

The Glorious New Heavens and New Earth

Key Verse: *“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.”*
—Isaiah 65:17,18

Selected Scripture:
Isaiah 65:17-21,23-25

IN OUR LAST LESSON, WE

spoke of the time of Christ’s coming kingdom, in which mankind will have the opportunity to return to God’s favor through heart-obedience to his righteous laws. Today we will focus on some of the conditions of that kingdom as described by Isaiah and other writers of the Scriptures. In our Key Verse, the prophet likens Christ’s kingdom to a “new heavens and a new earth.” He further states that the former kingdom of this “present evil world” (Gal. 1:4) will no more be remembered.

God’s creation of a new heavens and earth is not a reference to literal heaven or earth, but rather to a new arrangement, or order of things. Indeed, the Bible tells us concerning the literal earth that “the earth abideth forever.” (Eccles. 1:4) That which will be “new” are the governing forces of the kingdom, which will be centered in Christ and his faithful associates of the

present Gospel Age. Together, they will be the heavenly rulers of the kingdom, rather than Satan, who God has allowed for a time to be ruler over mankind. This “old” rulership of earth by the great Adversary will be replaced by the “new” heavens of the Christ—head and body.

Conditions in the earth itself will also be “new” during the kingdom, compared to man’s experience in his present fallen condition. Note these prophetic words from our lesson: “There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days. . . . 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. . . . They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD. . . . Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together. . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.”—Isa. 65:20-25

These wonderful conditions described by Isaiah are certainly a time all should look forward to with great anticipation. Lest we think that Isaiah alone spoke of a new heavens and new earth, his prophetic words are confirmed for us in the New Testament by both the Apostle Peter and John the Revelator. Peter says, “We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” (II Pet. 3:13) John adds, “I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.”—Rev. 21:1

In his vision, John saw, as Isaiah did, some of the details of the new heavens and earth. “I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them . . . and be their God. 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.”—vss. 3,4 ■