

Isaiah 65:17-25

“Extreme Makeover”

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Idea: Everything that has been broken by sin will be restored by Christ.

Intro: The passage starts with the proclamation, “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth.” IS uses the metaphor of recreation to relate the remarkable changes that God was going to bring about. We might think of it as a makeover. Popular to get a personal makeover and change improve your appearance. Or also popular, I have a brother in law who does home renovation and his company has been featured on TV program, extreme makeover. The cast selects a home of a needy recipient and in just one week, they renovate the home from top to bottom. It’s pretty incredible to see what they do. The show comes to a close when they reveal the new home to the owners. They are typically stunned, their breath taken away by their new home and in tears over the generosity shone.

In this passage, God promises to restore His church in such a manner – Idea above. The best way to describe it is that of re-creation, the making of the heavens and the earth new again. We’ll begin by thinking explaining the recreation, then examine four characteristics of the recreation.

First, God’s promised restoration was first spoken to the Jews going into captivity. The Jews surely looked on their return after captivity as such a renewal. Captive people just didn’t come back. They usually vanished in the pages of history. But God did bring the Jews back. Ps. 126 describes the joy of return as being so amazing that we were like those who were dreaming. It goes on to say that even the heathen nations agreed that the Lord has done great things for us!

IS describes the joy as being so great that the people would not remember the former things. They would not be troubled by the miseries they had gone through. Those memories would vanish as if they were a bad dream.

And yet, their return from captivity was only a first fulfillment. The Jews of the restoration would certainly have rejoiced at their return, but also been aware that there must be something more. They still longed for the Redeemer, and this is what God promises in the new heavens and new earth. He promises a spiritual renewal of such magnitude that it can only be described as a total makeover.

Thus a new heavens and a new earth point to a Church and a world renewed by Christ. It wasn’t limited just to the return of the Jews from captivity, which was amazing, but should be seen as pointing to the coming of Christ to redeem the Church and to judge

the world. As such, IS has in view not just Christ's first coming, but His second coming in glory, too.

Remember your joy at coming to Christ. Remember the first time you realized that God loved you and covered over your sins in Jesus? Remember how you thought that nothing would ever change, but then you heard the gospel, and it took your breath away. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." Something so breath-takingly good that it's like a dream! That's redemption in Jesus!

It may be that you have been raised in a Christian home, and yet you have surely been redeemed from the bondage of sin and death. Some of you have come to Christ later in life and out of a lifestyle of rebellion. You, too, have been reborn, remade from top to bottom. "Be glad and rejoice forever in what I create," says the Lord. At the same time, you, too, long for the consummation, for the time when you will be totally free from sin. That day is coming, too. That day is coming when Christ comes again in glory to bring all things to an end and to a beginning. At His second coming, Jesus will make all things new. At this time, creation still groans under the effects of sin. And while we are made new in justification, there is something more that we look forward to. We look forward to completing a race, to God finishing His work in us, making us free from sin once and for all. We look forward to glory.

IS goes on to prophetically speak of this newness. I've grouped this into four characteristics of the new heavens and new earth.

1. It is a totally new city and new people (18-19) Here, Jer is described as the city of rejoicing and a city made new. While IS has in view the rebuilding of Jer, once again, there is more. The literal city is one thing, but it also stands as a metaphor for the glorious consummation. Other prophets give dimensions of this new Jer and envision the temple rebuilt. NT describes it as having streets of gold and pearly gates. These don't point to a literal city, but to the beauty and perfection of what God establishes in eternity.

Here, God says that He is the creator of Jer, suggesting that He is the architect and builder of the New Jer so that what is built and those who live there are exactly what He designs. And not only that, He says that He will rejoice in Jer and joy in My people, suggesting that God Himself joins together in the joy of salvation. We are united together with God as He brings about this incredible story of love and redemption. And from the reality of our union with God in Christ, we then minister to the world around us, pointing to the newness that comes in Christ.

2. It is totally happy (19-20). “The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying. No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.” The point being that God will remove everything that causes sorrow and everything that blights life. IS expresses it in highly poetic language. Even if it were possible for death to enter, then if one died at 100 years old that one would still be considered a child. “This does not imply that death will still be present, but rather affirms that over the whole of life... the power of death will be destroyed.” M. Even in poetry, we can’t quite grasp the reality of this promise. It has to be phrased in terms of our experience and our experience is that everyone dies. We can’t even escape it in our imagination. So IS pictures it as being unthinkable that a child would die on the one hand, or that an elderly man or woman would fail to live out his days.

You should also know that IS has spiritual renewal in view, too. “But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.” When God gives the city a makeover He will have complete joy and delight in it and in her people. But there won’t be any sinners in the New Jer, as IS makes clear earlier in the chapter. But “once more metaphor is being used, as if to say that even if it were possible for sinner to go undetected for 100 years, that God’s holy justice would still seek it out and destroy it. “Thus verse 20 expresses a double thought: death will have no more power and sin no more presence.”

John picks this up in Rev 21:4, “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” God’s makeover is complete, wiping away sin and death and sorrow. And again, from the reality of our joy in Christ, we then minister to the world around us, pointing to the joy that comes in Christ.

3. It is totally secure (21-23) “They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, and my elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth children for trouble; for they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the Lord and their offspring with them.”

God uses the things of this world to communicate the security of our heavenly inheritance. In this world, as much as in IS’s day, we find it a tragedy to build up a home and a business and an inheritance, only to see it taken away. Imagine losing your home to creditors, losing your business to a competitor, losing your inheritance so that your children sink into dire need.

But God's inheritance cannot fade or be taken away. It is totally secure. IS uses this metaphor to help us grasp the greatness of God's salvation. His creation, or His recreation cannot be stolen away by thieves, and does not decay by rust or age. Those who belong to Him are like a tree planted by the waters. IS talks about vineyards which took years to establish and care for in order to come to their first crop, let alone any abundance. Buyt that communicates that the people are settled and secure. He talks about a tree for the same reason. You plant trees with the future generation in mind. So, too, IS says that their families will grow and be fruitful. They will bring forth children who are blessed by the Lord.

Take just this verse and think again of the sac of baptism. We bapt our children not bc we are good, and not bc our children are good, but bc God is good and bc He has promised to be our God and God to our children after us. And He has promised to see to it. We do not bring forth children for trouble! Instead, bc of God's promise, we bring forth children that are children of promise.

This also speaks about our spiritual condition now and in eternity. In the here and now, we can rest in the promise of God that He will indeed see to our redemption. When we respond in faith, God blesses us with growth in grace and joy. In addition, when we falter and fail, God promises that He will discipline us in love, but never destroy us. Why? Bc God has promised to bless us and keep us in His grace.

In eternity, this security will be complete. We will see our savior face to face and never again wander from Him. And what is in Jesus' hand, none can snatch away, now or ever. And from the reality of our security in Christ, we then minister to the world around us, pointing to the safety that comes in Christ.

4. It is totally at peace (24-25) "It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," says the Lord."

These two verses give the picture of unity. You might know how it is when you and your spouse are so in sync that you come to the same conclusions independently. Or you might finish one another's sentences, again bc of being so together. In this case, God says that the restoration that He brings to the Church is such that before we call Him, He answers. And while we are still speaking, he hears. He knows and anticipates our needs and acts to fulfill those needs and His purposes all at once. I chose the word peace to describe this, as M does. We who were once enemies with God are now at peace. But it might also be described as harmony. We are brought to live at peace with God in His

holy mountain, another metaphor describing our union with God. We are brought by Christ to live with God.

Vs. 25 describes the re-creation as a return to Eden where there is not only peace with God, but all of creation enjoys harmony. Harmony like we have never seen. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food." No longer will there be fear or hatred or bloodshed or destruction in all God's creation, bc the Lord God will bring peace to His church and to the entire universe.

Rev 21 describes this in vivid ways. The New Jer has no need of the sun or moon bc God dwells in the midst of her. God is the light and is in the midst of the city. How could this be? How could it be that sinner could ever dream about living eternally in God's presence in peace and harmony? Bc JC laid down His life for us.

This, too, has application in eternity and in the here and now. Eternity is easy. But do you realize that right now you have this self-same status? As a child of God you are at peace with Him. His love for you is so great that He says of you that He knows your needs even before you ask. He answers even before you speak.

Conc – The indicative is that Christ accomplishes an extreme makeover. Everything broken by sin will be made right by Christ. The imperative is to live this out by being Christ's ambassadors of peace in a dying and decaying world. He has given you hope and life and a purpose of extending His peace to those around you.