

# The New Heavens and the New Earth

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I want to talk about something, the new heavens and the new earth, which has quite frankly impacted the way we keep the holy days, so I want to walk through a few elements of the holy days today, but my focus will be on the new heavens and the new earth, and their implications—what we should know, at least in the most basic sense. Now when you get to the new heavens and the new earth, there are other subjects that are right there, next to them, that are tied in to these events—something else is happening at the same time—but to focus I need to walk through this and plough one furrow, so to speak, and then another day, at another time, some of the other issues can be addressed. So understand that when I start this subject I'm going to ignore certain things, because I can't afford to be totally tied up, in that respect.

The purpose of studying scripture is to be able to understand the meaning and application of the text. It is to better understand God's purpose and His will, and then as we understand, we order our lives accordingly. This is then a process, for each of us, of change, from what we were to where we need to be, and it has been a process of steps, in that sense, along the way. The purpose of studying scripture is not to shore up your long-held customs and traditions, to go in the Bible and say, well, I know what the answer is, and I need to find verses that support my answer. If you're studying the Bible to reinforce what you already believe, then all you're doing is preparing to win the next argument—I want to be able to answer that question, and I want to be able to defend my position—that isn't quite the same as wanting to know God's purpose and will. When being right is more important than doing right, then winning the next argument is the most important thing. Brethren, we're not here to win the next argument, we are here to do the right thing. As I've said before, the more corporate a church becomes, the less ecclesiastical it's going to be. That position just simply takes and replaces what God intended.

When my wife and I worked in Pasadena, at what we then called "headquarters" (and I'll just say headquarters was not exactly user-friendly, it just wasn't; it was a corporate headquarters of very, very high focus), I was the fleet manager of the church's car fleet. I had a budget, two to three million dollars at the time, buying and selling cars and supplying for the ministry the vehicles that were used by the various departments there in Pasadena. At one point I actually got fired and then disfellowshipped for offering to clean up one of the staff vehicles. Now, I'm telling you, you want to know how authority came to be on the throne, it was. An individual had simply said, Mark, we've got a problem, maybe you want to look at this, and he led me out, showed me a car (it was a staff vehicle, there was a little bit of clutter) and I just simply said, look, everybody's busy, we have a department that will take care of this, we can set it up; the car can go in every week if need be, we'll get it cleaned up, and I don't see a problem. (I didn't even go looking for the problem.) Well, again, as those things go, eventually I was yelled at

by the presiding evangelist of that moment, cursed, in front of witnesses, and threatened with physical violence. All I would have had to do was stand up; we'd have had a fisticuff right there in the room, and I was being challenged to "just try it". I was thinking, I could do that. Then I thought, I don't think I want to do that—this is not the time; let's not go there. But I mean, I was literally looking into a car, as manager of the fleet, to see if it was clean, and I ended up not only getting fired but getting disfellowshipped. So the correction I received was almost amazing in scale regardless of what the perception might have been.

What's obvious to me now, and I didn't really see it then, before I ever walked in the door to the Church of God, is that the love of the truth was already fading, and the love of power and control was taking its place. Honestly, looking back, I believe the Church of God has been in decline for as long as I have been in it; it was in decline when I walked in the door. I didn't recognize what the issues were; I have come to see, though, that the love of the truth began to be replaced by the love of power and control—winning the argument, being in charge, doing what you're told.

I just want to reference the book of Isaiah, chapter 30; God speaking here through Isaiah, to Jerusalem—Judah, God's people—in a specific reference, including, at times, the future, because Israel always disobeyed God, and Judah was like her, and she always disobeyed God as well. The Church of God has gone the same way. It's amazing to me to think in terms of how important it became in the Church of God to be in charge, to have power and control, and to tell somebody else what to do, as compared to looking to the Bible to understand His purpose and will, and then order your life accordingly. In Isaiah 30, verse 8, I just want to read here a passage where Isaiah was given instructions to go to a rebellious people.

**Isaiah 30:8** *Now go, write it before them on a tablet, and note it on a scroll,  
That it may be for time to come,*

So the warning was also for those who would read it later, not just the people who would receive it then. This is a warning, a warning to God's people to not go this way.

8 continued) *That it may be for time to come, forever and ever:*

9) *That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children who will not hear the law of the LORD;*

10) *Who say to the seers, "Do not see," and to the prophets, "Do not prophesy to us right things; speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits.*

11) *Get out of the way, turn aside from the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us."* (NKJV)

Can you imagine? Why is there no affection, true affection for God the Father? Why isn't that the natural course? Instead of denying God the Father, we should actually seek to embrace Him and His ways, and His instructions. But it says, *cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us*—anyone but God; you can worship anything you want, just not God. Well, isn't that amazing; it carries on down to our day, I believe.

Jeremiah 5, a passage that so many times I've gone to and it's so dramatically written, and yet so specific. I want to go back a little further and start in verse 20, and then finish through to the end of this chapter. It says,

**Jeremiah 5:20** *"Declare this in the house of Jacob and proclaim it in Judah, saying,*

*21) 'Hear this now, O foolish people, without understanding, who have eyes and see not, and who have ears and hear not:*

This is no different than the warning in the book of Revelation to the churches; it's the same language.

*22) Do you not fear Me?' says the LORD. 'Will you not tremble at My presence, Who have placed the sand as the bound of the sea, by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass beyond it? And though its waves toss to and fro, yet they cannot prevail; though they roar, yet they cannot pass over it.*

*23) But this people has a defiant and rebellious heart; they have revolted and departed.*

*24) They do not say in their heart, "Let us now fear the LORD our God, Who gives rain, both the former and the latter, in its season. He reserves for us the appointed weeks of the harvest."*

*25) Your iniquities have turned these things away, and your sins have withheld good from you.*

Now you think about this. You go and you live and you work at the headquarters of the Church of God, as we understood it, at least in our day, and one of the leading individuals in the Church, one of the evangelists who has some of the most recognition and authority in the entire organization, yells at you, curses you, and threatens and challenges you to a fist-fight, in his office, in front of witnesses, and nobody says a word. There was no defense that could be made against the abuse.

*26) 'For among My people are found wicked men; they lie in wait as one who sets snares; they set a trap; they catch men.*

*27) As a cage is full of birds, so their houses are full of deceit. Therefore they have become great and grown rich.*

*28) They have grown fat, they are sleek; yes, they surpass the deeds of the wicked; They do not plead the cause, the cause of the fatherless; yet they prosper, and the right of the needy they do not defend.*

*29) Shall I not punish them for these things?' says the LORD. 'Shall I not avenge Myself on such a nation as this?'*

And then it goes on to verse 30 which is, again, so amazingly written:

*30) "An astonishing and horrible thing has been committed in the land:*

*31) The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their own power; and My people love to have it so.*

*My people love to have it so—they love it.*

31 continued) *But what will you do in the end?* (NKJV)

The time comes when all of this comes to an accounting, all of this requires an answer, and all the fruit of it has to be realized.

I used to believe that what we taught was very much the same as what the apostles had taught—I identified with the apostolic Church and the record of scripture, and I believed that we were teaching what they had taught. Then frankly, over time, I came to see that that wasn't actually true, in fact, I began to see that much of what we were teaching was actually what had been taught by others outside of the Church of God, before our time. I simply hadn't seen the record; where had it come from? As I began to study scripture and began to clarify, in terms of, it now matches, instead of, parts of it have to be simply explained away, I began to go back and look for some of the places where some of this might have come from, and the honest answer is, it wasn't always a pretty picture.

God doesn't make mistakes. Truth doesn't change. So when you have to change something that was the truth, that means we really didn't have the truth after all, we just simply hadn't understood.

The Book of Mormon was written in 1830. That is where the idea of Jesus Christ being the God of the Old Testament, I believe, came from in this day. You can see threads of it back in the time of the early church fathers, after the time of the apostles, but, specifically and directly, it came out of Mormon doctrine. Pointing out that it was Moroni who explained that doctrine to Joseph Smith cost me my job—that was the moment that cost me my job this time in the Church, compared to what cost me my job the other time. I don't know why that is—I seem to have a hard time hanging on to a job, but here I am, a volunteer now. So pointing that out cost me my job—forty year's worth of service, and out the door.

I didn't need to bring The Book of Mormon because I don't need to do that, but here's one I brought with me, The Missing Links. I picked this up in a bookstore, maybe twenty to thirty years ago, and I thought it was interesting. It is written by Morton Spencer, in 1901, and is effectively The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy of its day. Excuse me, but 1901 is long before anyone wrote about such a subject in the organization that we have come through; this is material that was in place very heavily and openly before this time. Yet, it's good material; it's a two-volume set, and I've read through it, but it was from 1901. So the US and BC in Prophecy wasn't something that just came down from heaven on a dove; the fact is, there were people who knew these things and understood them long before our time, and openly taught them so. You open this book, and it says, Israel is scattered, lost, to be restored; the Hebrews in Britain; the royal house of Britain; Caucasian Israel; I mean, it's exactly what we studied and taught, but it's not new to us. It was there, very solidly there, long before our time.

That doesn't make it bad, but it doesn't make it good; it just makes it where you have to recognize these ideas didn't just start from nothing at a particular point in time, they were there, in many cases, like this one—more familiar to some—Judah's Scepter and Joseph's Birthright, J. H. Allen, from 1902. That's a bit later than the other book but it's still before our time, in the sense of our era of the Church. J. H. Allen was a Methodist minister, Morton Spencer was a Baptist minister, Moroni was a demon, but, let's just say, I chose sources that were not Church of God, historically. The Companion Bible was put together by E. W. Bullinger, who was an Anglican minister. I didn't bring it because it's rather big and I didn't want to haul it in here with me, but he has, at the back of his Bible (written in 1910), 198 appendices; he has at the end of his reference, "The Eternal Purpose"; he has, in his notes, what we would call, from the Church of God perspective, "the plan of God". I look at what E. W. Bullinger wrote, published in 1910, and there is an amazing amount of duplication that has taken place, from long before. Again, some of this stuff did not come down from heaven on a dove, and then it was revealed, and then all of a sudden we have the truth; this just simply isn't the record of scripture.

I do appreciate the research of Allen and Spencer; they've done some excellent work, a lot of history, and they also go into prophecy, but I appreciate their research, it's worth my time. I appreciate what Bullinger did, as well, in terms of his research; he had some very good material on "three days and three nights" and other things that he had researched, but that doesn't mean that I agree with all that they taught or I agree that it's true. The reason I'm bringing this out (The Companion Bible), Appendix 198, I want to read to you what E. W. Bullinger said was the eternal purpose. Now, he goes all the way back to the Creation, all the way down to what he considers the end of the record of prophecy; I'm just going to read you, basically, from the time of Christ's return, the points that are on his sheet, and I want you to just recognize what he's written.

It starts out with the Second Advent, which would be the Second Coming of Jesus Christ—the First Resurrection, then the Kingdom, is established. Alright, that's pretty close, we're getting there; some of these things are not in perfect order of what we have, but pretty close. Then it says, "The Chosen Nation Recalled and Blessed". Now, I'm going to mention today the fact that you're going to see prophecy that indicates the beginning of the restoration of the nation of Israel in the land, and that's "prepare the way of the LORD"—the highway, so that people can come to Jerusalem to worship during the Millennium. Bullinger recognized that there was a set of scriptures showing that Israel would be brought back to the land and restored to their possession, then mankind dealt with, as a whole, and then Satan bound, and the consequences, and then it says, "The Earth Restored and Blessed"—the Millennium, then Satan's final rebellion, etc.

Okay, so we're just walking right down the steps, so to speak. This is exactly, with a couple of word changes, what we've taught for seventy or more years: Satan's final rebellion, followed by the second resurrection, and the judgment of the Great White Throne, and the very last element is the new heavens and the new earth. Well, you know what? We could have had him get up and give the sermon because that's what

we teach. This was published by an Anglican minister in 1910, so I'm just offering that we consider, that we reason a little bit here; if it's in scripture and someone preaches it, then it doesn't matter where it came from, if it's true. But if they teach it and it's not literally in the scriptures but you teach it, then you've begun to follow them in their error, and I want to correct a little bit of that today. I want to take the last piece—new heavens and new earth—which he had at the very end of his portrayal of God's plan, and which we, historically, have had at the very end of our portrayal of God's plan; I believe we simply took his order and said, yes, we agree. Well, I don't agree, and I don't think scripture agrees, and I don't think it's a coincidence that we made the same mistake that he did—I don't think that's a coincidence at all.

Now, we need to keep the holy days, portraying God's plan, according to scripture, and not according to tradition, so I want to go through a couple of elements. I want to go back to Exodus 23, because the first thing I want to walk through is the Feast of Pentecost, and in verse 14 it says,

**Exodus 23:14** *“Three times you shall keep a feast to Me in the year:  
15) You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread (you shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you ... none shall appear before Me empty);  
16) [then it says] and the Feast of Harvest ... [then it says] the Feast of Ingathering ... (NKJV)*

So there are three—first is the Feast of Unleavened Bread, second is the Feast of Harvest, third is the Feast of Ingathering. When do we think of the harvest being portrayed in the plan of God? Well, traditionally, at the Feast of Tabernacles, kind of—the harvest is all in, then you go to the Feast. But the Feast of Harvest is actually Pentecost. In Exodus 34, let's look at a couple of different ways that this is described:

**Exodus 34:18** *“The Feast of Unleavened Bread you shall keep. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread [and it talks about it again, as being kept at the appointed time] ...*

Then in verse 21,

21) *“Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; in plowing time and in harvest you shall rest.  
22) “And you shall observe the Feast of Weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest,*

So the Feast of Harvest (mentioned above in Exodus 23:16), and the Feast of Weeks (seen just now in verse 22 of the same chapter) are the same thing; it's Pentecost, and notice what it says next:

22 continued) *... and [then] the Feast of Ingathering at the year's end. (NKJV)*

So the Feast of Firstfruits is the Feast of Pentecost; it's a Feast of Harvest, and is also called the Feast of Weeks.

Now let's go to Deuteronomy 16, because sometimes I think we don't look at this as precisely as we could. In Deuteronomy 16:9, it says,

**Deuteronomy 16:9** *"You shall count seven weeks for yourself [okay, so now we're beginning to count up to Pentecost]; begin to count the seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the grain.*

So the first sheaf of grain is—what? It's the first of the firstfruits—right? The wave sheaf. That's the beginning of the harvest.

10) *Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand ...*

Then go down to verse 16:

16) *"Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles ... (NKJV)*

Now here is my point: The firstfruit harvest is the spring harvest, right? Do you know when the firstfruits are harvested? In the spring. Well, that's not what we have historically taught. We have taught that the firstfruits are harvested in the fall. When I say "we", historically, the Church of God community has primarily taught, well, that's the Feast of Trumpets, part of the ingathering—the fall harvest. The feast of the firstfruits is the harvest of the firstfruits, and it's portrayed in the spring, at the spring harvest, so do you know what that means? That means we rise to meet Christ in the air at the end of the spring harvest, not at the beginning of the fall harvest. Is that what the Bible actually says? Well, it would be, if we could accept it as so.

Look at Revelation 14. Understand where we are in the book of Revelation. Where is the seventh trumpet blown, when the resurrection of the firstfruits takes place? Revelation 11, okay? Now, the seventh trumpet includes seven bowl plagues, and the bowl plagues are what are portrayed in the book of Revelation, then as you go through, and it tells you each one, what happens, how long—well, it doesn't tell you exactly how long, but there are some things there that take some time; we're talking about periods of at least a few months. So then you're going to go from the resurrection at the seventh trumpet, in Revelation 11, and you're going to go down, then, to the supper of the great God, the battle of the great day of God Almighty, in Revelation 19. Between chapters 11 and 19 are the bowl plagues that are being poured out; the Church has already been resurrected—the firstfruit harvest has already taken place. Now you'll go to chapter 14, which is in the middle of those two events:

**Revelation 14:1** *Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads.*

2) *And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps.*  
3) *They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. (NKJV)*

The resurrection has already taken place.

4) *These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.*  
5) *And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God. (NKJV)*

Where are the firstfruits during the bowl plagues? They are before God's throne. That's what it says. The resurrection of the firstfruits took place in chapter 11; the battle of the great day of God Almighty is going to take place in chapter 19. There are the bowls plagues, and do you know where the firstfruits are? They are in heaven. That's not exactly how we've kept the holy days all these years, is it? As time allows, we need to do this, not according to the custom and tradition of our own selves, or others before us, but simply according to scripture.

That's a start. There are things that are going to have to be put back in place. And that's what I mean when I said I used to think that we were teaching what the apostles taught. No, we were not. The apostles knew what they were talking about because they had been taught by Jesus Christ directly and He explained it to them. Then God inspired and worked with them in response. We had men teach us, some of what was true, some of what wasn't accurate, and that's understandable if you started there, and then you keep moving in the right direction, closer to God; but if you get to the point when winning the argument is the most important thing, and being in charge and in control, and having people do what you say is the most important thing, then you're not going to be advancing in truth, you're only going to advance in power and control, and that's a very temporary position to be in.

Let's go to Acts 3. There are going to have to be some things repaired, put back in place, in the course of God's prophetic plan. Acts 3 describes that as a kind of package. There are things in here that I just never believed; I read them, and they didn't make sense to me, so I just figured, well, the passage doesn't really mean what it says. What I'm finding is that had I known the order and put it together the way it was intended, then it could be literally understood as well and not just guessed at.

Let's go to Acts 3, where I want to start. Peter is preaching here, and Acts 3:13 is the scripture on the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but it goes on down, and says,

**Acts 3:18** *But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.*



19) *Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord [God the Father],*  
20) *and that He may send Jesus Christ,*

Now excuse me, Christ already came. Now we are talking about the times of refreshing at the Second Coming, that God will send Jesus Christ,

20 continued) *who was preached to you before,*  
21) *whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things ...*  
(NKJV)

So the Bible states that when Christ returns, it's going to be in the context of the restoration of all things. Restoration to what? Restoration to the way it was before God's creation became corrupted.

Let's go to Romans 8; it's a little bit out of order from the way I've made my notes, but let's go there to start with, and then I'll back up a little bit. In verse 18, Paul is writing here,

**Romans 8:18** *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*  
19) *For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.*

They are waiting for the resurrection of the children of God, to rise, to meet Christ in the air.

20) *For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;*  
21) *because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption ...*

—which is the bondage of sin. So in the context of the Second Coming of Christ, all things are going to be restored to the point back to before there was corruption. That would mean, at least as I would understand it, back to before there was sin. So you go back then, to Genesis 2; let's just go look at what takes place with sin, and what it looked like before there was sin, and that's what I believe the reference is to. Before Satan was present, and before Adam and Eve sinned, the garden was in perfect condition and peace, as God had created it.

**Genesis 2:15** *Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.*  
16) *And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat;*  
17) *but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."* (NKJV)

I didn't believe that. I thought, well, okay, it says they're going to die. Well, they died, Methuselah died, within a day for a year, if that's what it is. But you know, flesh is temporary, right? It just dies. Well, how temporary is the sun? Someday the sun is going to burn out; does that mean it goes away? It just means it changes form, right? It doesn't mean it goes away; everything that's there, burning out, is going to be somewhere else, burnt out, in whatever form that is—matter, energy, transference, chemical—the Creation exists because God wills it so, but it doesn't just go away. But again, it says here, *in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die*.

What I think now that means is, before you eat of it, you're not dead, and you're not going to die. You know what? If God is going to restore all things, then what you'd expect to see at some point is a statement something like, "There will be no more death." There is a statement like that. We'll get to it at some point today. But the point is, they were told that they were going to die if they ate of it; if they hadn't eaten it, then possibly the assumption would be that they weren't going to die, that this was the way God created them, and He could maintain them as long as He pleased.

Well, there you go, because it says, on the other end, when all things are restored, there will be no more death, so He puts it back to the way it was. Okay, it doesn't say there'll be no more second death—that's in the scripture, too, right? The second death is a punishment. In the Millennium, there won't be babies getting run over by trains, there won't be babies getting typhoid, or some serious disease, or dying prematurely, there won't be accidents and mistakes. Satan is not going to be there, so he's not going to be the driving force to try to make things go his way.

Go on down to Genesis 3:16; notice the judgment on Satan has been made, and it says,

**Genesis 3:16** *To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; (NKJV)*

I don't think it's talking about childbirth so much as it's talking about the pain of being in a family where people are not looking to God and putting Him first, and the misery that follows, and your children go off to war and get killed, or whatever. It's talking about human culture and what it produces.

16 continued) *Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.*  
17) *Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. (NKJV)*

So, if we're going to undo what is now being done in the restoration of all things, there'll be no more death, there'll be no more pain and sorrow, and there will be no more curse. Well, when you get there, you're going to find out that's just exactly the terminology for

the new heavens and the new earth. The curse is removed, the ground is no longer under desperate measures, the pain and sorrow—there will be no more pain, and indeed there will be no more death. It says all of those things.

I want to start in Isaiah 65, because Isaiah 65 is probably undeniably the cleanest, clearest statement that is made, if indeed we simply accept it for what it states.

**Isaiah 65:17** *“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth;*

This is not at the end of God’s plan, at the tail-end of everything being accomplished; no, this is right where it says it is, and these things that are listed under it are what are going to happen in the new heavens and the new earth.

17 continued) *And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.*

The former is this heaven and earth; we’re going to forget the way it used to be when life was hard, and now we’re going to have it the way God intended life to be.

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.*

This is the new heavens and the new earth. Now look at verse 20; it’s always been a problem, and I never quite knew what to do with it, but I’ll read it in the New King James, and then I want to read it from the New Living Translation (NLT). I don’t use the NLT as a first reference, but I find that some of the English words that they have chosen in it are excellent in specific places, and I’m not sure how they got so good with it but they actually were able, I think, to definitively explain some of these things at least in modern English usage.

Verse 20 describes the Millennium, and again, they live in houses, they have babies, they have vineyards and eat their fruit. It says,

**Isaiah 65:20** *“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. (NKJV)*

So the child is dying at one hundred years old, and it’s not exactly the way it said that maybe it would be. Let’s look at this in the NLT; I offer this to you as a consideration. This is where I’ve come to, where I now believe the intent is. If you disagree with me, that’s understandable—this is prophecy, and prophecy sometimes is certainly a matter of interpretation, but Isaiah 65:20 in the NLT says,

**Isaiah 65:20** *“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!” (NLT)*

Basically the NLT takes this verse and I don't think distorts it; I think it's literally trying to address the issue at hand, when it says, only the accursed are going to die at a hundred, and they're going to be considered to have died in the same way that a baby dies—too young. Okay, keep that in mind. We'll walk through a number of these, and you're going to see places during the Millennium where people who are cursed are dying. That's just the record of scripture, and I want to walk through them today.

*(21) They shall build houses and inhabit them; (NKJV)*

This is the Millennium; this is the new heavens and the new earth, part of the restoration of all things.

*21 continued) 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.*

*24) “It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear.*

*25) The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,” says the LORD. (NKJV)*

That's the new heavens and the new earth; that is not at the tail-end of God's plan, after everything is over, and everyone becomes a spirit being. They are having babies; they're eating vineyard fruit; they're raising families; they're living in their homes. Now, at some point, we're going to have to accept that instead of taking this piece over there and here's what that means, take this piece over here, etc.—it's not, it's a passage, but it's a passage that's consistent with all the other passages, once you lay them out, side by side. So let's go to Isaiah 66, the new heavens and the new earth, because the passage then flows right on down to the end of the book. But before we go to Isaiah 66, I want to go to Isaiah 27, because there is an event that is being referenced in Isaiah 66 that is the restoration of the nation of Israel. Israel is going to be restored at the beginning of the Millennium. They're going to be brought back into the land, and the scriptures on that are legion; they are through the Bible over and over and over again. You could do a series of sermons on that subject, but again, I'm only touching on it. I'm not going to go into that today, but in Isaiah 27, verse 12,

**Isaiah 27:12** *And it shall come to pass in that day that the LORD will thresh, from the channel of the River to the Brook of Egypt; and you will be gathered one by one, O you children of Israel. (NKJV)*

Well, that's pretty clear.

13) *So it shall be in that day: The great trumpet will be blown; they will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, and they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD [YHVH] in the holy mount at Jerusalem. (NKJV)*

Well, that's Zechariah 14. That's Ezekiel 37. They are going to worship in Jerusalem. This is God's people, Israel, being brought back and restored, and so Isaiah 66 starts out talking about the restoration of God's people, but that's not where I want to start; I want to go on down here to verse 14. For context, let's back up to verse 13:

**Isaiah 66:13** *As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem."*

14) *When you see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like grass; the hand of the LORD shall be known to His servants, and His indignation to His enemies.*

15) *For behold, the LORD will come with fire and with His chariots, like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, (NKJV)*

Alright? The great day of the battle of God Almighty has to take place before the Millennium can begin; Satan has to be destroyed and put down, but in the course of this God will make His judgment,

15 continued) *and His rebuke with flames of fire. (NKJV)*

So when you see the transition into the new heavens and the new earth you're going to see a great, fiery conflagration.

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,*

They're literally bringing to God His people, bringing them in and presenting them to God, saying, here is one of Your servants, and we brought him back to Jerusalem. That is at the beginning of the Millennium.

20 continued) *"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 verse 22.

22) *"For as the new heavens and the new earth ...*

It's describing the new heavens and the new earth, just as it did in Isaiah 65,

22 continued) *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 [in the new heavens and the new earth] that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD. (NKJV)*

Flesh. Everybody is not a spirit being. New heavens and new earth isn't at the tail-end of God's plan, it's right in the middle of it, and it's right where God said it would be; it's here, it's here at the restoration; this is the Millennium and that's called the new heavens and the new earth.

Now notice something else that is here. It says, in Isaiah 66,

24) *"And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me.*

Didn't Isaiah 65 say the sinners will be accursed? Well, it says,

24 repeated) *"And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh."*

That's the lake of fire. When does the lake of fire begin to burn? When the Beast and the false prophet are thrown in, the lake of fire begins to burn. Does it go out? It does not—it's eternal fire—its fire is not quenched; it is going to burn all the way through the Millennium, and it says right here in Isaiah 66, the people, during the new heavens and the new earth, when they come to Jerusalem ("bring to God an offering of His people"), will stop, and,

24 repeated) *... look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me ... and their fire is not quenched. (NKJV)*

Well, it just means what it says. I just never believed what it said. But it said that, and it always said that.

See, if you go back, it says, that great trumpet is blown; that's not the seventh trumpet, that's the trumpet of the Jubilee. That was blown on Atonement. So when we keep Atonement this year, we need to recognize that part of the symbolism of Atonement is the Jubilee trumpet that is blown, and the beginning of the restoration of Israel as they begin to then move down toward the promise—the Promised Land.

Alright, think about that. We've known for many years that the Feast of Trumpets portrays the day of the Lord, alright? Well, the day of the Lord concludes the bowl plagues, with the destruction of Babylon—Satan's system—and the binding of Satan. Well, wouldn't you have to stop destroying everything before you can start bringing people down to Jerusalem to join in the land? So the fact is, the Feast of Trumpets is going to be the picture of the destruction—day of the Lord—which is the full measure of God's wrath, okay? Pentecost is the seventh trumpet, actually, because that's the harvest of the firstfruits, but then Atonement is at least going to include the Jubilee and the freedom being declared, and the beginning of the restoration of Israel. There are so many scriptures on that; like I said, that will take an entire ... actually, I gave a sermon on some of that material, probably five years ago, on the subject of that day.

So it goes on, and it says, *all flesh* shall come and worship before Me during the new heavens and the new earth. That should tell you that Bullinger didn't get it right; he didn't put it in the right place and neither did we. It did not come down from heaven as a mistake—it was our mistake, okay? People make mistakes. I make mistakes, alright? But when someone says, you know what?—that's a mistake, it's not what the Bible says, and here's what the Bible does say, then at some point in time, you might want to correct your ways, instead of fighting for your long-held custom and tradition: no, we're not going to change anything!

No, we are going to have to change some things, as God opens our minds to see.

Let's go back to another element of this. I was kind of taught that earth is going to go away, because there's going to be a new earth and it will all be spirit, and this now is flesh, and God can't be near sin and flesh, He'll get His hands dirty—the Gnostics agreed with that—but in Ecclesiastes 1 (notice when we come to verse 4) it says,

**Ecclesiastes 1:1** *The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.*

2) *"Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher; "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."*

3) *What profit has a man from all his labor in which he toils under the sun?*

4) *One generation passes away, and another generation comes; but the earth abides forever. (NKJV)*

Okay, *forever* can mean on and on and on—it can mean that, too—but you know it's a contrast to the fact that a generation passes away but the earth doesn't. It says the

earth abides forever. This earth is going to be replaced by a new earth, but the new earth is still going to have people having babies, having houses, planting vineyards and eating their fruit, because that's what the Bible says. At some point in time we're going to have to believe what the Bible actually says.

In Psalm 78, it's talking about Israel rebelling against God, God's patience, His waiting and tolerating and forgiving, and giving them more opportunity, but in verse 65, it says,

**Psalm 78:65** *Then the LORD awoke as from sleep ...*

It's like all of a sudden God is going to do something, and all of a sudden, time is up.

65 continued) *... like a mighty man who shouts because of wine.*

66) *And He beat back His enemies; He put them to a perpetual reproach.*

67) *Moreover He rejected the tent of Joseph, and did not choose the tribe of Ephraim,*

68) *But chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion which He loved.*

69) *And He built His sanctuary like the heights, like the earth which He has established forever. (NKJV)*

Well, it says that. Again, we can argue over the meaning of the term *forever* and how it's used; that's fine, that's a fair argument, but the fact is the context is God established something; the old earth is going to become the new earth, and the new earth has got people on it, and God says, I intended that earth to continue.

70) *He also chose David His servant, and took him from the sheepfolds;*

71) *From following the ewes that had young He brought him, to shepherd Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance.*

72) *So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands. (NKJV)*

The reason I wanted to address Ecclesiastes and Psalms is because I now want to go to 2 Peter 3, because, again, 2 Peter 3 has been interpreted to mean that the earth is totally burnt up and destroyed, with the new heavens and new earth being all spirit. With that interpretation, the honest answer is, all these other scriptures don't match any more. Well, they all do match; you just have to agree that they all match together.

**2 Peter 3:10** *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night,*

The day of the Lord is the last period of time culminating in Christ's return, and God's judgment on the earth and the battle of Armageddon. Again, the day of the Lord,

10 repeated) *... 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. (NKJV)*



In English, it says *burned up*, but does it matter what the Greek says? Does it matter what the scriptures say? In English, it says burned up, with nothing left, so therefore all flesh has been destroyed, right? Ah, sorry, my little reference note at the bottom of this page in my Bible, regarding verse 10 (it's from the NU Text, which I think is one of the Alexandrian texts), just says the text reads, "laid bare", or literally, "found".

If you understand that the new heavens and the new earth are revealed at the beginning of the Millennium, and you understand that there are people being restored, being brought back to the land, in Israel, then there are still people alive on the earth. Maybe not many, but they are alive on the earth. So the interpretation that the earth is burned up completely and no physical life remains is not the record of scripture. The NLT says,

**2 Peter 3:10** ... *the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment.* (NLT)

That, to me, is understandable. There is a judgment, a judgment on the sin, on Babylon, on Satan's system, and on those who worship the Beast—there is a judgment taking place. Bowl plagues are going to be poured out, causing a great, fiery conflagration, leading to the deaths of animals and people on the earth, as it's portrayed in scripture, and at the end of that there will be a massive battle—the battle of Armageddon, which is the battle of the great day of God Almighty—and then the earth is going to be restored and made new again. That's really the way the story should be told. Notice what the following verses say.

- 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.* (NKJV)

So the new heavens and the new earth replace the old heavens and the old earth, and in the new heavens and the new earth, people have babies, they have homes, they have vineyards and eat their fruit, and their children are called the sons of the blessed of the Lord. So it all matches, but it only matches when you put it in its right place. Bullinger didn't get it right, and frankly, neither did we. We simply didn't have it the way it is revealed in scripture.

So now the new heavens and the new earth, in Revelation 21—I want to go there now, because it's the same passage; again, as I said, there are all kinds of subjects here that would take an entire development of their own. New Jerusalem, I believe, takes an entire development of its own, so I'm not going to walk into the subject of New

Jerusalem here, I simply want to go through this part of the prophetic scriptures. In Revelation 21, it says,

**Revelation 21:1** *Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth [this one] had passed away. Also there was no more sea.*

I did address at one point the scriptures that I believe show that the sea symbolizes Satan's dominion and presence. The Gentile kingdoms are all "in the sea", and the Beast comes up "out of the sea", Leviathan is "in the sea", and it portrays vivid imagery of Satan. Some believe this means the earth is going to be dry and there won't be oceans, but that's not what I believe is the intent of these passages. Going on, it says,

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,*

Yes, *with men*. In the new heavens and the new earth, the tabernacle of God is with men. His dwelling is with men—with physical human beings. That's what it says.

3 continued) *and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them,*

*God Himself*—that's God the Father.

3 repeated) *... 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."* (NKJV)

What are the former things? The former things are the curse on the land, death, and crying and sorrow. Go back to Genesis; that's exactly what was promised to take place because of sin. Now we're going to go to a time when Satan is going to be removed, and there will be human beings, living forward into the Millennium, without his influence, with God and Christ reigning on the earth, and it just says all those things that entered with the curse back in Genesis are now going to go back to where it was before God allowed the earth to come into corruption because of sin. No more sorrow, no more death, no more crying, no more pain. The former things have passed away.

In Genesis 3, what began? Death. It says, in the day you eat of it you'll die. Pain and sorrow will be your life. The ground will be cursed. Then God says, I'm going to undo that. I'm going to go back to the way I wanted it to be from the beginning; we're going to start over now, and we're going to start it here. That is the new heavens and the new earth.

**Revelation 21:5** *Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."*

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,*

Excuse me, we are in the new heavens and the new earth—that's the setting.

8 continued) *sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."*

Ultimately the second death is portrayed as the resurrection during the Great White Throne judgment. That's called the second death, and that's fine, but the lake of fire starts to burn with the Beast and the false prophet, and Isaiah 65 and 66 both make reference to the very same thing. And here we have the lake of fire burning at a time when the new heavens and the new earth are being described as well.

Brethren, the scriptures match, actually; they work together. Sometimes it's kind of a paradigm shift, especially if we think we've always known the answer, and now the answer isn't what we knew it to be, and it's hard then to step back. Just because it's a traditional belief doesn't mean it's wrong, but it can't replace the record of scripture; put one on one side and one on the other, and go see what the one says—verify that it's consistent. If you have ten things and eight of them agree, that's your answer. If you're going to go look for two questionable areas that you're not quite sure of in order to win your argument, then you're not putting God first. Quite frankly, you're going to be in serious trouble in that day.

The new heavens and the new earth are the change from this age to the age to come—what God actually intended from the beginning—and are part of the restoration of all things, the time when God Himself will be with men, when flesh will come and worship before YHVH in Jerusalem. It's when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our LORD and His Christ, and that reign will go on forever and ever.