

A Future to Die For

Isaiah 65:17-25



Background: In our four-part series *Comfort O Comfort My People* we have gone through three steps: First, we received God’s word of comfort (Isa 40:1-11). On the second week, we drew near to God to lament and listen (Isa 49:1-6). Last week we caught a vision for the blessings we receive in doing acts of justice (Isa 58:1-14). To conclude our series, the prophet strengthens our hope and stirs our imagination for a future to die for — in the words of Paul, “an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison” (2 Cor 4:17). My hope is that when your children or friends ask you what heaven is like, you’ll be able to reframe their question and light their hearts on fire with a vision of a new earth, which is crammed with the life of heaven.

Sermon Text: Isaiah 65:17-25 (ESV)

¹⁷ *“For behold, I create new heavens
and a new earth,*

*and the former things shall not be remembered
or come into mind.*

¹⁸ *But be glad and rejoice forever
in that which I create;*

*for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy,
and her people to be a gladness.*

¹⁹ *I will rejoice in Jerusalem
and be glad in my people;*

*no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping
and the cry of distress.*

²⁰ *No more shall there be in it
an infant who lives but a few days,
or an old man who does not fill out his days,
for like a youth he shall die at a hundred,
and who falls short of a hundred shall be thought accursed*

²¹ *They shall build houses and inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.*

²² *They shall not build and another inhabit;
they shall not plant and another eat;*

*for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.*

²³ *They shall not labor in vain*

*or bear children for calamity,
for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the Lord,
and their descendants with them.
24 Before they call I will answer;
while they are yet speaking I will hear.
25 The wolf and the lamb shall graze together;
the lion shall eat straw like the ox,
and dust shall be the serpent's food.
They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain," says the Lord.*

Discussion Questions

1. Preparation

- a. As you reflect on the sermon, what stands out to you most?
- b. What is one thing you hoped to talk about today/tonight?
- c. What question(s) did you come away with from the sermon?

2. Sermon questions (pick 3)

- a. Intro: When someone mentions heaven, what is the first image that pops into your mind? Does this image bring hopefulness or boredom for you? Why or why not?
- b. Intro: Brian gave a way to interpret the prophets in his intro. They are pastoral, always have historical anchors and are filled with metaphors and hyperbole. The prophets stir the imagination. Do you tend to enjoy reading the prophets or not? Do you have a favorite one? Why or why not?
- c. Joy and satisfaction: Brian's first and third points spoke to the new creation being saturated with joy and satisfaction. These are also big themes in the teaching of Jesus. In fact, Jesus says that joy and satisfaction are found in him right now (ie. we can live the life of the new creation right now!). Do joy and satisfaction characterize your life right now? Why or why not?
- d. Intimacy: Brian's 5th point was that there will be an "intimate" connection with God in the new creation. How can you build intimacy into your relationship with God this week?
- e. Judy Halliday shared her hope in the midst of her pain. Where in your life do you have pain right now? Do you have hope in the midst of your pain? Why or why not?