

HEAVEN

In this lesson, our study of Heaven will cover Section Five (Chapters 14-16) of Randy Alcorn's book, "Heaven". This section is entitled "Seeing the Earth Restored". What will the restored or renewed earth look like? How will it be organized, what will it be like to live on it? In our lesson, we will look at these and other questions as we continue our study.

Consider the following:

1. Read Isaiah Chapter 2 and compare it with the following verses found in Revelation 6:15-17 and Revelation 18:9-20. Note below what they tell us about the days leading up to Christ's return, and what he will do when he returns.
 - a. ANSWER: In the days leading up to Christ's return, man will be worshipping everything made by his own hands and following the Anti-Christ. Trusting in wealth, power, and the pleasures of this world, mankind will have no place to hide when Christ comes to judge them. The collapse of the economic and political systems of the world will bring about a great mourning by all those who trusted in them. Christ will return, judge them, and set up his Millennial kingdom, over which he will rule with a rod of iron.
2. Read Isaiah 11:1-10 and note below what this reveals to us about the Messiah's reign.
 - a. ANSWER 1: Christ's rule will bring a peace not just to the world as we know it, but to all of creation as well. The "renewal" of all things will include man and the rest of God's creation living in peace and harmony, as it was originally intended.
 - b. ANSWER 2: *"A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD - and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious."*
3. Compare Isaiah 62:5-7, 10-11 with Revelation 22:12. What do these passages tell us about Christ's return?
 - a. ANSWER 1: *Isa. 62:5-7: As a young man marries a maiden, so will your sons marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you. I have posted watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the LORD, give yourselves no rest, and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth. Isa. 62:10-11: Pass through, pass through the gates! Prepare the way for the people. Build up, build up the highway! Remove the stones. Raise a banner for the nations. The LORD has made proclamation to the ends of the earth: "Say to the Daughter of Zion, 'See, your Savior comes! See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.'" Rev. 22:12: "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done."*
 - b. ANSWER 2: These passages indicate to us that Christ is bringing our reward with Him, and when He returns He will reward some and judge others.
4. Read Isaiah 65:17- 25. List below some of the things that we learn about what it will be like living on the earth during Christ's Millennial Reign?
 - a. ANSWER 1: His people ("my people") will be a delight. They will live very very long lives, be prosperous in everything that they do, and have a life that allows them to enjoy the work of their hands. There will be no tears; no weeping or crying will be heard in Jerusalem. They will continue have families, give birth, and live normal but joyful lives, in peace with Christ and in peace with His creation.

b. ANSWER 2: *"Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. 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. 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. 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; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. 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 works of their hands. They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them. Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain," says the LORD.*

5. Read Isaiah 66:22-23. What does Christ promise to do during his Millennial reign?

a. ANSWER 1: *"As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me," declares the LORD, "so will your name and descendants endure. From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me," says the LORD. "And they will go out and look upon the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me; their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind."*

b. ANSWER 2: Christ promises that our names will endure forever, just as the New Heaven and New Earth that he is making for us will endure forever. He also tells us that during His reign "all mankind" will bow down before Him.

6. Compare Romans 8:19-23 and 2 Peter 3:5-13 with Genesis 6:13. What can we learn about the fate of this earth, and the "new earth" that is coming? Consider this as well: Did God "destroy" the earth with the flood?

a. ANSWER 1: **Rom. 8:19-23:** *The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.*

b. ANSWER 2: **2 Pet. 3:5-13:** *But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. 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 we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.*

c. ANSWER 3: **Gen. 6:13:** *So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth."*

d. ANSWER 4: We can learn from these verses that certainly all that we see around us today will be destroyed, "burned up" according to some translations of 2 Peter. We can also see that not only is man looking forward to this renewal, but so is creation itself: the earth, the animals and plants on the earth; everything is looking forward to the coming "renewal". We can also see from Genesis that when God said he was going to destroy the earth, he did indeed, but the basic "earth" as we know it remained, radically changed and completely void of life except on the ark; it was a different earth than before the flood. This may be a model for us to better understand the transition to the new earth and new heaven. During this transition, everything on this earth is burned up and a new earth emerges; the same will apply for the heavens which now reside on earth with us. They will be "new" and completely different in many respects: no stars, no sun, no sea; and yet it will be an earth that we recognize, a physical earth created anew for physical people, animals and plant life - God's creation as He originally intended it to be!

God has prepared many good places for us to abide, from (1) Paradise (or the intermediate heaven), to (2) our home in His Millennial Kingdom, to (3) the New Heaven and New Earth that he is creating for us. What a blessing to look forward to; what a hope and a joy to know that we as God's creatures will once again live and walk and talk with Him while living on this new earth! Spread the Good News to everyone you know and have a blessed week.

In Christ,

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