

Isaiah 65:1-16 God's New Creation: A People

As we approach this text and the topic of a new creation (v. 17), we must immediately recognize God as the One who creates. God's revelation to us begins with the words: **"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."** We, and everything in existence is here because God created. He spoke, and out of nothing, creation! And this theme permeates EVERYTHING we know and understand. Besides the fact that God exists from eternity, creation is the presupposition that gives meaning to this world and our lives! And it is interesting that in the beginning, God creates a place and then a people as he puts Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Well, in Isaiah 65-66 we see God creating a people, a special people, and then re-creating a place for them. This is why Jesus tells us in John 14:2-3, **"I am going to prepare a place for you . . ."** This truth is vital to us as we live in God's first creation which is marred because of sin. For our only hope in change lies in the power of God to make things right and create a new heavens and a new earth. Vv. 17-25 speak about the place. But vv. 1-16 speak about the people who will inhabit this place. With this in mind, this week, we will consider the people, next week, the place. I have 3 truths with some implications/applications to follow.

1. Gentiles will inhabit the new heavens and the new earth. Look at v. 1: **"I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, "Here I am, here I am," to a nation that was not called by my name."** I believe this verse stands alone and should not be included with vv. 2-7. This is a clear statement about the inclusion of the Gentiles. It is true that Israel often did not seek God and did not ask for Him. But, many times they did, and there was always a remnant of those with faith. And, Israel was always "called by the name of God." Also, when we come to Rom. 10:20 Paul quotes this very verse to show God's calling of the Gentiles. He says, **"Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, "I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me."** We must always remember that the NT makes the OT shadows and figures and pictures clear as regards their fulfillment.

As we've seen throughout Isaiah, especially after cp. 40, God's new creation will include the nations of the entire world. In Rev. 7:9 the Apostle John says, **"After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb . . ."** (Rev. 7:9). Though it should be abundantly clear from the OT, I am sure the majority of physical Israel did not grasp this truth. And in fact, the Apostle Paul says that the inclusion of the Gentiles has made them "jealous" (Rom. 11:11). God's message to the nations has always been, "Behold, me!" "Behold, me!" Here I am! Seek me and you will find!

It always amazes me that physical Israel would ever think that the new heavens and the new earth would only include a small people on the edge of Palestine! Sin has permeated the entire cosmos. For ALL are sons and daughters of Adam. **"For ALL have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"** (Rom. 3:23). And **"For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now . . ."** Brothers and sisters, as Gentiles (and Jews), we wait for the new heavens and the new earth. And, in Christ, we are included!

Application: Our seeking is always preceded by the sovereign revelation of God. We did not ask. We did not seek. In the end God allowed himself to be sought. In 1 John 4:19 we read: **“We love because he first loved us.”** John 15:16: **“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide”** (John 15:16). Eph. 2: 4-5: **“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved . . .”** What a beautiful truth that the grace of God in Christ has come to China Grove!

Application: It simply follows that we bring no merit or excellence to our salvation. (Eph. 2:8-9)

2. Rebellious Israel will not inhabit the new heavens and the new earth. Look at vv. 2-7: **“I spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices; a people who provoke me to my face continually, sacrificing in gardens and making offerings on bricks; who sit in tombs, and spend the night in secret places; who eat pig’s flesh, and broth of tainted meat is in their vessels; who say, “Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am too holy for you.” These are a smoke in my nostrils, a fire that burns all the day. Behold, it is written before me: “I will not keep silent, but I will repay; I will indeed repay into their lap both your iniquities and your fathers’ iniquities together, says the LORD; because they made offerings on the mountains and insulted me on the hills, I will measure into their lap payment for their former deeds.”**

Here, we see the picture of a holy God, looking down upon a people who have known his ways, who have been familiar with his commands, and those with whom God has entered a covenant. He is still faithful and his hands are open wide. Yet, they are “rebellious.” They “walk in ways that are not good.” They seek their “own devices.” By their rebellion, they “provoke” him. They sacrifice, not in the temple, but in gardens. They enter into sin in secret, thinking God does not see. They “eat pig’s flesh and broth of tainted meat.” This is simply a reference to doing that which is forbidden and unclean in Mosaic Law. And because of these things, the anger and wrath of God is a “fire that burns all the day.” And because of these things God will not “keep silent.” He will “repay.” And though it may seem they are getting away with their sins over a period of time, God will remember them all and judge accordingly. And these people will not inhabit the new heavens and the new earth.

In fact, notice in this passage what will happen (both in this life and the life to come). V. 11: **“But you who forsake the Lord, who forget my holy mountain, who set a table for Fortune and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny, I will destine you to the sword, and all of you shall bow down to the slaughter, because, when I called, you did not answer; when I spoke, you did not listen, but you did what was evil in my eyes.”**

A good definition of rebellion is seen in v. 2: **“who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices.”** The heart of disobedience is self, trying to do things without consulting God, trying to save ourselves without God, trying to live life in this world according to our own thoughts. Listen to a couple verses. Prov. 18:2: **“A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion.”** If we turn on the television and watch most of the talk shows, this is what we see. We all have our opinions. But, they must come from the God of truth! Prov. 3:5-6 says, **“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own**

understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.” Matt. 6:33 says, **“Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness . . .”** These are the things that mark the people of God’s new creation. A few applications:

Application: Notice the effects of disobedience in vv. 13-15: **“Therefore thus says the Lord God: Behold, my servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty; behold, my servants shall rejoice, but you shall be put to shame; behold, my servants shall sing for gladness of heart, but you shall cry out for pain of heart and shall wail for breaking of spirit. You shall leave your name to my chosen for a curse, and the Lord God will put you to death, but his servants he will call by another name, so that he who blesses himself in the land shall bless himself by the God of truth, and he who takes an oath in the land shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten and are hidden from my eyes.”**

Application: The Bible is our source of revelation. This means Scripture is sufficient. Often, I see our Christian culture take more of life’s cues from this world than from the Bible. And when we do this, we take our wisdom from the world and not God. The translation in v. 4 is a reference to secret vigils, seeking knowledge from the dead, where they seek visions and dreams. This particular sin “provokes God to his face.” Why? Because God is the One who reveals, not the dead, not false gods in secret gardens.

Application: It is nonsense to claim some sort of holiness while being disobedient to known commands of God. (hypocrite).

3. Obedient Israel will inhabit the new heavens and the new earth. Look at vv. 8-10: **“Thus says the Lord: As the new wine is found in the cluster, and they say, Do not destroy it, for there is a blessing in it, so I will do for my servants’ sake, and not destroy them all. I will bring forth offspring from Jacob, and from Judah possessors of my mountains; my chosen shall possess it, and my servants shall dwell there. Sharon shall become a pasture for flocks, and the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down.”** In this context, I believe we see clearly the “remnant” of God. Remnant means “a small remaining quantity of something,” or in this case, “someone.” We must not forget that Isaiah preached to a people (for the most part) who did not obey God, who did not seek after him. But he understood God’s faithfulness, God’s promise to bless the offspring of Abraham; even when they would be totally destroyed as a sovereign nation by the Babylonians. Isaiah often speaks about “roots” and “stumps” left in the land. They appear as nothing, but one day will be great again and even grow into a great kingdom, even the new heavens and the new earth.

Isaiah begins the book with this thought: **“If the LORD of hosts had not left us a few survivors, we should have been like Sodom, and become like Gomorrah”** (Is. 1:9). Isaiah 10:20-22: **“In that day the remnant of Israel and the survivors of the house of Jacob will no more lean on him who struck them, but will lean on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God. For though your people Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return. Destruction is decreed, overflowing with righteousness.”** Is. 28:5: **“In that day the LORD of hosts will be a crown of glory, and a diadem of beauty, to the remnant of his people . . .”** We see multiple fulfillments of this truth; first with Israel’s return from Babylon. We see this as God’s remnant of

people in the whole world come to Christ in these latter days. And we will see the ultimate fulfilment of this people in the new creation, the new heavens and the new earth.

In these verses, we see reformation and transformation realized in the new heavens and the new earth. Look at v. 10. **“Sharon shall become a pasture for flocks, and the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down.”** Both of these places, Sharon in the west, Achor in the east, were places of great beauty and prosperity. But, during Babylonian captivity, they will become desolate. But Isaiah is saying, “Don’t worry. God will transform and renew these places into something even greater.”

With these 3 truths in mind, what are some implications of “creating” a new people fit for the new heavens and the new earth?

The power of the new creation belongs to God. God is the one who creates. God is the one who works in power to make us fit. The same power that was used in the first creation is the same power that works in us. All glory belongs to Him! If anyone will be fit for heaven, it will be because God will do it. **“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them”** (Eph. 2:8-10). Phil. 2:13: **“For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.”**

This power is founded upon the person and work of Jesus Christ. In Isaiah, He is the Davidic King; He is the suffering servant. He is the anointed conqueror. Now, look at 2 Cor. 5:17: **“For if any man be in Christ, He is a NEW CREATION.”**

This power to create anew is confirmed in the resurrection of Christ! With this in mind, this is why Paul prays in Eph. 1: 19-23: that you might know **“the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.”** Through the power of the Holy Spirit, you are being fit for the new heavens and the new earth. You are already a new creation. Everything you need for life and godliness is already yours in Christ. But, one day, you will put off this earthly body and put on a new one where you will be with God forever.

We will enjoy the new heavens and the new earth as ONE BODY, both Jew and Gentile. **“For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility . . . that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross . . . For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father . . . In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”** (Eph. 2:14-22). Today, we, along with the Jews, make up the Church of Christ. We are a people God has created for himself. And together we will enjoy God forever in the new heavens and the new earth.