

## THE GLORIOUS NEW CREATION

Bible Background • Isaiah 65

Printed Text • Isaiah 65:17-21, 23-25 | Devotional Reading • Isaiah 42:1-9

### Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: KNOW that God will usher in a new heaven and a new earth; TRUST that God will keep His promise of a new heaven and a new earth; and PRAISE God that nothing is going to be the same in the new heaven and new earth.

### In Focus

Cosmologists—scientists who study the physical universe—believe the universe is finite and has a beginning and an end. They break down the life cycle of the universe into five periods lasting trillions of years. The first began with the “Big Bang” when everything that would exist exploded out of nothing and nowhere.

The second period, the one in which we currently live, is called the Stelliferous period, or the era of starlight. At the end of this period, all the stars will burn out and release their energy into the universe. This will leave the universe with “black holes.” When they have drained the remaining energy, they will cease to exist as well. This time will be the last period called the Dark period, when nothing will exist and the universe will be dead forever.

Theologians are biblical scholars who study the nature of God agree with cosmologists that the universe is finite. However, these theologians believe the end is not the end, but leads to a new beginning. At the end of time, God will create a new heaven and earth that will extend into all eternity.

*Today's lesson is about how believers should look forward to a time of joyful eternal life and make the most of every witnessing opportunity because time is limited.*

### Keep in Mind

*“For, 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).*

### Focal Verses

<sup>KJV</sup> Isaiah 65:17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. **18** 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. **19** And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. **20** There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. **21** And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. **65:23** They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. **24** And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. **25** The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.

<sup>NLT</sup> Isaiah 65:17 “Look! I am creating new heavens and a new earth, and no one will even think about the old ones anymore. **18** Be glad; rejoice forever in my creation! And look! I will create Jerusalem as a place of happiness. Her people will be a source of joy. **19** I will rejoice over Jerusalem and delight in my people. And the sound of weeping and crying will be heard in it no more. **20** “No longer will babies die when only a few days old. No longer will adults die before they have lived a full life. No longer will people be considered old at one hundred! Only the cursed will die that young! **21** In those days people will live in the houses they build and eat the fruit of their own vineyards. **65:23** They will not work in vain, and their children will not be doomed to misfortune. For they are people blessed by the LORD, and their children, too, will be blessed. **24** I will answer them before they even call to me. While they are still talking about their needs, I will go ahead and answer their prayers! **25** The wolf and the lamb will feed together. The lion will eat hay like a cow. But the snakes will eat dust. In those days no one will be hurt or destroyed on my holy mountain. I, the LORD, have spoken!”

## The People, Places, and Times

**Jerusalem's Prophetic Destiny.** The Old Testament portrays a distinctive future for Jerusalem; it will be the worship center when the promised time of renewal comes. The Messiah will take His waiting throne and the nation will be secure. This future is affirmed by most of the prophets, especially Zechariah in Zechariah chapters 12 through 14.

The New Testament introduces the concept of a heavenly Jerusalem. All that Jerusalem has been in sacred history as a political and religious center has foreshadowed what God intends to do on earth. That perfect center of political and religious life is spoken of as the heavenly or New Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:2; Revelation 3:12; 21:2, 10).

### Background

In chapters 60-66, Isaiah addresses his message to the people living in exile, assuring them that they still had a future. Isaiah sees a blessed future for the nation of Israel. The apostle Paul would later add to this prophecy by revealing the mystery of God's will: to unite Jew and Gentile into one body with Christ as the head (see Ephesians 1:9-13). When that time comes, Isaiah says of Jerusalem, "Though you were once despised and hated, with no one traveling through you, I will make you beautiful forever, a joy to all generations" (Isaiah 60:15, NLT). He tells the people who have been taken captive into foreign lands, "Their descendants will be recognized and honored among the nations. Everyone will realize that they are a people the LORD has blessed" (61:9, NLT). "Jerusalem will be known as 'The Desirable Place' and 'The City No Longer Forsaken'" (62:12, NLT).

In the final chapters, the prophet describes the glorious consummation of history. In chapter 64, he pictures a God-initiated future characterized by joy, the elimination of mourning and fear, the end to death, and communion with God. Although the return from Babylonian exile to Jerusalem resulted in some measure of this blessing for the people, many contend that the full realization of this prophecy will not be fulfilled until Jesus ushers in the new age.

### At-A-Glance

1. The Glorious New Creation (Isaiah 65:17-21)
2. The Glorious New Life (vv. 23-25)

### In Depth

#### 1. The Glorious New Creation (Isaiah 65:17-21)

Very early in Israel's history, God revealed to Moses the beginning of time. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the great lawgiver penned these words: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1, NLT). This one statement is enough to drive anyone who seriously contemplates it to his knees in worship. Consider that the galaxy where we live, called the Milky Way, is only one of millions. Our galaxy is rotating at a speed of about 490,000 miles per hour, and yet it takes about 225 years to make one complete revolution. This gives you some idea of how large the our galaxy and the universe is.

After creating the universe, God was pleased with His creation. Everything was virtuous, right and beautiful. Then Adam and Eve rebelled against God, fell into sin and all of creation suffered. The wonderful creation of God was scarred by the advent and growth of sin. As a result, God was no longer pleased with His creation. So thousands of years after Moses, God revealed to Isaiah the end of time: "Look! I am creating new heavens and a new earth, and no one will even think about the old ones anymore" (Isaiah 65:17, NLT). The original creation will be destroyed by fire (2 Peter 3:12). Time, space, matter and energy will all be consumed by this great refining blaze, and God will create a new heaven to reveal His glory and a new earth for redeemed humanity. God's creatures, created in His image, will again be able to contemplate the wonders of the creation and and appreciate His majesty (see Psalms 8:3-4). This new creation will be so beautiful and glorious that no one will even remember the original.

God will give His people cause to rejoice. Nature will fulfill its original potential for perfection: "Let the heavens be glad, and the earth rejoice! Let the sea and everything in it shout his praise! Let the fields and their crops burst out with joy! Let the trees of the forest rustle with praise" (Psalms 96:11-12, NLT). The causes of human misery will be destroyed. "Then the devil, who had deceived them, was thrown into the fiery lake of burning sulfur, joining the beast and the false prophet. . . . Then death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:10, 14, NLT). God will rule in the midst of His people, and we will finally see His face. "No longer will there be a curse upon anything. For the throne of God and of the Lamb will be there, and His servants will worship him. And they will see his face" (Revelation 22:3-4, NLT). Not only will God's people rejoice in Him, but the Lord proclaims, "I will rejoice over Jerusalem and

delight in my people" ([Isaiah 65:19](#), NLT; see [62:5](#)). Because death and the grave will be eliminated, people will live eternally with the Lord, and crying and weeping will never again be heard.

One day God will purify the heavens and the earth with fire and recreate them. Don't withhold your praise until the blessed event occurs; praise Him today and thank Him for making you a new creature worthy of His new creation.

## **2. The Glorious New Life (vv. 23-25)**

The climax of the new creation is the removal and reversal of the curse of [Genesis 3](#). Adam and Eve's sin caused humanity to fall from grace and from God's gracious presence. Their sin affected all of creation. It caused the descendants of Adam and Eve to be born under the curse of sin. Because of the curse on nature, Adam, Eve and their descendants experience physical hardship as they struggle through life for necessary provision (see [Genesis 3:17-19](#)). Mothers bear their children in pain, and watch in sorrow as sickness, hardship and death affect and eventually end the lives of their offspring. In the new creation Isaiah foresees, "They will not work in vain, and their children will not be doomed to misfortune" ([Isaiah 65:23](#), NLT). Just as God provided work for Adam in the original creation, humanity will have work to do in the new creation. However, since sin has been eliminated and the curse of sin reversed, all human effort will be fruitful and eternally significant without the worry of daily provision. In the new creation, the children of the cursed will become "blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them" ([65:23](#)). The greatest blessing of all will be the restoration of our original fellowship with God. We will experience the loving nearness of the everlasting Father who is sensitive to our every need: "I will answer them before they even call to me. While they are still talking about their needs, I will go ahead and answer their prayers!" ([v. 24](#), NLT).

The original order of things will return. God never intended for violence to be the rule of nature. Animals were not created to eat other animals, and men were not created to make war on or murder other men. In the new creation, the wolf and the lamb will feed in the same pasture. The mighty, flesh eating lion will eat grass like a cow. The snake, who was cursed to travel on its belly in the dust as a sign of humiliation, and the dust as its sustenance.

The advent of sin in the earth caused changes in the planet and the rest of creation, but God never changed. He maintained His eternal love for humanity and His desire to provide a place for us.

He never alters in His desire for us to have dominion over the earth. In the end, God will recreate the world as pure, uncorrupted, and good. The redeemed of humanity will rule and reign with Christ.

### **Search the Scriptures**

1. God promises to create a new heaven and a new earth. What will be a key emotion in the new creation ([Isaiah 65:18](#))?
2. How will God respond to the needs and desires of His people in the new creation ([v. 24](#))?

### **Discuss the Meaning**

Do you believe that the conditions of our world will get better or worse? As believers wait patiently for God to usher in the new age, what are our obligations to the present world?

### **Lesson in Our Society**

The people of Israel received the promise of the new creation while they were in captivity as a result of turning away from God. Believers today are often just as rebellious as the ancient Israelites. We fail to share the Good News of Christ with others, reach out to the needy, and obey God's Word. We should live each day making the most of every opportunity to do all of those things.

### **Follow the Spirit**

What God wants me to do:

### **Remember Your Thoughts**

Special insights I have learned:

## More Light on the Text

### Isaiah 65:17-21, 23-25

**17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.**

Commentators differ on the specific era in mind in this passage. Some state that the passage is expressly devoted to life of the future; others suggest that the writing was ascribed to the Hellenistic era. Still others dated it with Israel's post-exilic period. In any case, there is a sense that Israel is given a pictorial description of what will happen when the Messiah sets up His rule in the new earth (also see Revelation 21:1-27). One editor of the Oxford Annotated Bible connects vv. 17-19 with vv. 1-16, where Isaiah's condemnation of false worship is presented in a contrast between the earthly politics, temple worship and "physical" Jerusalem, and between new heavens and a new earth where the presence of the Lord will clearly be manifest.

As this text begins, we must note the primary "character:" God ("I create . . ."). According to The Interpreter's Bible, the passage (vv. 17-21, 23-25) is a recollection that exceeds Isaiah's prophecies in 40-48: "The world itself will be completely transformed in the new age that God brings" (913). The word "create" is used and comes from the Hebrew *bara'* (**baw-RAW**), which gives the idea to form, produce, engrave and create. *Bara'* emphasizes the initiation of an object, and, in its context, can only be performed by God. The Hebrew *bara'* is used in Genesis 1, where God creates from nothing, which is why Christians affirm the Latin phrase "creation ex-nihilo"—meaning "created out of nothing." However, in this instance, it appeared that the writer emphasized that the cosmos will be recreated and restored to its original intent before the fall of humanity. The context seemed to suggest that God would cleanse creation of all that has defiled it (see also Revelation 21:1-8; 22:11-15), for nothing of the former will be remembered (see Isaiah 43:18-19) or stored in one's heart. In short, paradise lost will become paradise regained when God completes His restorative work and transforms both creation and His people.

For Barton, Isaiah gives a tremendous pictorial view of the new heavens and new earth that are eternal, safe, peaceful and abundant with all the good things God has created (see Isaiah 66:22-23; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1). Most scholars agree that the descriptive nature of this text has not yet been fully realized; therefore, they concur it is a future prophecy with Christ as the main spokesman.

**18 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.**

God encouraged His people to "be glad and rejoice." The Hebrew word for "glad" is *suws* (**soos**), while the word for "rejoice" is *gijl* (**gheel**). Both words have similar meanings; however, *suws* means to make merry and exceedingly rejoice, perhaps through dance, while *gijl* is often expressed with shouts and songs. Notice, too, that God wants the shouting, dancing, singing, and exuberant praise to continue "forever" (Heb. *ad*, meaning into eternity). Why? God has promised to "create" Jerusalem. The Hebrew word for "create" in this instance is also *bara'*; but here God will reshape or reform the city with "existing materials," i.e., those who have clean hearts, pure motives and a will to worship the Lord in spirit and truth (see Psalms 15:1-5; 24:3-5; John 4:23-24). Indeed, in the new earth, Jerusalem will be a place of shouting and rejoicing for all God has done in and through the life of His people.

**19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.**

Muilenburg suggests that a new relationship with God and Jerusalem will be established, where God will rejoice over His city and people. The time for mourning will come to an end. Coogan connects verse 19 with Isaiah 25:6-10, where the eschatological (end times) picture of a Messianic banquet is described (see also 1 Samuel 9:13; Luke 14:15-24). God's people will have no need of fear or sadness, as God will make all things new for His people. Again, the prophetic picture is also clearly seen in Revelation 22:1-5, where God will reign as the light of New Jerusalem and the leaves of the Tree of Life shall be for the healing of the nations.

**20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. 21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.**

Berlin and Brettler point out that verse 20 brings to mind those who will not enjoy the transformation. The Hebrew Bible states the verse as follows: "No more shall there be an infant or graybeard who does not live out his days. He who dies at a hundred years Shall be reckoned a youth, And he who fails to reach a hundred Shall be reckoned accursed." In short, extraordinary longevity shall return to its former days before the flood that destroyed most of humanity, when people lived well beyond 300 to 500 years (see Genesis 5:1-32). For those who are righteous, they will expect to live a long and blessed life as opposed to those who have fallen from favor with God.

Eternal prosperity is also promised for the righteous. They shall enjoy the fruit of their own labor. Contrast this verse with God's judgment on Adam, because of his rebellion and disobedience (see [Genesis 3:17-19](#)), and it is clear that this prophecy is Messianic in its scope. Also, these verses correspond to God's promise to Jerusalem that they shall gather their produce and enjoy it as they praise the Lord in the courts of His holiness (see [Isaiah 62:8-9](#)). The new millennium will bring forth from God blessing, not judgment, and will be dramatically different than the judgments spoken by the prophetic oracles in the past (see [Amos 5:11](#); [Micah 6:14-15](#); [Zephaniah 1:12-14](#)).

**65:23 They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.**

The promise from God is encompassing. Not only will God's people enjoy the fruit of their work, but also that for which they labored shall bring forth an abundant harvest. The second promise is that they shall also bear children in prosperity. In this verse, Isaiah used the word "trouble," and in Hebrew it is *behalah* (**beh-haw-LAW**), which literally means, "fear, fright, sudden destruction, or the sudden terror of God brought upon disobedient Israel" (also see [Jeremiah 15:8](#)). However, unlike the judgment on the children that God spoke against Israel for disobedience (see [Deuteronomy 28:41](#)), these children shall be destined for greatness because, in the new millennium, all shall have God's stamp of approval.

**24 And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.**

Here, the prophet described an era of peace and harmony for the people with their Creator. The silence of God, which was prevalent in the past—and tested the souls of the people—shall be broken. In both [Isaiah 51:9-11](#) and [Isaiah 63-64](#), the people questioned whether God listened to their prayers. God makes the declaration that not only will He answer prayer, but, in the future, God will act before they can get the words out of their mouths. For Muilenburg, God's blessing will extend even into their interior consciousness (also see [Isaiah 30:19, 21](#); [58:9](#); [Jeremiah 29:11-12](#)).

In [Isaiah 65:24](#), the Hebrew word for "answer" is *'anah* (**aw-NAW**), and by implication it means, "to pay attention, give heed, and begin to speak." Thus, God seems to indicate that before the people pay attention, or give heed to Him, He will already have paid attention and given care to those who He loves.

**25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.**

Berlin and Brettler state that [verse 25](#) contains quotes from [Isaiah 11:6, 9](#), which speak of a new, peaceful era ushered in by an ideal Davidic king. But here, the human king is not mentioned. The prophet envisions a renewal where peace shall dwell both among humans and creatures; no human or animal will kill for food (also see [Genesis 1:29-30](#)). Thus, Jerusalem shall be a city of peace where all will reside in harmony, just as God declared before the fall of humanity.

The phrase "and dust shall be the serpent's meat" refers to [Genesis 3:14](#), where God spoke a prophetic word against the creature Satan used to deceive both Adam and Eve. Most scholars agree that this statement may point to the idea that, unlike the garden of Eden where Satan infiltrated with this creature, there shall be no evil in the new millennium. Another reference is [Micah 7:16-17](#), where God will destroy the nations that have risen against Israel. They, too, shall be like serpents.

In [Isaiah 65:25](#), the Hebrew word for "hurt" (*ra`a`*, **raw-AH**), gives the idea of breaking into pieces, afflicting, dashing and destroying, doing evil, or living wickedly. Thus, *ra`a`* denoted any activity that is contrary to God's will and purpose. Those who seek to do malicious sin against others will not only injure themselves; God also will inflict misery and pain upon them. Thus in [verse 25](#), God seems to reflect His final judgment on all who will be outside of New Jerusalem (His "holy mountain"). As John writes: "And there shall in no wise enter into (New Jerusalem) any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" ([Revelation 21:27](#)).

For Barton, the entire prophecy "may refer to the reign of Christ on earth, because sin and death have not yet been finally destroyed" (1279; see also [1 Corinthians 15:23-28](#)). Muilenburg suggests that this speaks of the new creation and age of peace in the Messianic community. [Isaiah 65:17-25](#) gives the idea of the return to paradise, with no more pain and death (see [Isaiah 11:1-9](#); [Revelation 21:4](#)).

## Say It Correctly

Jerusalem. juh-ROO-suh-luhm, -sluhm.

## Daily Bible Readings

<b>MONDAY</b>	The Handiwork of God	( <u>Psalm 19:1-6</u> )
<b>TUESDAY</b>	The Guidance of God	( <u>Psalm 19:7-14</u> )
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	No One Is Righteous	( <u>Romans 3:9-20</u> )
<b>THURSDAY</b>	Sin, Death, Sacrifice, and Salvation	( <u>Romans 5:6-14</u> )
<b>FRIDAY</b>	New Things Springing Forth	( <u>Isaiah 42:1-9</u> )
<b>SATURDAY</b>	God Makes All Things New	( <u>Revelation 21:1-7</u> )
<b>SUNDAY</b>	New Heavens and a New Earth	( <u>Isaiah 65:17-21, 23-25</u> )

## Notes