

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH-Red Bud, Illinois
Adult Bible Class "A New Heavens and the New Earth"

II. Isaiah 66:18-23

v. 18 God will use His all-knowingness ("omniscience") when gathering all people before Him.
 "the time is coming" refers to the end-time Judgment Day; **What will they see?** _____

v. 19 **What might this "sign" be that God sets among them?** _____

Isaiah 11:10 In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.

Who might be these survivors sent "to the nations"? _____

What have they survived? _____

Revelation 7:14 "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Tarshish = Spain; Put (Pul) = Libya; Lud = Africa; Tubal = Turkey (Asia Minor); Javan = Greece
These nations are symbols, or representatives, of the worldwide gathering of those who are saved. They were on the outer edge of ancient Israel and would have been known to Isaiah's first readers.

v. 20 **Who is coming to this great gathering?** _____

How are they getting there? _____

A constant, and perhaps unanswerable question, about the Last Day and its judgment scene, is "How?" How will all people see Jesus return at the same time? How will all people be gathered before Him? The risen Lord Jesus whose resurrected body was not confined by space itself, certainly will be able to perform that same work on the bodies of the people our Triune God created.

Where is this taking place? _____

For God's Old Testament people, the city of Jerusalem was their capital, the center and focal point of their nation. Upon its mountain (Zion) was built God's temple, the place of His promised presence for the forgiveness of their sins. This is where those people brought their "grain offering" to "the house of the Lord." In a future setting, Jerusalem is the symbol for where God's redeemed and forgiven people gather. In the New Testament age, this is the Holy Christian Church, believers who gather in faith to bring the offering of their worship to the Lord.

v. 21 In the Old Testament those who served in God's temple as priests (descendants of Aaron) and Levites had to be from the tribe of Levi. Now people from all nations will be such servants of the Lord.

v. 22 In an almost offhanded way, God refers to "the new heavens and the new earth" that He makes.

How does God describe them? _____

God speaks of the new heavens (plural) and the new earth (singular) very matter-of-fact without telling us any details of how, when, why and what they are like. Here God uses them as an example of how His gathered people will remain. **How long will that be?** _____

v. 23 **What is the time frame "from new moon to new moon"?** _____

What is the time frame "from Sabbath to Sabbath?" _____

God is using earthly designations of time to describe the current, repeated worship of Him by His redeemed people in the church to illustrate the timeless worship of Him by His glorified people for eternity when all "time" will be holy to the Lord.

Colossians 2:16-17 Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

Holy Jesus, sanctify and purify me from all uncleanness. Quench my passion for sin and grant me life everlasting. Amen. (*Lutheran Study Bible*, page 1201)

III. 2nd Peter 3:11-13

v. 11 “Since”- this paragraph is based on what Peter has written in the previous paragraph about the “day of the Lord,” the suddenness of its coming, the dissolving of the heavenly bodies and the exposure of the earth and the works done on it. Knowing of what is to come for this world, how will that affect the lives we now are living? Not only are we to believe in the return of Christ for this world’s end, we are to live our lives in such a way that we know it will happen. We should be the kind of people now who will be able to live in that new world. Our current time-bound earthly lives in Christ are a practice run for what living with Christ will be like. If we are looking forward to being on the victorious side when Christ return, we should live as his winning team now.

Luther: “Since you know that everything must pass away, both heaven and earth, consider how completely you must be prepared with a saintly and godly life and conduct to meet this day.” (American Edition, 30:197)

How will our knowledge of Christ’s return to bring this world to its end be seen in our lives?

Matthew 6:33 (Jesus said) *But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

v. 12 **What two things are we to do in regards to the coming “day of God”?**

The Greek word for “waiting” occurs three times in verses 12-14. Since this is not something we like to do, we also can “hasten” the day of God. God’s delay when it comes to this world’s end is giving people time to hear His Word, repent of their sins, and come to given faith in Jesus as their Savior.

How can we “hasten” our Lord’s return?

Our words of witness to others and prayers for His return are speeding up His end of time arrival.

Matthew 24:14 (Jesus said) And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Revelation 22:20-21 He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

What will happen to “the heavens” and “the heavenly bodies”?

The Old Testament prophets frequently mention fire in connection with the final judgment (Mal. 4:1).

v. 13 “Paradise will be regained as all the ruin and frustration with which man’s sin has disfigured God’s good world will have passed away” (Lutheran Study Bible, page 1924). We are not looking forward to this world’s end out of some desire to see “them” get what’s coming to “them” (whoever “they” are), but instead to witness the glory of our Lord Jesus and be part of this great promise of “new heavens and a new earth.” Because our final destiny will be determined by Christ’s second coming, Peter urges his readers to hasten the day of God by their faithful service to Him and others.

What will be different in the world to come from this world now?

This will be God’s full and complete answer to the Third Petition of our Lord’s Prayer, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” While there will be a radical difference between the old and the new, it is also clear that this language is describing a renewal, not an abolishing, of God’s creation.

Romans 8:18, 21 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.... ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.