

I Make All Things New

God's promise to His people throughout the ages has been consistent: Whatever our current circumstances, we have something far better to look forward to.

“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind” (Isa. 65:17).

“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. . . . Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new’” (Rev. 21:5).



The common language in these two passages, despite being separated by eight centuries, has sparked considerable speculation. Are both passages referring to the same future state? If so, what is that state, and when will it be inaugurated? If not, how are they different? Consult the usual commentaries if you care to dig into those questions. For our purpose, I suggest that we take a simpler, more practical approach.

A clue to the unified message in these passages can be seen in the fact that both were written by prophets living in times of great distress for God's people. The Jews in Isaiah's day were facing annihilation at the hands of a powerful Assyrian army. The Christians to whom John wrote were suffering persecution from their enemies, both political (Rome) and religious (Jews). In both cases, God's promises seemed so remote, so weak, to people who were staring death in the face. Where was God in their struggles?

The message to both groups was the same: *A day is coming when God will make everything new.* He will create an entirely new environment, one devoid of all the pain and injustice and death that make this life so hard to bear. This will not be merely a fresh start in the same old material universe—which, like all the other fresh starts in history, will eventually grow old and fade away—but a new creation, one that is quite alien to the one we're living in now.

Whatever the details, the common message in both passages is one of *hope*. No matter how dark the night, or how heavy the burden, or how painful the journey may be now, we know we have something far better to look forward to. When that day comes—whatever form it takes and however He brings it to pass—it will far surpass anything we can hope for in our current circumstances. Isaiah says that in this new realm, the misery and the tears that we routinely experience now will “not be remembered or come to mind.” Imagine that—the very memory of the hardships we have experienced in this life will be washed away by the majestic glory that surrounds us in that new home!

If we really believe and embrace God's promise of a future realm of indescribable peace, it will be reflected in how we face the travails of this present life. We can go about our daily affairs with joy and gladness, because we know that someday God will set everything right again. Trapped in a defective body that no longer functions as it should? Oh well, in a little while you'll receive a perfect one! An economic collapse wipes out your life savings? You were going to leave it behind anyway, right? And besides, it cannot compare to the treasures that await you! Enemies malign and abuse you? There will be a higher tribunal before which all the injustices you suffer will be answered for. Whatever the hardships you may be dealing with now, cling to this promise: *God will make everything new!* Until then, you can handle this!

As we stand on the threshold of a new year, looking forward to another opportunity to turn over yet another “new leaf,” we should reflect more deeply on this glorious promise. The coming year will bring its own share of new disappointments and problems—nothing ever really changes in this life, does it? But our hearts long for that day when God will sweep away everything that is broken and make everything new again. In that hope alone, we will rejoice.

— David King