

The Benefits of Salvation Series

Heaven: Looking Beyond the Horizon

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Do you have questions about heaven? Do you wonder how your choices now affect eternity? Do you see the great adventure that awaits every believer? Do you live with that blessed hope of eternal life? Are we down here wasting our lives because of poor choices; or are we living in anticipation of the greatest adventure we've ever had with the Holy Spirit, of life with Christ and believers of all time, and of life before our Holy Father in a place where creation is restored and we live in the fullness of all God has for us in Jesus?

The Word of God helps us realize our destiny, understand life beyond the grave, grasp redemption's restoration, anticipate resurrection, celebrate eternal relationship with the Godhead, and prepares us to reign with Christ in His Kingdom.

The Bible speaks of a "new heaven and a new earth." As I mentioned last week, theologians debate whether the new heaven and new earth are new in kind or new in quality or both. We will focus on the Redeemed in Christ, those whom Christ has redeemed by His Blood. In contrast, the wicked or unrighteous ones or workers of iniquity or unredeemed, who know not God and who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus will pay the penalty of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. Matthew 25: 46.

And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

We have gone through a brief history of what happens to true believers in Christ. Today we will take it from a slightly different angle.

The true believer is in this "already and not yet" paradox. He is raised with Christ and seated with Him in the heavenlies. He lives in the present reality of having a righteousness in Christ that he did not earn or deserve, but which is imputed to him. And then we have the fact that God's new creation has already started with the death and resurrection of Christ.

Genesis 1 and 2 give us the past. Here we see original humanity and original earth as God delegates reign to innocent mankind and gives mankind dominion with intended stewardship of Earth. God institutes the covenant of creation a/k/a the covenant of Adam a/k/a the covenant of works. God in Heaven visits Earth and there is no curse, only universal perfection and blessing, no shame.

This covenant is made with Adam. The fruit of the Tree of Life in Eden can be eaten but not the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. There is a River of Life and before redemption, sin is unknown. There is no death. Mankind is created from the earth. The First Adam reigns and is under a creation mandate.

The Serpent, Satan, is also on Earth. God walks with humans in the Garden and God's glory is evident to all, with unhindered individual worship. God's goodness is known and both creation and humanity are perfect. Mankind is to name, tend, and rule animals. They are to tend the garden, having dominion as stewards or trustees, not to exercise domination, but to care for and not abuse this high privilege. The ground is fertile and vegetation lush with abundant food and water. There is restfulness and satisfaction in labor, an innocence and closeness to God. We call it Paradise, with humanity in an ideal place, but able to sin or not to sin, naked in innocence. There is one marriage, perfect, and the beginning of human culture wherein humanity learns and creates in purity, rules and is to expand Paradise. God reveals His plan for humanity and Earth. Man is created in the image of God. God, as Creator, is owed obedience with submission to God's will.

God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." ([Gen. 1:28](#))

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ([Gen. 2:15](#))

Adam listened to another word, another wisdom, rejecting Christ the wisdom of God and plunging humanity into the estate of sin and misery.

Genesis 3 through Revelation 20 speaks of a present reality, showing fallen humanity; some believe and are transformed. Fallen Earth nevertheless shows glimmers of the original state. Reigning falls into dispute with God, Satan, and fallen humanity. Mankind's dominion becomes thwarted, frustrated, and twisted. God is in Heaven, separate yet active. He indwells believers by His Holy Spirit. This is the estate of sin and misery, sin and the Curse, the withdrawal of blessing or blessing selectively given, yet common grace pervades. There is shame. Humanity is cut off from the Tree of Life in Paradise. Rivers and nature give glimmers of past and future and the unfolding drama of redemption begins.

Sin corrupts; its power and penalty assaulted, defeated by Christ. Death permeates all. Mankind dies, returns to the Earth; yet new life is given to some as having been chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world. The First Adam falls; mankind reigns corruptly, with glimpses of good; the Last Adam comes.

The Last Adam is Jesus Christ, God Incarnate. The Serpent, Satan, is judged but is still present on Earth. Humans are cut off from God and God's glory is obscured, seen only in glimpses. Worship is hampered by sin and God's goodness is known by some, doubted by others. Creation and humanity are tainted by sin. Animals and mankind hurt each other. The ground is cursed and vegetation diseased. Hunger and thirst, toil for food and water, restlessness and toil in labor become the norm. Sin pervades with its alienation from God, though some are declared righteous in Christ by imputation. Paradise is lost but sought; glimmers seen, foretastes. Mankind is banished, struggles and wanders in fallen places.

All mankind is enslaved to sin; some are empowered not to sin, clothed due to unrighteousness with the righteousness of Christ. Many marriages result with marriage

flawed by sin, blame, and manipulation. Culture becomes contaminated in its advancement. Mankind learns, creates in impurity (Cain, Babel). Mankind is banished from Paradise but longs for a return to Paradise. God's plan seems delayed but though the vision tarry, wait for it; it will not tarry. The justified in Christ will live by faith.

The Future State is seen in Revelation 21 and 22. There is a new heaven and a new earth. We see a resurrected new humanity in Christ and a new Earth with God delegating reign to those justified in Christ by faith in Him. Mankind's dominion is fulfilled by the righteous ones in Christ; redeemed stewardship of Earth results. God lives forever with mankind on the New Earth. **“And I will be your God; and you will be My son.”**

The Covenant of Grace is consummated. Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. He that has the Son has life; he that does not have the Son has not life. It is appointed unto man once to die and after that the Judgment.

For those in Christ, redeemed and resurrected, there is no more Curse; thus greater blessing, perfection, and unending grace. There is no shame or potential for shame. The Tree of Life in New Jerusalem allows mankind to eat again forever. The River of Life flows from the throne. Sin and death have been forever removed. True believers are delivered from the penalty of sin, the power of sin, and the presence of sin.

The Second Man reigns as God-Man, with the new humanity in Christ as co-heirs with Christ. The Serpent, Satan, is thrown into the eternal lake of fire. God dwells face-to-face with those in Christ and His glory is forever manifested with unhindered corporate worship and His goodness forever celebrated. Creation and humanity are restored to perfection and animals and humanity live in complete harmony. The ground is fertile; vegetation thrives with abundance of food and water. There is an enhanced restfulness and joy in labor, complete righteousness in Christ, and paradise regained and magnified. In this glorified state, those redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb, are restored to an ideal place, unable to sin, permanently empowered, clothed with righteousness. There is one marriage (Christ and the Church or Bride), perfect and unhindered. Culture is purified; God's will is obeyed free of sin. Humanity learns, creates in wisdom and purity, with unlimited free access to the One true and living God. God's plan for the new humanity in Christ and for a New Earth is realized.

Isaiah 65.17, Isaiah 66.22, 2 Peter 3.13, Revelation 21.1

“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.” Isaiah 65:17 ESV

²¹“And I will select some of them as priests and Levites,” says the LORD. ²²“For just as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, will endure before Me,” declares the LORD. “so your descendants and your name will endure.” ²³From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come to worship before Me,” says the LORD.... (comp. Revelation 21:1-27; Revelation 22:1-5). Isaiah 66:21-23
Berean

But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. 2 Peter 3:13 ESV

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. Revelation 21:1

Ellicott comments: "The hope of the renewal and restitution of all things had been long cherished. Earlier prophets had sanctioned the hope: Isaiah had told of new heavens and new earth ([Isaiah 65:17](#)); Ezekiel had closed his prophecy with the splendid vision of a renewed land of promise (Ezekiel 40-48); Christ Himself had spoken of the era which He inaugurated as the regeneration ([Matthew 19:28](#)); His followers soon caught the truth that the outcome of the gospel age would be the realisation of all those marvellous visions with which prophets had sustained the fainting hopes of the people of God. The hope was not to be for ever receding as new height after height was surmounted. It will not always be said, "The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth" ([Ezekiel 12:22](#)). The fulfilment may seem to tarry; the unbelieving might doubt or scoff ([Matthew 24:43](#); [1Thessalonians 5:2](#); [2Peter 3:4](#)); but those who felt that the gospel was a power of spiritual regeneration, making all things new ([2Corinthians 5:17](#)), learned to look forward to the widest and fullest restoration, and to expect new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness ([2Peter 3:13](#)). The characteristic word which runs throughout the description is the word "new." Ellicott's Commentary on Revelation 21:1.

God is into redemption, reconciliation, restoration, recovery, return, renewal, regeneration, resurrection, reclamation. **Psalm 24:1 – The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein. Psalm 24:1 KJV**

God has prior claim to His creation and does not relinquish that claim to contenders. God's original plan will be fulfilled. Acts 3:21 speaks of the restoration of all things. Jesus spoke of the renewal of all things in Matthew 19:27, 28. *Paligenesia* means "new genesis" or "coming back from death to life." Creation awaits the manifestation of the sons of God, those who understand God's original purpose and who will fill the Earth with His glory. All competitors to God's dominion, authority, and power will be destroyed. 1 Cor. 15:22-25 The glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. (Isaiah 40:5) See also Psalm 102:15, 16,; Is 11:9, 10; Is 66:19, 20; Haggai 2:6, 7; Is 6:3; Ps 72:19; Habakkuk 2:14; Is 60.

The redeemed are more than restored to an original state of being living souls, Adam before the Fall. The redeemed are in Christ conformed to the image of Christ, who is the prototype of a new humanity. The Last Adam [Second Man, Man from heaven] is more than the first Adam. Jesus Christ, Lord, Savior, King of kings and Lord of lords, is fully God and fully Man, a divine Person with a divine nature who took on a human nature. We are human persons with a human nature who partake of the divine nature. 1 Corinthians 15.

Christ is the first fruits of the Redeemed. God does not merely return humanity to the original plan; but it is His plan from before the foundation of the world to glorify Christ and to display His glory in the Redeemed, from every tribe and tongue and nation, one New Man. The Redeemed are spiritual beings, heavenly, without corruption, immortal through Christ's immortality, living in vital spiritual union with/in Christ. The redeemed not only have dominion over earthly things, but also over spiritual beings. They will judge angels. The spirit world will be subject to them. **Christ is God's crowning glory, and we in Christ fill the Earth with His glory. John 17**

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