



The New Heavens and New Earth

Both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible speak about a coming “new heavens and new earth”. Many assume that these references are speaking about a spiritual heaven and earth that will not exist until after the plan of salvation for mankind has been completed and there are no longer any physical human beings. However, several of the Biblical references to the “new heavens and new earth” clearly mention physical humans beings living physical lives. Notice the following examples:

Is 65:17-23

¹⁷ **“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. ¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy. ¹⁹ I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people; The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying. ²⁰ “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. 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 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. ²³ 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.****

Is 66:22-23

²² **“For as the new heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me,”** says the LORD, “So shall your descendants and your name remain. ²³ And it shall come to pass That from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another, **All flesh shall come to worship before Me,”** **says the LORD.**

Clearly these verses are describing a millennial setting with physical human beings living physical lives. This fact is made abundantly clear by the references to physical life spans, building houses, planting vineyards, and “all flesh shall come to worship before Me”. These references would never apply to a spiritual world where physical humans no longer exist.

The Timing of The New Heavens and New Earth

The key to understanding the timing of the “new heavens and new earth” is noticing the context that the “new heavens and new earth” are mentioned in. Notice the verses that immediately precede the quote from Isaiah 66:22-23 cited above.

Is 66:15-21

¹⁵ For behold, the LORD will come with fire And with His chariots, like a whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire. ¹⁶ For by fire and by His sword The LORD will judge all flesh; And the slain of the LORD shall be many. ¹⁷ “Those who sanctify themselves and purify themselves, To go to the gardens After an idol in the midst, Eating swine’s flesh and the abomination and the mouse, Shall be consumed together,” says the LORD. ¹⁸ “For I know their works and their thoughts. It shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory. ¹⁹ I will set a sign among them; and those among them who escape I will send to the nations: to Tarshish and Pul and Lud, who draw the bow, and Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles. ²⁰ Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the LORD out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem,” says the LORD, “as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD. ²¹ And I will also take some of them for priests and Levites,” says the LORD.

Notice that the context begins with speaking about the time when “by fire and by His sword The LORD will judge all flesh”. This is an obvious reference to the Day of the LORD. (For more information on the Day of the LORD please see the paper entitled “The Meaning Of The Feast Of Trumpets”.) The context then mentions the “priests and Levites” serving in the temple that will exist during the millennium (Ezekiel 40-46).

This same picture is portrayed by the Apostle Peter when he speaks about the “new heavens and new earth”. First, he speaks about the destruction of the earth that will be brought about by the Day of the LORD, and then he mentions that what follows after this is the “new heavens and new earth”.

2 Peter 3:10-13

¹⁰ **But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.**

¹¹ Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? ¹³ **Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.**

The Day of the LORD will result in a level of destruction of the earth that can be difficult for us to wrap our minds around. By the time the Day of the LORD ends the earth as we know it today will be almost completely destroyed. All of the water on the earth (both the fresh water and the salt water of the oceans) will have been turned into blood (Rev 16:3-7). In addition, the earth will be scorched with great heat (Rev 16:8-9) which will naturally result in massive fires. There will also be a global earthquake of such severity that it will flatten the mountains on the earth and drown the islands due to the massive tsunamis this earthquake will cause (Rev 16:17-21). The Prophet Jeremiah describes the earth at this time as resembling the desolate state it was in prior to recreation in Genesis 1:2.

Jer 4:23-26

²³ **I beheld the earth, and indeed it was without form, and void; And the heavens, they had no light.** ²⁴ I beheld the mountains, and indeed they trembled, And all the hills moved back and forth. ²⁵ I beheld, and indeed there was no man, And all the birds of the heavens had fled. ²⁶ I beheld, and indeed the fruitful land was a wilderness, **And all its cities were broken down At the presence of the LORD, By His fierce anger.**

However, the description the Bible gives of the earth during the millennial period that follows the Day of the LORD is one of a lush green earth that resembles the condition of the Garden of Eden.

Is 41:17-20

¹⁷ "The poor and needy seek water, but there is none, Their tongues fail for thirst. I, the LORD, will hear them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. ¹⁸ **I will open rivers in desolate heights, And fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, And the dry land springs of water.**

19 I will plant in the wilderness the cedar and the acacia tree, The myrtle and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the cypress tree and the pine And the box tree together, ²⁰ That they may see and know, And consider and understand together, That the hand of the LORD has done this, And the Holy One of Israel has created it.

Is 43:18-21

¹⁸ “Do not remember the former things, Nor consider the things of old. ¹⁹ **Behold, I will do a new thing,** Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? **I will even make a road in the wilderness And rivers in the desert.** ²⁰ The beast of the field will honor Me, The jackals and the ostriches, **Because I give waters in the wilderness And rivers in the desert, To give drink to My people, My chosen.** ²¹ This people I have formed for Myself; They shall declare My praise.

Is 51:3

³ For the LORD will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; **He will make her wilderness like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the LORD;** Joy and gladness will be found in it, Thanksgiving and the voice of melody.

Given the destroyed condition the earth will be in at the end of the Day of the LORD, God will obviously have to supernaturally intervene to restore the earth to a condition that can sustain human life. As the verses quoted above demonstrate, He will do more than just restore the earth to a condition that can sustain human life. He will transform the earth into a better state than it was in prior to the Day of the LORD. This is why Isaiah 43:19 states “Behold, I do a new thing”. This transformation of the earth into a utopian Garden of Eden like state is what the Bible is referring to when it speaks about a “new heavens and new earth”.

The Prophet Ezekiel describes exactly how this transformation of the earth will take place.

Ezek 47:1-12

¹ Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar. ² He brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gateway that faces east; and there was water, running out on the right side. ³ And when the man went out to the east with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the water came up to my ankles. ⁴ Again he measured one thousand

and brought me through the waters; the water came up to my knees. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water came up to my waist. ⁵ Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed. ⁶ He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this?" Then he brought me and returned me to the bank of the river. ⁷ When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, were very many trees on one side and the other. ⁸ Then he said to me: **"This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed. ⁹ And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes. ¹⁰ It shall be that fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be places for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many. ¹¹ But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt. ¹² Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine."**

What About Revelation 21?

As we have seen so far in this paper, the Biblical references to the "new heavens and new earth" in Isaiah 65 & 66 as well as 2 Peter 3 are obviously speaking about the replenished earth that will exist during the millennium. However, the reference to a "new heaven and new earth" in Revelation 21 is often assumed to be speaking about a spiritual heaven and earth at a time when physical humans no longer exist. This assumption is due to the wording in verse 1 and verse 4.

Rev 21:1-4

¹ Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. **Also there was no more sea.** ² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, **"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men,** and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ **And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."**

The statement in verse 1 that “there was no more sea” is often assumed to be a reference to no more bodies of water. In addition, the statement in verse 4 that “there shall be no more death” is often assumed to mean that physical human beings could not possibly still be in existence at the time that is being described in these verses.

However, we also have to consider the statement in verse 3 that “the tabernacle of God is with men”. The Greek word translated as “men” in this verse is “anthropos”. The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament by Spiros Zodhiates defines this word as:

Anthropos (Strong’s # 444) – “Man, a generic name in distinction from gods and the animals. In the NT, used to make the distinction between sinful man, whose conduct, way, or nature is opposed to God...A man or woman, an individual of the human race, a person....Spoken in reference to his human nature, a man, i.e., a human being, a mortal. Here is included the idea of human infirmity and imperfection, especially when spoken in contrast to God and divine things. (emphasis added)

This indicates that John is speaking about physical humans still being in existence at this time. We also have to consider that in verses 6-8 John speaks about humans that overcome being rewarded with eternal life and those that continue in a life of sin being thrown in the lake of fire. If physical humans no longer exist at this point these statements would be irrelevant.

Rev 21:6-8

⁶ And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

⁷ **He who overcomes shall inherit all things**, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. ⁸ **But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.**”

No More Sea

As previously mentioned, the statement that “there was no more sea” in Revelation 21:1 is often interpreted to mean that John is saying there are no more bodies of water. However, the book of Revelation is filled with symbolic descriptions that are not intended to be taken literally. So, we also need to consider the possibility that John was speaking symbolically when he stated “there was no more sea” and he was not referring to bodies of water. The Bible repeatedly uses the term “sea” symbolically when speaking about Satan and those under his influence. Satan is symbolically

pictured in the Bible as a sea creature named Leviathan and the Beast power that he leads is symbolically pictured as creatures rising up out of the “sea”. Consider the following examples:

Job 41:1-8

¹ **“Can you draw out Leviathan with a hook, Or snare his tongue with a line which you lower? ² Can you put a reed through his nose, Or pierce his jaw with a hook?** ³ Will he make many supplications to you? Will he speak softly to you? ⁴ Will he make a covenant with you? Will you take him as a servant forever? ⁵ Will you play with him as with a bird, Or will you leash him for your maidens? ⁶ Will your companions make a banquet of him? Will they apportion him among the merchants? ⁷ **Can you fill his skin with harpoons, Or his head with fishing spears?** ⁸ Lay your hand on him; Remember the battle— Never do it again!

Ps 74:12-14

¹² For God is my King from of old, Working salvation in the midst of the earth. ¹³ You divided the sea by Your strength; **You broke the heads of the sea serpents in the waters.** ¹⁴ **You broke the heads of Leviathan in pieces,** And gave him as food to the people inhabiting the wilderness.

Ps 104:24-26

²⁴ O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. The earth is full of Your possessions— ²⁵ **This great and wide sea,** In which are innumerable teeming things, Living things both small and great. ²⁶ There the ships sail about; **There is that Leviathan Which You have made to play there.**

Is 27:1

¹ In that day the LORD with His severe sword, great and strong, Will punish **Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan that twisted serpent; And He will slay the reptile that is in the sea.**

Dan. 7:1-4

¹ In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts. ² Daniel spoke, saying, **“I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. ³ And four great beasts came up from the sea,** each different from the other. ⁴ The first was like

a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

Rev 13:1

¹ Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.

When we consider these scriptures, we can see that when John stated "there was no more sea" he was not saying there will be no bodies of water. He was referring to the fact that Satan will be bound during the millennium when God creates the "new heaven and new earth" and mankind will not be subjected to Satan's influence at that time (Rev 20:1-3).

No More Death

So now we just need to address John's statement about "no more death" in Revelation 21:4. As we have already seen, if we assume that John is stating that physical humans no longer exist then we have a direct contradiction with his statement in verse 3 that "the tabernacle of God is with men". In addition, verses 7-8 speak about the rebellious humans that will be cast into the lake of fire because of their rebellion against God. Verse 8 also describes the lake of fire as "the second death". So, obviously physical humans will still be in existence at this time and the concept of death will not be totally erased. So, how are we to understand John's statement that there will be "no more death"? The key to understanding this statement is comparing Revelation 21:1-4 to Isaiah 65:17-20.

Rev 21:1-4

¹ Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ **And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.**"

Is 65:17-20

¹⁷ **“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. ¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy. ¹⁹ I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people; The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying. ²⁰ “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.**

Notice that both accounts start by mentioning “new heaven and new earth”. Both also then go on to mention the absence of crying and sorrow. However, Isaiah 65:20 mentions very long life spans being the norm during the millennium. The quote above is from the New King James Version of the Bible. This verse is translated more clearly in the New Living Translation.

Is 65:20 -- NLT

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!**

We can see from Isaiah 65:20 that during the millennium extremely long life spans will be the norm. Only those that are overtly rebellious to God will die young. When compared to human history prior to the millennium one could generally describe this time period with the statement “no more death” because death as we understand it today will not be the norm.

Once we properly understand the meaning of the statements “nor more sea” and “no more death” in Revelation 21:1-4, we can see that the reference to a “new heaven and new earth” in Revelation 21 is describing the same time frame that is spoken of in Isaiah 65 & 66 and 2 Peter 3. The “new heavens and new earth” refers to the replenished utopian earth that will exist during the millennium.