, waiting for this day of restoration.
 - c. But understand that this work of new creation is not done all at once.
 - The work of New Creation began when Jesus Christ came into the world, but it will not be complete until the resurrection at the last day.
 - We will look at this more later.
3. Third, the completeness of the blessing is seen in God’s declaration that the past will be forgotten.

- The end of verse 17 says:
 - **Isa 65:17: And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.**
 - This is not talking about amnesia, for we will remember what God has delivered us from...
 - but it is a way of saying that nothing of the world marred and ruined by sin will remain for God's people.
 - They will dwell in a new heavens and a new earth where righteousness dwells.
 - The sin and the curse will be completely gone.
 - The same expression was used by Joseph when he interpreted Pharaoh's dream and told him that the 7 years of plenty would be forgotten during the 7 years of famine.
- B. Because the blessing is so complete, the LORD calls upon us to rejoice in it forever!
- You can see the call in verse 18:
 - **Isaiah 65:18... But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create;**
1. It might seem a shameful thing that we must be told to be glad and rejoice in the New Heavens and the New Earth that God creates for us...
 - And indeed it is a shame...
 - But because we have not yet been perfected while this work is still being completed,
 - we have to be knocked in the side of the head as it were and told to rejoice!
 2. But this is really more than a mere command to rejoice—it is a blessing...
 - a. It is like the command to be fruitful and multiply.
 - When God said that, He was not merely issuing a command, but He was giving us the ability to be fruitful and multiply.
 - Likewise, when Jesus commanded a sick person to “Be healed,”
 - It was indeed a command, but one that included the power to obey.
 - So it is that when He commands us to be rejoice forever,
 - He is bringing forth the joy in us,
 - both by so blessing us that we have reason to rejoice...
 - and by lifting us out of our lethargy and putting a new song in our heart to delight in what He has done.
 - When Jesus was departing from the world, He told His disciples that they would be given His joy.
 - That is what He does for all His people.
 - He gives them joy in the gospel.

- b. And look, this rejoicing that is given to us is no passing joy...
 - The Lord calls on us to rejoice forever!
 - God will give us true happiness for all eternity—both the ground for it as well as the disposition to it.
- c. Verse 19 makes it certain that this call to rejoice is also a gift of rejoicing.
 - It says:
 - **Isaiah 65:19: The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying.**
 - God will so change things that we will not have any occasion for sorrow—only for pure, unmitigated joy.
 - Once we come into fellowship with the risen Christ, a joy begins in us that will never be taken away.
 - Jesus told His disciples:
 - **John 16:22: You now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.**
 - Amen!
 - Eternal joy!
 - That is what the LORD has in store for His people in Jesus Christ!

TRANS> But note well:

- As complete as this blessing of the new heavens and the new earth that God creates is for His people,
- C. This blessing is not universal. It is only for **His** people.
1. In verse 18, the LORD restates the blessing as creating *Jerusalem* as a rejoicing.
 - He says (in the second half of v. 18),
 - **Isa 65:18: behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy.**
 2. By speaking of **Jerusalem**, the Lord shows us clearly that it is only His people who enjoy the blessing of the new heavens and the new earth.
 - a. Jerusalem specifies **His** city over against Babylon, the city of man, the city of the world.
 - Already we have seen that for the final blessing to come,
 - Satan and all the enemies of Jesus Christ must be brought to the place of destruction.
 - Remember in chapter 61 where the acceptable day of the LORD was also the day of vengeance for His enemies?

- And remember in chapter 63 where Jesus was seen coming from the city of man with blood stained garments from trampling upon them in His wrath?
 - And remember in verse 13-15 where the God declared that He would make a clear distinction between His servants and those who rejected His salvation...
 - **Isaiah 65:13-15: Behold, My servants shall eat, But you shall be hungry; Behold, My servants shall drink, But you shall be thirsty; Behold, My servants shall rejoice, But you shall be ashamed; Behold, My servants shall sing for joy of heart, But you shall cry for sorrow of heart, And wail for grief of spirit. You shall leave your name as a curse to My chosen; For the Lord GOD will slay you, And call His servants by another name;**
 - Make no mistake about it!
 - The rebellion must be crushed and cast into their place of torment before the new heavens and the new earth is completed.
 - For this reason, it is Jerusalem who is said to rejoice, not all people without exception.
- b. Understand as well that Jerusalem does not here refer to the mere physical city in Palestine!
- We saw last week in Isaiah 65:1 that God promised to reveal Himself to those who were not called by His name...
 - And that He was going to cut off many who were among the covenant people and were called by His name...
 - As Jesus told the Jews in His day...
 - **Mt 21:43 "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.**
 - So the Jerusalem that rejoices is not the earthly city,
 - but the people who make up the city that the earthly city of Jerusalem represented in the Old Covenant!
 - The city where God showed Himself to be reconciled to His people through the blood of the covenant!
 - The city made up of men and women from all over the world that is in Jesus Christ by faith and that enjoys new life in Him.
 - The city of justified persons who are reconciled to God through the blood of Jesus Christ, shed on the cross for the forgiveness of sins.
 - Be sure that you are truly among them—a true resident of this great city!
 - You may be a member of Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church or any other church in this world,

- but you are only a resident of the city that will rejoice forever if you are in Jesus Christ,
- obtaining forgiveness and new life from Him by faith.

TRANS> These are the people that the LORD rejoices in and no other when He says:

- **Isa 65:19: I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people;**
 - They are His people, reconciled to Him by Jesus, made righteous through His blood.
 - He does not rejoice in the wicked.
- But before we move on consider what this means...
 - That God will rejoice in His people!

D. Consider what a wonderful thing it is to have God rejoice in you!

1. We are those who once grieved the Lord because of our sin and rebellion...
 - We are Adam's sons and daughters who were expelled from the garden.
 - We are they who continually provoked God to wrath day after day—
 - but now we are said to be a delight to God!
2. This is the greatest blessing of all—
 - In the New heaven and the new earth, we will be a constant delight in the eyes of our heavenly Father!
 - Never will we disappoint Him.
 - Never will we say one word or think one thought that displeases Him.
 - Never will we do one act that offends Him...
 - And it won't be that He has become indifferent about sin and corruption...
 - Not at all!
 - It will be that He has renewed us!
 - It will be that the new creation that we are as soon as we are in Christ will be complete!
 - What joy will be ours!
 - What joy will be His—in what He has created...
 - His workmanship in Christ Jesus, created for good works!
 - Thanks be to God for His mercy and grace!

TRANS> What a complete blessing God has for His people!

- Nothing less than the creation of a new heaven and a new earth—for us!
- And now our gracious Lord goes on to describe this new heavens and new earth.
 - Having told us how complete a work it is, He now describes it to us.
 - This is the second thing we want to look at this morning...

II. Secondly, see how the LORD describes the new heaven and the new earth that He will create for us.

- First, we will take a quick look at the five things He promises to restore...
- Then we will look at when God will this great work of creation...
- And then we will look at the five things He restores in more detail.

A. So first, a brief overview of the five things that God restores for His people when He creates a new heavens and a new earth for them...

1. Here are the five things:

- a. First, where there was death under His curse, there will be life.
 - **Isaiah 65:20: No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.**
- b. Second, where there was unfruitful labour, there will be fruitful labour.
 - **Isaiah 65:21-22: They shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and another eat; For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.**
- c. Third, where there was trouble from children, there will be blessing from them.
 - **Isaiah 65:23: They shall not labor in vain, Nor bring forth children for trouble; For they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, And their offspring with them.**
- d. Fourth, where there was alienation from God, there will be communion.
 - **Isaiah 65:24: "It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear.**
- e. Fifth, where there was hostility from the curse, there will be harmony and peace.
 - **Isaiah 65:25: The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," Says the LORD.**

TRANS> Those are the five things...

2. They are essentially a reversal of the curse that God brought upon the world when we fell.
 - Death, unfruitful labour, trouble in raising children, loss of communion with God, and hostility in the creation...
 - God's promise is that He will create a New Heavens and a New Earth for His people in which the curse will be eliminated and forgotten.

TRANS> But before we look at the five changes in detail, there is a question that cries out for an answer.

B. When is God going to do all of this?

1. It is not such an easy question to answer because the LORD does not tell us when.
 - On the one hand, it might look as if it was talking about the final state of glory after the final resurrection,
 - but you can see that death is spoken of...
 - and not only that, but the bringing forth of children...
 - These are things that do not pertain to the eternal state.
 - Yet, at the same time, if these blessings refer to this life,
 - They do not seem to be complete enough.
 - Back in verse 19, we saw that there would be no more weeping or crying.
 - The blessing seems to be greater than what we obtain in this present age.
 - In 2 Peter 3, we saw that Peter referred to a complete melting away of the present order of things.

TRANS> So what is the best answer?

2. The best answer is to recognise that the creation of the new heavens and the new earth is the work that Jesus does over the entire extent of His ministry...
 - It is the work that He began when He came into the world 2000 years ago...
 - that He is continuing now as He subdues the earth in this present age...
 - and that He will complete when He returns at the last day.
 - In other words, it is a progressive work that is going on right now.
 - That is the simplest way to understand it without forcing some system upon it that man has come up with...
 - a system that must be forced because it doesn't really fit all the facts.
3. Let me show you how this fits with what the Bible says:
 - a. First, let me show you that according to the scriptures, the new creation has already begun in Jesus.
 - Jesus Himself is the firstfruits of the new creation as 1 Cor 15:20 says:
 - **1Co 15:20 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.**
 - According to Eph 1:20-22, Christ has already been exalted as head over all things:

- The Father has already
 - (v. 20-22) **“raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church...**
 - As Jesus Himself told His disciples,
 - **Mt 28:18: All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.**
 - **Joh 3:35: The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.**
 - This is what Daniel prophesied when Jesus ascended into heaven in Daniel 7 when he saw a vision of Jesus’ ascension from heaven’s perspective:
 - **Da 7:13-14: "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.**
 - And the result is that the New Creation has begun in all who trust in Jesus.
 - **2 Cor 5:17: “Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”**
 - Gal 6:15: “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.”**
- b. But though this great work has begun, it is evident that the final blessing has not come yet.
- As Hebrews 2:8-9 says:
 - **Heb 2:8: You have put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him.**
 - We have just seen that God has put all things under Jesus...yet the passage continues...
 - **Heb 2:9: But now we do not yet see all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.**
 - The subjugation of all things under the feet of Jesus has begun, but it is not complete.
 - Romans 8 explains that the creation will not be restored until the last day and neither will we. In Romans 8:18-25, Paul says:

- **Rom 8:18-25: For I consider 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 creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.**
 - So you see from this that the work or new creation, though started, is by no means complete!
- c. The Bible shows that it is a work in process that is yet to be completed.
- 1) The new creation is a progressive work that occurs stage by stage.
 - We can see that as God works in us to make us more like Jesus—one step at a time...
 - and this is also true as the gospel goes forth to subdue the nations.
 - 1Co 15:25 says: **For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.**
 - Jesus is going forth, conquering by His word.
 - The gospel is going out into the world until the knowledge of the earth covers the earth as the waters cover the sea.
 - We have already seen the promise in Isaiah 11:9 that:
 - **Isa 11:9: the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.**
 - Likewise, Psalm 22:27 declares that:
 - **Ps 22:27 All the ends of the world Shall remember and turn to the LORD, And all the families of the nations Shall worship before You.**
 - This is the work that we see moving forward before our eyes today, and that we participate in!
 - It is the work that Christ has been doing in the earth ever since He sent His disciples out to make disciples of all the nations.
 - 2) We who hope in the Lord's promise to do this work yearn for it and eagerly pursue it.
 - Again, as Hebrews 2:8 says,
 - **Heb 2:8: "now we do not yet see all things put under him."**

- This is why 2 Peter 3:12 says that we who have this hope are now:
 - **2 Peter 3:12: looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God,**
- And 2 Peter 2:13 says the we
 - **2 Peter 3:12: “look for new heavens and new earth in which righteousness dwells.”**
- And Titus 2:13 says that we who have the beginning of Christ’s work now are:
 - **Tit 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,**
 - We are motivated to work for the kingdom because we believe the promise.

- 3) We have the firstfruits of the kingdom now and this encourages us to look for more!
 - What we have now is like a deposit from God—a pledge of what is to come.
 - It is like having a rich uncle who informs you that you are in his will and that he is giving you \$100,000 to help you out now...
 - Right away, you begin to use that \$100,000.
 - It makes a difference!
 - You already are able to enjoy it, but you also know that there is much more to come...
 - It is only the beginning.

TRANS> So you see then that the creation of the New Heavens and the New Earth began when Christ first appeared,

- that it is continuing now and will keep progressing until all things are brought under His feet...
 - and that it will be completed when He returns at the last day and we are resurrected.
 - This great work is a present, progressive reality that will be fully accomplished in God’s appointed time.
 - Isaiah’s focus here is not to tell us when the New Creation will come, but **that** it will come.

C. Now let us look more closely at the five components of the New Heavens and the New Earth that are listed here for our encouragement.

- They all show us that in the New Creation, the curse will be reversed for God’s people.

1. First, where there was death under His curse, there will be life in the new heavens and the new earth.
 - **Isaiah 65:20: No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.**
 - a. What monstrous thing death is—
 - ripping away from us those that we love.
 - taking men and women who were given dominion over the earth and returning them to dust, to the ground from which they were made.
 - It is full of pain and misery as our bodies fall apart before us...
 - something so wrong, so unnatural, that was brought on us because of our sin.
 - b. But you see that verse 20 speaks in general of the subjugation of death—
 - That children will not be cut off as they are now, or old men before they have fulfilled their days...
 - 1) A change has already begun because we know that Jesus has been raised from death and given immortality.
 - And when we come to Him, we are joined to His resurrected body so that even when we die, our bodies are still united to Him and will be raised.
 - And so that our spirits depart to be with Him until that day.
 - There is a sense in which we in Christ do not die.
 - 2) And though I would not be dogmatic about this,
 - I would suggest that verse 20 may refer to the blessing of longer life in this world even before Christ returns,
 - in the sense that when the gospel progresses so that the knowledge of the Lord covers the earth as the waters cover the sea,
 - we will enjoy lengthened lives with greater health.
 - Such was the case before the flood, so why not under the spread of righteousness?

TRANS> But whether that be the case or not,

- 3) The one that that is made certain in scripture is that death will be completely abolished for all who belong to Christ.
 - These bodies will be raised without corruption, never to be sick, never to die again.
 - **1 Cor 15:51-54: Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be**

raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

- There will be no more death when the new creation is finished.
 - That is the first reversal.
2. Second, where there was unfruitful labour, there will be fruitful labour in the new heavens and the new earth.
- **Isaiah 65:21-22: They shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and another eat; For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain.**
- a. The language here is reflective of the curse that God pronounced upon His covenant people if they did not continue in His grace.
- Deut 28:30 says:
 - **Deut 28:30: you shall build a house, but you shall not dwell in it; you shall plant a vineyard, but shall not gather its grapes."**
 - The idea is that you go to work, but then something happens to your work so that you don't get to enjoy the fruits of it...
 - Enemies come and take it all away...
 - Or a wasting storm comes and destroys what you have done...
 - Or you become sick and unable to enjoy the works of your hands.
- b. We all know what it is to labour in vain in this fallen world.
- But when God creates the new heavens and the new earth, this unnatural state of affairs will no longer prevail!
 - What we do for ourselves and for others will last and be enjoyed!
 - Rather than having enemies come and take the fruits of our labour,
 - we will be joyfully serving each other in love—
 - blessing each other and living in the blessing of our mutual labours.
- c. Here again, you can see how this is restored even in this world when the gospel comes!
- When the gospel comes to a people, we begin to do our daily work for the glory of God...
 - and when a whole nation or community does this, they begin to prosper in each other's labours.
 - Whenever the gospel overtakes a community, prosperity follows.
 - But this is only a foretaste of what we will have when God completes His work of New Creation.

3. Third, where there was trouble from children, there will be blessing from them in the new heavens and the new earth.
 - **Isaiah 65:23: They shall not labor in vain, Nor bring forth children for trouble; For they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, And their offspring with them.**
 - a. Under the curse, we bring forth children in pain in sorrow...
 - Many women die giving birth, children are often born with defects and sorrows...
 - but even worse than that, they often grow up and turn against us—they reject the Lord and bring us down to our grave in sorrow.
 - b. But in the gospel, the Lord promises to bless us and our children,
 - And in Christ this becomes a greater reality than it was under the Old Covenant.
 - Malachi speaks of this blessing as coming with Elijah—by which he means John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ.
 - He says:
 - **Mal 4:6: And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers,**
 - The New Testament is full of household baptisms...
 - The LORD gathers whole families to Himself for salvation and what harmony is brought to those households through Christ!
 - But again, this is not yet perfectly realised, for even Jesus warned that many houses would be divided because of the gospel.
 - This is especially true when the gospel breaks into a place and older children believe and their parents do not.
 - And it is true when apostasy comes to a community and the Lord begins to turn away His blessing by cutting off the children of His people.
 - But the promise of the gospel is, at heart, to us and to our children so that we no longer bring forth children for trouble!
 - c. As the gospel advances in the earth, this becomes more and more so.
 - But when the new heavens and the new earth are complete, there will be perfect unity between us and our children—
 - all who were in the LORD will be together as one.
 - 4. Fourth, where there was alienation from God, there will be communion in the new heavens and the new earth.
 - **Isaiah 65:24: "It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear.**

- a. Before the fall, Adam and Eve had full communion with God.
 - They were able to walk with Him in the cool of the day.
 - Their desires were pure and He gave them whatever they asked...
 - But at the fall, this blessed communion was disrupted.
 - They were cut off from God and cast out of His presence.

- b. Under the Old Covenant, access to Him was partially restored,
 - but only at a distance through sacrifices and offerings.
 - The veil at the temple symbolised the distance that was kept between God and his people because of sin.
 - They could call on His name, but there was a distance.

 - But when Jesus came and with Him the beginning of the new heavens and the new earth by His atoning sacrifice...
 - the veil of the temple was torn in two, showing that the way into the holiest had been opened to all who come to Christ.
 - Jesus told us that whatever we ask in His name would be done for us! By His blood, the way is opened for us!
 - And the Spirit is given to us so that we might be able to pray for things that are pleasing to Him...

- c. Yet, even with this great advance, we still are told that we do not have all that we ask because we ask with the wrong motives...
 - The work of the Spirit in us is not yet perfected—it is only the beginning of the work that He will yet do in us.
 - As we saw before, it is only a deposit and not the full deal.
 - When the gospel does a greater work in the earth, our prayers and our communion with God will be greatly improved...
 - The Spirit will be poured out upon the church for that great work.

 - And in the final state—when the new heavens and the new earth are complete...
 - we will have perfect communion with our heavenly Father...
 - We will only ask for those things that delight Him and He will cheerfully answer us!
 - We will have no more sin and no need for chastening.

 - But do not underestimate the great blessing that is ours now—
 - We have access to our heavenly Father in Jesus...the way into the holy place has been opened up for us!
 - Do not keep underestimating what you have.

- I know that you do because you do not come as you would if you truly understood what you have.
 - But when the new heavens and the new earth are complete—how often you will come before your gracious heavenly Father!
5. Fifth, where there was hostility from the curse, there will be harmony and peace in the new heavens and the new earth.
- **Isaiah 65:25: The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," Says the LORD.**
- a. This passage stirs up a lot of questions...
- Does this mean that there will be animals in eternity?
 - If not, when will these changes occur with the animals?
 - Or is it even talking about literal animals?
- b. The answer is first and foremost that this speaks of the reversal of the curse which curse brought enmity between us and the beasts.
- 1) Some have insisted that there will be no animals in the new heaven and the new earth, but I do not know where they get their confidence about that.
- Do we suppose that there will be no trees?
 - If God is going to restore **all** things, why would He decide that animals were a bad idea and something He does not want to restore?
 - I think the view that there will be no animals probably has more to do with Plato's influence on the church than it does with the Bible.
- 2) But again, the main point is that the disharmony we have is eliminated by the gospel.
- Even in this world, when men turn to the Lord, they cease to abuse their beasts—
 - They give them a rest on the Sabbath...
 - They become more patient with them...
 - And it is entirely possible that when the gospel spreads further into the earth, that the LORD will begin to subdue the animals before us.
- c. But I also believe that it is right to see the animals as representative of nations...
- Paul interprets the passage about muzzling an ox in this way—when he applies it to paying those who labour...
 - He says, **“Is it oxen God is concerned about? Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt...”**
 - So, on the same principle of interpretation, we can apply this passage about once hostile animals to once hostile nations and individuals!

- It is certainly true that under the gospel,
 - nations and peoples that were once bitter enemies are reconciled to each other through Christ.
 - They beat their swords in ploughshares and the spears into pruning hooks and do not learn war any more.
 - That is a blessing that comes when the gospel spreads into the earth.
- The whole is summed up for us very nicely at the end of the verse...
 - **“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain says the LORD.”**
- God’s holy mountain refers to the place where His redeemed people dwell...
 - And here He says that no one will hurt or destroy each other in all His Holy Mountain!
 - We hurt and destroy each other now in our sin, and it is an awful thing.
 - I myself often have to confess my own hurtful actions to others.
 - What a terrible thing it is that in our pride and selfishness,
 - we bring harm to each other!
 - All the nasty words and all the neglected duties!
- But the good news is that in Jesus Christ it will not always be so!
 - The day is coming when we will not hurt or destroy in all of God’s holy mountain because we will be know the LORD...
 - Jesus Christ will bring us before the face of God and we will see Him as He is and we will be like Him...
 - We will love as He loves and we will serve as He serves, and we will worship God with a perfect love and a perfect reverence.
 - We will no longer think of harming and destroying...
 - We will be too enraptured in serving our glorious King and Saviour!
- Too often, instead of focusing on the glory of that is spoken of in this passage—
 - the glory of paradise restored—
 - We get all caught up trying to figure out if this is talking about something that is yet to happen in this world...

- or if it is talking about heaven and if there will be animals there—
 - or what?
- But all you need to know is that paradise is going to be restored by Jesus Christ—
 - and we and all of creation will stop hurting each other because we will all be caught up in our glorious God!
- This is what Jesus came to restore!
 - It begins in this life as we come to know our God through Christ and He delivers us...
 - And it is brought to completion in heaven...
 - That is what you need to know and that is what you need to rejoice in and that is what you need to look forward to with glad hope.

Conclusion

- This whole account of the new heavens and the new earth that God is creating was written to give you hope if you are trusting in Jesus.
 - If you are not trusting in Him, you will not enjoy any of these blessings.
 - But if you are, this is your glorious inheritance in Christ!
 - If your hope in these things is real, you will pursue these things now...
 - You will look for and hasten the day of the Lord!
 - You will pray for this blessing,
 - You will evangelise,
 - You will put off the old man and put on the new man,
 - You will rejoice in what God has promised,
 - You will labour because you will know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.
- So do you believe that God really is creating a new heavens and new earth?