

God's New Creation

- When last time took something old, shabby, worn out, and replaced with something brand new? Always nice to replace something old, beyond repair with something brand new, isn't it? New shoes. Update furniture; put down new carpet. Bank, new bill. New suit, outfit. On this Mother's Day, maybe some moms something new. Sanctuary carpet, lights. So can appreciate what means to get something brand new; to replace old, worn out with new/improved.
- God can appreciate that, too. Why today when God talks re heaven, calls it place that will replace this old creation (where live now), and will be brand new creation. Heaven will be God's new creation; what Isa says in reading for today (Isa 65), which I think is one of clearest, most beautiful pictures of eternal life in heaven in entire book of Isa. God basically says, someday I'm going take this old, worn out creation, replace with brand new creation.
- **Vs. 17a.** Makes think first vs of Bible, **Gn 1:1**. Now, **vs. 17a.** God is creator; made world out of nothing. Remember, before creation, nothing. But when said: light; skies, land, plants, animals. From mind of God to mouth of God, spoke his vision for this world; everything created, out of nothing. Today, craftsmen, artisans fashion all kinds things: jewelry, pottery, carpentry; but don't create metal, clay, or wood. God is creator.
- Created "**heavens/earth**;" that phrase doesn't just mean sky, planet; means everything in between, everything that exists: from farthest galaxies in space, to smallest cells in our bodies; from tiny baby in your arms, to vast landscape of this beautiful, amazing planet. God's creation is amazing!
- So why create something new? Why God say **vs. 17**, when this creation is pretty awesome? Well, really want to talk re this creation, have to remember what happened shortly after created, in Eden. God's perfect creation was quickly infested with sin. Satan slithered his way onto forbidden tree, tempted AE eat fruit. They did; changed everything. Perfection no longer perfect, and sin placed curse on AE, children, children's children, us. Not just humanity; sin also cursed God's entire creation, so that violence, disease, pain, guilt, disaster, death – all result of curse of sin. Paul: "**the creation subjected to frustration**" (**Rom 8:20**). This may be amazing world, but also world filled with suffering, sin, death.
- So, God promises **vs. 17-18**. "*I know not, oh, I know not what joys await us there, what radiancy of glory, what bliss beyond compare*" (*CWS 728*). So when get to go there, to this "*sweet and blessed country, the home of God's elect*"? Jesus said: "**Keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come**" (**Mt 24:42**). Jesus is coming back, on Judgment Day, to judge the living and the dead; on that day, "**Heaven and earth will pass away**" (**Mt 24:35**). This sinful world, as we know it, will be pass away and be destroyed. Peter: "**That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise**" (made here in Isa) "**we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells**" (**2 Pt 3:12-13**).
- So if want talk God's new creation, what heaven like, here's what God says: "On Last Day, I'll take this sin-filled world, destroy; but renew, refashion, recreate. Make new/improved, perfect once again. This time, stay perfect." And God's new creation in heaven isn't going be puffy clouds in sky, people floating around, everyone plays harp – whatever silly picture of heaven you've seen portrayed on TV shows. Heaven will be a real, tangible, material, physical place. You'll walk, touch, taste, see, smell, hear, breathe, live. Called eternal life for reason; you'll live there with resurrected body in real place. It'll be like Eden before fall into sin: God's very best creation, designed for humans to enjoy. That's what heaven like: God's perfect new creation, designed for humans enjoy.
- Consider this: God is God of order who does things in patterns; I see God's new creation as part of a pattern. Four parts to this pattern: perfection, corruption, destruction, renewal. Original creation / flood. See same pattern in life of Christ: perfect, sinless Son of God; took on corruption of our sin; destroyed on cross; renewed in res. Rest of humanity follows pattern: created perfect; sin corrupts; we suffer effects of sin (disease, death); but on Last Day bodies raised, we renewed, refashioned, recreated, just like Jesus' body in his res. That's what Job means: "**After my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh will I see God**" (**19:26**). What Paul means: "**We will all be changed – in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.**" (**1 Cor 15:51**). We'll complete pattern of perfection, corruption, destruction, renewal. That's same pattern this world faces. This world we live in: created perfect, corrupted/frustrated by sin, destroyed by fire (as Peter), renewed, refashioned, recreated. **Vs. 17a.**
- Today Jesus: "**My Father's house has many rooms...I am going there to prepare a place for you,**" and "**I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am**" (**Jn 14:2-3**). Heaven is real

place. Today God describes this real place in picturesque language by calling it the new Jerusalem. **Vs. 18b-19a.** At very end Bible, end Rev, God picks up on same language: **“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and...I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.”** *“Jerusalem the golden, with milk and honey blest – the sight of it refreshes the weary and oppressed.”*

- Here’s why so refreshing: because of what won’t be there. Heaven so indescribable, beyond our comprehension, that when God talks about heaven, instead of telling us what will be there, usually just tells us what won’t be there. In Isa reading for today, whole list of things says won’t be there:
 - **Vs. 19b.** Whatever makes you shed tears of sorrow won’t be there. **“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away”** (Rev 21:4). So no more tears.
 - Also: **vs. 20.** Point here longevity instead of brevity, life that lasts forever. No death! If you’ve ever lost a loved one, if right now thinking about someone dear to you who has died or soon may, then you know how horrible, crushing the reality of death is. But God says in his new creation, no death.
 - **Vs. 21-22a.** So in heaven: no stolen property, no injustice, no cheating, nothing unfair. Only satisfaction. In this world, we find satisfaction in homes and labor. So God uses that picture, says: in new creation, we’ll have perfect satisfaction, that no one will be able to steal that away from us.
 - **Vs. 23ab.** No miscarriages, no dead babies. Sarah & I had miscarriage; some of you have lost babies, too. Hard thing to hold dead baby. Mothers who’ve been through that – they don’t forget re that baby on Mother’s Day. God says that in heaven, there will be no **vs. 23bc** – children.
 - Finally, no violence. **Vs. 25.** Just picture: violent predators living with prey in peace/harmony, because no violence. This whole list of bad things – point is that none will be there in heaven, in God’s new creation.
- Today, **vs. 17a** - someday. But what does this vision of God’s new creation mean for you/me today?
 - 1) God loves you. Creator, who created you and created creation for you, will recreate his creation, give that new creation to you. Everything good you have comes from Creator, including heaven; God loves you.
 - 2) Be patient. Life on this earth sometimes downright awful. I don’t have to prove that to you because you know; you’ve seen, felt that awful. But be patient. The same Jesus who bore weight of the cross for you also help you bear weight of your awful, whatever may be. And he promises that you have a new creation in heaven to look forward to, and he is going to bring you there in due time. So be patient.
 - 3) Remember: heaven will be perfect; will be Eden God intended for this world; but this Eden will not be susceptible to sin or its curse. So every guilt ever felt, every hardship you’ve ever faced, every heartache you’ve ever endured – these **vs. 17b.** Gone forever, because heaven will be perfect.
- **Vs. 17a.**

Isaiah 65:17-25

¹⁷ “See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. ¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. ¹⁹ I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more.

²⁰ “Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; the one who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere child; the one who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. ²¹ They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. ²² No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the work of their hands. ²³ They will not labor in vain, nor will they bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them. ²⁴ Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. ²⁵ The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, and dust will be the serpent’s food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain,” says the LORD.