

New Heavens & New Earth

Isaiah 65

Welcome to New Hope, in-person, and online where **last Sunday: 787 locations streamed live 20 min.+**

*Our tech teams says **25% join us from outside the state of MI.** We thank God for each of you!

*We rejoice that God is using the ministry of New Hope to spread the gospel of Jesus, locally & globally.

***Last year \$702,000 flowed through NH for the cause of missions. Places like S.E. Asia:**

*"Our overwhelming gratitude to our family at New Hope overflows in prayers of thanksgiving ...Your prayer, love and fervor to see the gospel of Jesus **reach every corner of this world** is truly humbling. Within an often complex and crumbling time for the body of Christ, **New Hope is a beacon of light that helps us to stealthily maneuver down to the frontline of warfare**, where we are not only prepared to stand but to take ground from the enemy...On behalf of our indigenous team we pray blessings over you all as we fight shoulder to shoulder.*

(Dave, SE Asia, Big Life)

***This is our 47th sermon in Isaiah**, a man who lived in troubled political times, but the thing that held his faith firm was his belief in **God's Unfolding Plan** that ultimately leads us to **"The Coming Kingdom."**

***So far we, we have looked at "the Heart" of the Coming Kingdom – 4 key 'chambers':**

- *The Judgment of His Enemies (Is. 24)*
- *The Death of Death (Is. 25)*
- *The Resurrection of the Dead (Is. 26)*
- *The Defeat of Satan (Is. 27)*

*Two more sermons in this theme: (Next week) **Final Judgment.** (Today) **New Heavens/New Earth.**

***Today, we turn to Is. 65, which paints a gorgeous picture of Earth under the rule of Jesus as King.**

*When **Christ is inaugurated, Earth will flourish with joy** and the **Capital will be free of trouble**

*It is a **Coming Kingdom** promised by Isaiah, Peter, Revelation, and Jesus...But, it starts here:

1. God is eager to be found, (v.1-7)

- *He is ready. (v.1-2)*
- *We are rebels. (v.3-7)*

***Summary:** v.1-7 pictures God as **Father who longs for us to seek Him**, but we run like **prodigals**

- **He is ready. (v.1-2)**
"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. 2 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"

***This is quoted in Romans by Paul** who promised salvation to “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord” but then marveled that his culture was still running away, quoting Isaiah:

“Then Isaiah is so bold as to say...[Is. 65:1]...But of Israel he says...[Is. 65:2]” (Rom 10)

*IOW: The great news is that **God, the Father is READY to be found!** He still spreads His arms out, READY to receive prodigals.

***He wants rebels. Teens. Addicts. Dems/Rep. He wants Trump & Biden. He wants Pelosi and McConnell. He wants you!**

“God persistently stands in front of individuals from every nation on earth and says, ‘Behold me! I am ready to save you! All you have to do is seek me!’”

(Commentary, Exalting Jesus in Isaiah)

- **We are rebels. (v.3-7)**

*“3 a people who **provoke me** to my face continually...and **spend the night in secret places...5** who say, ‘**Keep to yourself, do not come near me...**’ These are a smoke in my nostrils, a fire that burns all the day. 6 Behold...‘I will not keep silent, but **I will repay...because** they made offerings on the mountains and **insulted me** on the hills...”* (v.3-7, excerpts)

*IOW: The very people God is READY to **receive** are **REBELS** who **run the other way..**

***They provoke God; insult God; defy God,** even say: ‘Don’t come near me.’

*Before we **look down our nose** at others who do this, haven’t we all done this?

***How marvelous to read this and recognize: I’ve provoked God; insulted & defied; and desperately need a Savior!**

***Hear: Jesus did not come to make BAD PEOPLE, GOOD, but to make DEAD SINNERS, ALIVE.”**

2. ...and saves those who seek Him, (v.8-16)

- *Some will.* (v.8-10)
- *Others ‘roll the dice.’* (v.11-12)
- *The final outcome.* (v.13-16)

***Summary:** People respond **2 different ways** to the Father...**some run to him and are saved ...others roll the dice and take their chances...**and both decisions have a final outcome.

- **Some will. (v.8-10)**

*8 “But I will not destroy them all,” says the Lord. “For just as **good grapes** are found among a cluster of **bad ones** (and someone will say, ‘Don’t throw them all away—**some of those grapes are good!**’), so I will not destroy all Israel. For I still have **true servants** there. 9 I will **preserve a remnant** of the people of Israel and of Judah to possess my land. Those I choose will inherit it, and **my servants will live there.**”* (v.8-9, NLT)

*We may say someone is a “**good egg.**” Here, God says some are “**good grapes.**”

***Like Wineries in N. MI** preserve good grapes at harvest, God will preserve His people.

*God is giving assurance that **even in the midst of all the BAD RAISINS in culture**, He will preserve **GOOD GRAPES (“true servants”)** who will inherit salvation.

*Side Note: Whenever you travel, make it a **top priority** to connect w/ true servants in the household of God...**reminding us that God has servants in all communities.**

*The **Second Metaphor is strange, but powerful.**

10 Sharon shall become a pasture for flocks, and the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down, for my people who have sought me.”

*Huh? Any **Sharon’s here?** What is this ‘useless’ verse about?

*God uses **2 geographic regions** to describe the work He will do in His people. **Two possibilities:**

- **His work would be Nation-Sweeping.**

***Sharon** was on the **west**; **Achor** on the **east**. God could be using geographic boundaries to describe that His work would sweep across the entire land (like **“L.A. to Boston”**).

- **His work would be Life-Transforming.**

***Sharon** = a region with *“an extensive area of sand dunes.”* (JSTOR, Roller)

***Think: Sleeping Bear Dunes.**

***Achor** = a region **widely known as a national symbol** of defeat, death, and disaster.

***Think: Ground Zero**, or any number of map locations associated with disaster.

*So, if God were writing us, let’s rephrase it to show how it would resonate:

*“**Sleeping Bear Dunes** will become lush farmland full of cherry trees...**and Ground Zero** will be built into a tower of worship where the church celebrates.”*

*Take comfort, God promises even in **corrupt cultures**, He will **preserve a faithful remnant.**

My thoughts: “What is coming for the American Remnant?”

- Continued **cultural shift** away from Biblical ethics.
- Increased **political restrictions** against the church.
- Continued **national downfall** due to defiance.
- Increased **spiritual need** for repentance & revival.
- The Best Days of the Church are yet to come!

*God’s plan is unfolding in history...and part of that plan is His preservation of His people.

- **Others ‘roll the dice.’ (v.11-12)**

*“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**, 12 I will **destine you to the sword...because**, when I called, **you did not answer**; when I spoke, **you did not listen...**”*

*These are **bad grapes**: people who rebel against the Lord. Instead of running to the Lord, they roll the dice with **Fortune & Destiny, Fate & Luck**. They play **Russian Roulette** with eternity.

*One **NH woman** was talking to **her aging father** about the Lord and he replied he **“doesn’t think there is anything after you leave the earth.”**

*Perhaps that describes some of you...here or online...and you are joining us today because some family member is making you listen.

*Let me encourage you: **Instead of rolling the dice with Fate & Destiny**, you can live with **Faith & Certainty** in the person & work of Jesus, who came to take away sin.

*His **arms are open**...inviting you to surrender to Him as Lord.

*He is **calling**...and wants you to answer. He is **speaking**...and wants you to listen.

- **The Final Outcome. (v.13-16)**

*“13 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; 14 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.*

*These are the **two outcomes**, depending on how people respond to the Lord.

*Outcome for **“my servants”** = *eating, drinking, rejoicing, sing for gladness (Heaven)*

*Outcome for **Others** = *hunger, thirst, shame, cry out in pain” (Hell)*

***Some people “don’t want to think about” Heaven/Hell.** One TC man didn’t...for 75 years!

“David” had a bad experience with believers and for 75 years “rolled the dice.” His son writes:

*“My father was **a kind, loving generous man, but also stubborn**. When he was a young boy his friends invited him to a bible camp. They told him it would be fun...As soon as he got to the camp some of the kids drew a line in the sand and told him to step over and accept Jesus or he was going to Hell. He did not step over the line; instead he walked several miles home. He was 12 years old. It left such **bitterness in his heart** that whenever anyone tried to tell him about Jesus he would say, **“I don’t want to talk about it.”** Through his lifetime there were several Christian people that planted seeds...He still **did not want to talk about it**. At 86 years of age, in poor health and with dementia, my sister stopped by to visit him. She noticed on this day his mind and conversation was amazingly clear. She said **“Dad I would like to talk to you about Jesus”**. His response was **“I have been thinking a lot about Jesus.”** From there she was able to talk with him and pray with him to trust in Jesus Christ for his salvation. He died 6 months later and we were able to rejoice in knowing he was in Heaven.”*

*Listen, even if you’ve been **turned off** by “crazy believers” or **shut down** by “bad churches,” maybe it’s time to **think about Jesus**; and **stop rolling the dice with eternity**.

- 3. **...promising a New Creation. (v.17-25)**

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

*This verse, quoted in **2 Pet. 3:13 & Rev. 21:1**, pictures a day God rules over creation, the earth flourishes under the kingship of Jesus, and all creation is **made NEW!**

*IOW: **“The Best is Yet to Come!”** Creation itself will flourish as it was once intended.

***Summary: The Lord lifts the veil to give a glimpse of Earth flourishing, under the rule of Christ**

- *Trouble, Forgotten* (v.17)
- *Sorrow, Eliminated* (v.18-19)
- *Death, Conquered* (v.20)
- *Frustration, Removed* (v.21-24)
- *Curse, Lifted* (v.25)

- **Trouble, Forgotten** (v.17)

“...and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.” (v.17)

***Glorified Dementia! Holy Alzheimer’s.** God helps us forget **painful memories.**

*The wonders of New Creation will be so glorious that the **pain, anger, stress, fear, anxiety, and every other “former thing”** will not be remembered. Forgotten.

- **Sorrow, Eliminated** (v.18-19)

*“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.”*

*Imagine the **CAPITAL CITY of the world** being a place of celebration, joy & gladness!

***More than 1 NH woman went to bed “Angry” or “Fearful” this week...**only to remember that: **God’s Got this!** He has a plan, unfolding in history.

- **Death, Conquered** (v.20)

*“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 the young man shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.”*

*Isaiah, who previously described **“the death of death”** now promises **extraordinary long life.**

***90 will be the new 20.** People once thought of as “old” will be **young “whipper snappers.”**

***Art Jepson (92) or Mark Polzin (91)** will be **spring chickens**, spry as young calves.

***My mom (turns 70 next month)** will run marathons with the best of them.

*Babies will **no longer struggle to survive in NICU, or die of premature causes.**

*One **N.H. family** gave birth in August to Boaz, **“incompatible with life.”** His dad, **Ron, writes:**

*“No more shall an infant live but a few days.’ This was, of course, **our greatest fear** in regards to Boaz: that his **LIFE** would be cut short. His **Trisomy 18** diagnosis carries with it a medically grim*

outlook. **'Incompatible with LIFE'** is the phrase commonly used. What if he only lives a few hours? A few days? One year? We didn't even know if he would make it to birth!

Life is God's greatest gift to us. We cherish LIFE. So much that people FEAR DEATH...Every day we have with Boaz is a precious gift from God...His LIFE is valuable - valuable enough for us to turn our lives upside down...and valuable enough for **our Savior to lay down His own LIFE**...And isn't that one of the great hopes that we cling to? **The hope of LIFE ETERNAL!** With all of the wonders that Heaven promises (**health, beauty, reunions, the best cookies you've ever had...**), isn't it the "foreverness" of LIFE with Jesus that really sticks?"

- **Frustration, Removed (v.21-24)**

*"21 They shall **build houses** and **inhabit** them; they shall **plant vineyards** and **eat**...22 They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for...**my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands**. 23 They shall **not labor in vain** or **bear doomed to misfortune**, for they shall be the **offspring of the blessed** of the Lord..."*

*Everything we have **tasted on earth** has been **flavored by the curse**.

***Work** has been frustrated by **rotten employees, bad ventures, and "Karens"**

*Family has been **cursed by conflict, pain, and raising children who end up in distress**.

*Employees, imagine a day when we **"long enjoy the work of our hands."**

*Parents, imagine a day when our kids are considered **"offspring blessed by the Lord."**

- **Curse, Lifted (v.25)**

*"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."*

*It's a picture of **"Global Shalom."** Serpent is defeated. Hostility is gone. The curse lifted. The Lord himself is inaugurated as King of Earth, and all Creation rejoices.

Action Steps:

- **Repent of insulting the Lord** – we've all done it!
- **Run to the Father** – He is ready!
- **Don't roll the dice with eternity** – It is long!
- **Increase priority to "the remnant"** – She will prosper!
- **Holy Lives, Hopeful Hearts** – Jesus is coming!

*Peter, who walked with Jesus, saw the crucifixion, witnessed the resurrection, gives us action:

*"11 Since everything will be destroyed in this way, **what kind of people ought you to be?** You ought to **live holy and godly lives** 12 as you **look forward to the day of God** and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. 13 But in keeping with his promise we are **looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth**, the home of righteousness."*

(2 Peter 3:11-13, NIV)