



THE NEW EARTH

QUEST LESSON E-13

The Problem: There are many questions that come to mind when we consider the condition of the saved of all ages in the earth made new. First, of course, is the question, when is the earth made new? Many Christians think that the 1,000 years of peace after the second coming of Jesus will be spent on this earth. As we have seen, during the millennium the saved will be in heaven, and this earth will be in a state of desolation inhabited only by Satan and his evil demons. (See lesson E11). Now we must emphasize what the Bible teaches about the time when God makes the earth all over again, a fit place for the saved believers to live for eternity.

What will the capital of the new earth be like? We must realize as we study this subject that it is not possible for human beings in their present state to imagine the wonderful things that the Lord has in store for them. Even so, we can gain some idea of the beauty and glory of the holy city and of the new earth in general, what will the saved be like spiritually? It is difficult to imagine a world free from temptation to sin, and free from disease and death. Will there be no more arguments, no more discrimination, no more illness? Will there be no more fear? Will people be able to recognize those who were their friends and loved ones before the coming of Jesus? What will the saved be like physically? Will they have bodies, or will they be spirit beings? Will they remember the hurtful experiences of this life, and be bothered by the emotional reactions that caused such suffering in their sinful state?

Is there any possibility that sin will rise up again, after the earth has been recreated by God? Will the saved have complete security without any fear that their world of glory and peace will be shattered by some new threat?

Is this world of joy, purity, perfect health, and perfect peace worth preparing for? How do we get ready to inhabit such a place?

These are some of the questions that come into mind as we read the Scriptures about the new earth and allow our minds to contemplate the prospect of God's plan for us. Now let us turn to the Bible and see what it Says on this subject. As we do, the Holy Spirit will stimulate our imaginations so that we can have at least some idea of what it will be like to be a citizen of God's perfect new earth.

Objectives

First, we ask, when is the earth made new?

Second, we study the Bible description of the new earth's capital.

Third, we shall consider the spiritual life of the saved.

Fourth, we inquire concerning the physical and material blessings of the saved.

Fifth, we ask the question, are you ready for the new earth?

I. When Is the Earth Made New?

The answer to this question is very simple. The Apostle John, who wrote the book of Revelation, was given a vision of the earth being made new at a particular point of time.

The Word

1. When do Christ and the saved descend to this earth? Revelation 21:2; 20:7-9.
2. What does God do immediately after the destruction of the lost? Revelation 21:1; 2 Peter 3:13-14.
3. What did Isaiah say regarding God's intention to renew the earth? Isaiah 65:17-18, 66:22.

Explanation: At the end of the millennium Satan is released from his prison by the raising of the lost of all ages from the dead. Then he and his demons have people to tempt again. Christ and the saved descend from heaven in the holy city, the New Jerusalem, and the city rests on this earth. Then General Satan leads his hosts of the lost to besiege the city with the plan of making an assault upon it. At that point of time their plan is interrupted by God appearing on the "great white throne" above the city (Revelation 20:11). The decision of the heavenly court, that has been sitting in heaven during the millennium, is then made known to the wicked. Every person realizes why he is outside the city, why the Lord cannot admit him and give him eternal life, and what just punishment is about to be given him. Then fire comes down from heaven and destroys all the wicked, including Satan.

After the earth has been purified by fire, and sin and sinners are no more, the Lord restores the earth to its perfectly beautiful state before our first parents sinned. Peter looked forward to this time with intense longing. He said, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13). Isaiah foresaw the same wonderful transformation (Isaiah 65:17-18), and he foretold that peer handiwork would never again be destroyed (Isaiah 66:22).

Relevance: It is futile to look for any lasting improvement in the condition of our world today. The Bible predicts that things will get worse, not better. Sin, sorrow, war, and destruction will become more and more prevalent, right up to the second coming of Jesus. Only after that can we hope for deliverance from the frustrations and sufferings of this life. The millennium will be a time of wonderful peace and perfection in heaven. And when the earth is renewed after that, God's people will have an eternity of joy in the most ideal environment He can give them.

II. The Capital of The New Earth

No human pen could adequately describe the magnificence of the New Jerusalem. We can only read the Bible description and try to imagine what it will be like.

The Word

4. What is the New Jerusalem called? How does John describe the city? Revelation 21:9-12; compare 19:7-8.
5. To what extent do the number 12 and multiples of 12 occur in the description of the New Jerusalem? Revelation 21:12-21; compare Revelation 7:4-8.
6. What other significant features will the New Jerusalem have? Revelation 21:22-27.

Explanation: The New Jerusalem is called "the bride, the Lamb's wife" (Revelation 21:9). This is because it is the home of Christ's faithful people. The saved were married to Christ during the pre-advent, investigative judgment. This was called the "marriage of the Lamb" (Revelation 19:7). In Revelation 19:7-8, the true believers in Christ, who have received the gift of His righteousness by the Holy Spirit, are the bride. So both the people and the city are called the bride. The reason for that is simply that the city is the eternal home of the saved. The city is called the bride because Christ's faithful ones inhabit it.

The number 12 occurs quite frequently in the description of the city. This is because the number 12 is a symbol of the spiritual completeness and symmetry of the saved people who inhabit it. The faithful living on the earth when Jesus comes, who have never experienced death, are called the 144,000 (Revelation 7:1-8). This number is not designed to indicate that only 144,000 living believers will exist on the earth when Jesus comes the second time. The number is a multiple of 12 (12 times 12 times 1,000). It represents the perfect spiritual wholeness that will be enjoyed by those who allow Christ to reign perpetually in their hearts. Similarly, the New Jerusalem is depicted as a perfect square (or maybe a cube). It has 12 gates and 12 foundations. It is not known whether the measurement of 12,000 furlongs (or 1,378.4

miles, since a furlong is 606 ft. 6 in.) is the measurement of the circumference or of one side (Revelation 21:16). If this is the circumference, the city would be about 344.6 miles in aside. That would be a very large city, but we cannot be sure that our human measurements are correct. The main point seems to be that the number 12 figures largely in the dimensions. Revelation 21:17 says that the measure of the wall will be 144 cubits, "according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel." Since it is the measurement of an angel, we cannot be sure that our computations are satisfactory. And we do not know whether 144 cubits (or 210 feet; taking 17 1/2 inches per New Testament cubit) is intended to be the height of the wall or its thickness. Once again the number 12 figures largely. 144 is 12 times 12.

The purpose seems to be to indicate that the city is perfect in every way. It is a perfect home for a spiritually perfected people. The description that follows beggars the imagination. The wall of jasper, the city itself of translucent gold, the foundations of precious stones, the gates of pearl, the massive, glorious structure, all suggest to the mind the most beautiful architectural wonder the human mind could possibly conceive. Despite our effort to imagine it, we are left knowing that it will be more wonderful than our most exalted human conception.

There will be no temple there, for the Lord is the city's temple. The temple in heaven (Revelation 7:15; compare 20:4) is the heavenly sanctuary (Hebrews 8:1-2) where the sin problem is finally disposed of during the millennium. After that, there is no need of a temple. Sin has at last been excluded from the universe.

The Lord Himself provides the light needed, and there is no night there (verse 25). The nations of the saved will dwell in this city (verse 26). It will be the center and capital of the government of God for the entire universe (verse 3). Our little world, that so foolishly rebelled against its Creator, will be restored to its former beauty, and given much greater significance and glory than ever before, for it was here that the infinite God made the supreme sacrifice to save sinners from eternal loss. It was here that the matchless Jove of God was demonstrated for all the universe to behold!

Relevance: There will be no defilement or corruption of any kind in the holy city, New Jerusalem. Only pure hearts will qualify for citizenship there (Revelation 21:27). Only redeemed souls in whose lives the power of Christ is reigning will ever enter there. These are the ones who in the pre-advent judgment have had their names retained in the book of life (compare Daniel 12:1; 7:9-14; Revelation 3:5).

III. The Spiritual Life of The Saved

When Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36), He meant that His kingdom was spiritual, not temporal; not characterized by worldly power or human pride. Thus His eternal Kingdom on the earth made new will be primarily a spiritual realm in which holiness is perfectly and perpetually manifested.

The Word

7. Who will dwell with the saved for eternity on the earth made new? Revelation 21:3.
8. What is the spiritual qualification for inhabiting the new earth? Revelation 21:7.
9. Of what do the saved partake throughout eternity? Revelation 22:2; 7:17; 21:6; 22:17; compare John 4:14.
10. What special day of worship will be observed on the new earth? Isaiah 66:23.
11. Who will be the object of adoration and worship throughout eternity? Revelation 22:3-5; compare 19:5-6.

Explanation: God Himself will dwell with His people. The holy city will be the center of His government. He will accept as His subjects "he that overcometh" (Revelation 21:7). Throughout the book of Revelation, the great emphasis is upon the blessings for the overcomer. (See chapters 2 and 3). Christ wants us to have victory as he received victory (Revelation 3:21). He offers all the necessary power to make us conquerors of sin (Jude 24). And He assures us that what we give up for Him is very minimal indeed, compared to the wonder of our eternal inheritance in the earth made new.

Throughout eternity the saved partake of the tree of life (Revelation 22:2) and the water of life (7:17; 21:6). This means that their perpetual existence both spiritually and physically will be maintained by their constant union with Christ. The promise of Jesus to the woman at the well will be fulfilled for the redeemed in the most complete way. Because they drink deeply and constantly of the water of life, they will never die (John 4:14).

The Sabbath will be the weekly day of worship in the earth made new (Isaiah 66:23). Worship will be a daily matter, but especially significant on the day that reminds us of God's creative work and His infinite redeeming grace. The Lord who mercifully and tenderly fosters the spiritual lives of His redeemed people will be the constant object of their adoration. Now there is no deceiver to turn their minds away from God or convince them that the Lord is responsible for evil and suffering. The demonic source of all such deception is now no more, and life in its fullest sense can be lived by those who fully acknowledge their debt of gratitude to the Source of all life.

Relevance: Our worship here and now should be a preparation for that thrilling day when we will worship our Lord in the new earth. Daily worship is of vital importance to each one of us, and Sabbath worship is a foretaste of the Kingdom's great joys.

IV. The Physical and Material Blessings of The Saved

One of the most exciting features of the new earth is that we will be real people in a real world. We will not be ethereal spirits divorced from work and social activities that are meaningful to humans. The Bible account is plain.

The Word

12. Will the inhabitants of the new earth have bodies? Or will they be disembodied spirits? Philippians 3:20-21; Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 15:44, 49.
13. Will the saved know their loved ones? How does Paul answer this question? 1 Corinthians 13:12. What kind of temporal security will the inhabitants of the new earth enjoy? Isaiah 65:17-25. How does Isaiah dramatize the complete absence of hurtful experiences in the new earth? Isaiah 11:6-9.
14. What will replace the barren, unattractive parts of earth? Isaiah 35:1-2.
15. How does Isaiah dramatize the complete absence of hurtful experiences in the new earth? Isaiah 11:6-9.
16. What will replace the barren, unattractive parts of earth? Isaiah 35:1-2.
17. To what extent will the sad experiences of this life disturb the peace of the saved? Revelation 21:43 Isaiah 65:17.
18. Will sin ever again enter the universe? In what words does the Bible answer that question? Nahum 1:9.

Explanation: The redeemed inhabitants of the new earth will be physical beings. Our bodies will be made like Christ's body after His resurrection from the dead. We will not be as we are now, with the physical limitations of fallen beings, but neither will we be disembodied spirits. We will know our friends and loved ones and be known by them. He will have the privilege of working with our hands and enjoying the results of our labor. It will not be the arduous labor of this fallen world, but the most satisfying and fulfilling work that could be entered into. There will be scope for every noble ambition.

Isaiah 65:20 does not mean that sin and death will exist on the new earth. Isaiah's message had a dual application; to Israel as a nation, and to the end-time situation when earthly kingdoms have been swept away and God's Kingdom established. Israel could have enjoyed great spiritual, physical, and material blessings, if the people had followed the will of God. There would have been little infant mortality, little physical sickness. Because Israel failed, the promises to her have been inherited by the Christian Church (Galatians 3:28-29). Now the secondary application of Isaiah's prophecy applies. In this application, those features involving sin and death no longer have relevance. But the predictions concerning the "new heavens" and the "new earth" run parallel with those of John in the book of Revelation.

Elsewhere Isaiah emphasizes the joys awaiting the saved in the new earth. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9). Animals that in our fallen world are incompatible will dwell together in a perfect bond of peace. There will be no deserts or barren parts of earth, and no huge sea, as we know it today (Revelation 21:1).

One of the most wonderful assurances is that "the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21:4), and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isaiah 65:17). The Lord will not allow the memories of earth's struggles, disappointments and heartaches to destroy the peace and contentment of His people. And the sin problem will never

again arise. "Affliction shall not rise up the second time" (Nahum 1:9). Praise the Lord for that! The entire universe has seen the dire results of evil, and all are convinced that God is entirely righteous and just. No one will ever again wish to diverge from perfect conformity to His righteous will.

Relevance: "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18). We think of our struggles in this life as very severe. But in relation to the heavenly rewards for faithfulness, and the new earth satisfactions, our sufferings are very slight indeed. One day God's faithful people will exclaim, "Heaven is cheap enough!" The price paid to reach there is very slight in comparison with the satisfaction of the new earth,

V. Are You Ready for The New Earth?

As you measure your life beside God's standard for you, how do you see yourself?

The Word

19. What is Jesus' earnest desire for each of us? John 17:24,
20. Under what conditions can we inherit the new earth? Ezekiel 33:11; Revelation 21:7-8.
21. How may we be overcomers? Romans 1:16-17; 1 John 5:4.

Explanation: Jesus wants each one of us to share His Kingdom with Him. Because we are the creatures of His hand, and because He has given all to save us, His most earnest desire is to see us delivered from all evil and sharing a part in the earth made new.

Victory over sin is made readily available to every one of us. There is great power in the Gospel to the one who believes. Faith in Christ, living, abiding, constant faith is the means of spiritual power and purity.

Relevance: You can be an overcomer because of your spiritual union with Christ. He wants to dwell within you by His Holy Spirit (John 14:23; 17:23) and live out His life through you (Galatians 2:20). There are enormous material and physical blessings for the saved in the new earth. But the real issue confronting us today is spiritual. Christ is offering spiritual advantages; victory over all sin (2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Peter 1:15-16), and purity of heart and mind. These blessings can be yours now and forever. You can be a perfected soul in a perfected world. But the spiritual qualities that will characterize the saved are to be yours now, because Jesus offers Himself to you now. His righteousness is yours now (Romans 8:9-10). His presence in your heart is yours now (John 14:18).

Will you receive Christ as your present and immediate Savior from sin? Will you resolve to seek Him daily so that when He comes there will be no doubt at all about your eternal destiny?

Review Questions

1. True or False
 - a. The new earth is established at the second coming of Jesus.
 - b. The new earth is established at the end of the millennium.
 - c. The weekly sabbath will be kept on the new earth.
 - d. The saved on the new earth will be disembodied spirits.
2. Since the divine plan is that we will inhabit the new earth with redeemed people from every nation on earth, is it right of us to harbor prejudice against other people? Since Jesus died for them just as surely for us, and since they will be our neighbors in the new earth, why should we not love them, work for them, and live happily with them on this earth?