

## NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH

Isaiah 65: 17-25

Saturday, March 10, 2018, 22nd Day of Lent

This passage has some very familiar and comforting language: “a new Heaven and a new Earth”: “the wolf and the lamb feeding together.” When I first read this, I was in my analytical “Bible Study” mode, and I couldn’t help but wonder if God, as quoted by Isaiah, is referring to a new terrestrial arrangement for the chosen ones or an ultimate heavenly Utopian realm as John outlined in his great Revelation. (John was obviously familiar with this scripture.)

I decided to set aside my amateurish Biblical scholarship for the moment and ask myself, “What can you glean from this scripture that will be meaningful in your life right now?” I confess that I “cheated” a little and read the beginning of Chapter 65. It is full of judgment and dire warnings. No optimism, no inspiring promises, no hope for a better future. But in verse 16 the mood begins to shift, and beginning with verse 17, things really look up.

I need to hear this often. Not everything in my life goes well all the time; my words and deeds are not always what they should be; I am not as faithful to the kingdom of God as I could be. As the apostle Paul said, I have “sinned and come short of the glory of God.” But I see here in Isaiah’s words the ultimate goodness of God – a “New Heaven and a New Earth”, not dependent on my works or my goodness, but built by the power and love of our divine creator.

This seems to me a foreshadowing of the incarnation and the ultimate healing of creation through the work of Jesus, our brother and redeemer. As I reflect on my own shortcomings in this Lenten season, it is very important that I be assured our creator and sustainer has very big plans for the ones who were lovingly created in God’s own image – that God’s loving care is with us now and will be manifested even more later on.

**Prayer:** Loving God, help us in our weakness as we struggle with our personal problems and the world’s distractions. Strengthen us through your Holy Spirit that we may be sustained and enabled to be your ministers as we await the fullness of your creation. Amen.

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