

The Promise of Paradise: Local or Global?

The word of our God stands for ever Isaiah 40:8

Study 2a: ISRAEL'S SAVIOUR is also CREATION'S REDEEMER

Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period of RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time. Acts 3:19-21 (NASB)

Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the REGENERATION, when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Matthew 19:28 (NASB)



The REGENERATION

'The regeneration' means the new Genesis, the creating of a new heaven and a new earth, as was expected by the Jews. Alfred Plummer The Gospel According to Matthew p.271

This is a new word in the Gospel vocabulary, and points to the general renewal "re-genesis ..." -- in the end of the days, which occupied a prominent place in Jewish apocalyptic hopes ... Commentators translate this promise, so strongly Jewish in form, into Christian ideas, according to their taste, reading into it what was not there for the disciples when it was spoken. A.B.Bruce The Expositor's Greek Testament: The Synoptic Gospels p.252

In Matt. 19:28 the word is used, in the Lord's discourse, in the wider sense, of the "restoration of all things" (Acts 3:21, R.V.), when, as a result of the Second Advent of Christ, Jehovah 'sets His King upon His holy hill of Zion' (Ps.2:6), and Israel, now in apostasy, is restored to its destined status, in the recognition and under the benign sovereignty of its Messiah. Thereby will be accomplished the deliverance of the world from the power and deception of Satan and from the despotic and antichristian rulers of the nations. This restitution will not in the coming Millennial age be universally a return to the pristine condition

of Edenic innocence previous to the Fall, but it will fulfil the establishment of God's Covenant with Abraham concerning his descendants, a veritable re-birth of the nation, involving the peace and prosperity of the Gentiles. That the worldwide subjection to the authority of Christ will not mean the entire banishment of evil, is clear from Rev. 20:7,8. Only in the new heavens and earth, "wherein dwelleth righteousness," will sin and evil be entirely absent. William E. Vine Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words p.267

1. What hopes are inseparably connected? (Rom. 8:18-23; 11:25-27)
He shows how the creation has in hope been made subject to vanity; that is, inasmuch as it shall some time be made free, according to what Isaiah testifies, and what Peter confirms still more clearly ... thus the condemnation of mankind is imprinted on the heavens, and on the earth, and on all creatures. It hence also appears to what excelling glory the sons of God shall be exalted; for all creatures shall be renewed in order to amplify it, and to render it illustrious ... for God will restore to a perfect state the world, now fallen, together with mankind. John Calvin Romans (tr. Owen, p.305)
2. Just as we 'groan within ourselves', so must the faithful of Israel have groaned under the oppression of the unfaithful sons of David during 200 years of backsliding (Isaiah 1:1-6)
3. Despite Israel's revolt, what unchanging purpose is revealed in Isaiah's very name? (1:18,24-26)
4. The gospel is in Isaiah as no other OT book -- more often quoted in NT than other prophets put together
5. Who was Isaiah? Royal Family 'chaplain'; the irony is that we know less of him than other major prophets
6. Isaiah keeps before our eyes ONE GOD, JEHOVAH -- who appears with 3 unique titles:
 1. THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL
 2. REDEEMER (SAVIOUR) OF ISRAEL

3. THE SUFFERING SERVANT

7. The gospel of Isaiah is bound up with these titles, but for JW's Isaiah means what gospel?

Gloriously does Isaiah paint the Kingdom hope for the future! Look! It is the "new heavens and a new earth," ... the book of Isaiah ... points in exalted tones to the magnificent hope of Messiah's kingdom whereby His great name will be sanctified. All Scripture is Inspired of God and Beneficial (WTBTS, 1963) p.123

8. The word 'paradise' is not found in Isaiah, but where do JW's find the concept?

PARADISE (redeemed creation) has primarily 2 meanings for JW's

a.2:2-4 What do they miss in vv.1,5,6?

In the preaching of the Christ, in the mission of the Twelve, in the whole history of the Apostolic Church, we have, to say the least, an adequate fulfilment of the promise. The language of St. Paul, however, suggests that there may be in the future a yet more glorious mission, of which Jerusalem shall once more be the centre (Rom. xi.12-15) E. H. Plumptre Isaiah (Ellicott's Commentary vol.4, p.421)

b. 11:6-9 Who will bring about paradise? (vv.1-5)

At the same time it must be noted that Isaiah has placed great stress upon the animals themselves, and this very fact shows that it is impossible to carry through in detail a figurative interpretation. If all is merely figurative, what is the point of such detailed statements concerning the change in animals? It would appear also that we have here a parallelism or comparison with the condition before the fall of man into sin. Ed. J. Young Isaiah (NICOT) vol. I p 390

If, as some have thought, the "earth" here should be the land (i.e., as in chaps. ix.19, x. 23, the land of Judah), that region is represented as the paradise centre of a restored world, to which, as in chap. ii.2, all nations turn for light and blessing. Probably, however, the words may be taken in their wider significance. E.H. Plumptre Isaiah (Ellicott's Commentary, vol.4 p.454)

c. 25:7,8 Where is the banquet?

d. 35:5,6 Where, and who are the neighbours? (vv.1-4,10)

e. 45:18 Is Jehovah hiding from JW's? (vv.15-17)

f. 55:1,2 The basis for hope? (vv.3,11)

g. 65:17,20-25 What's missing from the picture? (vv.18,19,25)

[on 11:6-9] ... the literal interpretation, defended by several Jewish expositors, maintains an undeniable preference. In favour of it are the following arguments: 1. The circumstance that it is impossible to carry through, in the details, the figurative interpretation ... Now, as it is by sin that outward discord, & contention, & destruction arose in the irrational creature, so we may also expect that, when the cause has been removed, the effect too will disappear; that, with the cessation of the discord and enmity among men, which according to ver.9, the Prophet expected of the Messianic time, discord and enmity in the animal world will cease also ... compare 65:25, 66:22; Matt.19:28, where the Lord speaks of the [palingenesia, regeneration], the return of the whole earthly creation to its original condition; but especially Rom.8:19ff -- that classical passage of the New Testament which is really parallel to the passage before us. E.W. Hengstenberg Christology of the Old Testament vol. I pp.473-4 (2 vol. orig 4 vol)

Israel shall be saved by Jehovah with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be put to shame or confounded world without end. For thus saith Jehovah that created the heavens, the God that formed the earth and made it, that established it and created it not a waste, but formed it to be inhabited: I am Jehovah; and there is none else.

Isaiah 45:17,18 (ASV)

IMPLICATIONS?

For Muslims? For dialogue with environmentalists?