

## **The New Earth**

### *When God Fulfills All Our Deepest Desires*

Pioneer of positive psychology Martin Seligman developed the PERMA theory of well-being to explain the five elements that allow people to flourish. They are positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment.<sup>1</sup> Sounds a lot like heaven to me. In the world to come, God will not only surround us with reasons to be happy, but He will expand our brains' capacity for happiness. In our present state, positive brain chemicals such as serotonin, epinephrine, and dopamine are expendable. Then, we will be capable of unlimited happiness, joy, pleasure, excitement, worship, and peace.

### **The Cleansing of the Earth**

As Jesus descends a third time in exactly the spot from which He ascended (See Acts 1:11), the New Jerusalem descends from heaven:

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be their God. And God shall 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." Revelation 21:2-4

While the earth rages with fire, God's children rest safely in the Holy City. God is a consuming fire to the wicked, but to His own people a sun and a shield.

"For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up," says the Lord of hosts, "that will leave them neither root nor branch." Malachi 4:1

Once the fire finishes consuming sin, its only vestiges are the wounds in Jesus side, hands, and feet. These wounds forever reveal that He is love. Righteousness dwells in the cosmos because evil is vanquished. Our old earth has been made new and is prepared for our reentry. It will be the best of extreme makeovers.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/happiness/positive-psychology>  
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## Let's Take a Tour

How might we envision the fire-cleansed earth made new? Some are so worried about making the afterlife gimmicky and materialistic that they spiritualize away the very things that satisfy our longings for safety and beauty. It's true that "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Corinthians 2:9), but God does reveal some things about heaven! And they are wonderful things.

Let's close our eyes and take a little futuristic, imaginary tour:

**Notice your mansion.** Yes, Jesus said, "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2). Being in a clean, beautiful, organized home raises the mood. In heaven, God sets an unlimited budget for your home. He spares nothing to delight your sense of design, beauty, and comfort.

**Drink in the water.** Did you know that only a few minutes near water increases well-being? In heaven "The Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters" (Revelation 7:17). Jesus Himself leads us to the fountain of youth where we will never thirst again.

**Look up at the trees!** As we make our way to the holy city, on either side of the river of life, we see "the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month." And the leaves serve to "heal the nations" (Revelation 22:2), imparting vigor and strength. Even here on earth, spending time around trees helps us manage stress. Imagine the new trees in the new earth!

**Flowers everywhere!** The beauty and fragrance of flowers here on earth encourage well-being. How much more the blooms of paradise! "The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose" (Isaiah 35:1). Nature bears none of the signs of death and decay. Everywhere we find verdure and color.

**Animals, our friends!** There were more animals than humans around the manger and in the ark. God loves animals! The Psalmist said of God's relationship to them, "You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; and You renew the face of the earth" (vs. 29-30). The prophet Isaiah predicted perfect vegetarian peace between animals and humans: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them" (11:6).

**Our bodies pulse with health.** "And the inhabitant will not say, 'I am sick'; the people who dwell in it will be forgiven their iniquity" (Isaiah 33:24). Reminiscent of the healing herbs we use here, heaven's healing leaves from the tree of life (Revelation 22:2) work the miracles we've ached for on our earthly sojourn. Our energy and strength will be illimitable! "But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint," (Isaiah 41:31).

***Our minds will be healed.*** Many of us struggle through life because of neurocognitive problems, lingering trauma symptoms, or treatment-resistant anxiety or depression. God will heal those conditions for once and for all! He will also assist us with relational problems during that 1000-year therapy session, with the end result of complete peace and reconciliation. Otherwise, how could He offer “no more pain” (Revelation 21:4)?

***The food!*** God made our taste buds and the wonderful foods that stimulate them every day. He said during the Lord’s Supper that we would drink the fruit of the vine again with Him in heaven (Matthew 26:29). While we don’t know all of the menu items, we can anticipate that it will be beyond our imaginations for taste, texture, and nourishment.

***We work in a new way.*** Isa 65:21 says, “They will also plant vineyards and eat their fruit.” We will serve (Revelation 22:3), lead (2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 22:5), and fellowship with others (Matthew 16:3). No doubt we will build houses, create musical productions, perform scientific experiments, organize excursions, and whatever else delights our ambitions.

***Safety in the neighborhood.*** The World Health Organization says that over one billion children globally experience violence.<sup>2</sup> They will find relief in the earth made new. “My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places” (Isaiah 32:18); “Violence shall no longer be heard in your land, neither wasting nor destruction within your borders; but you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise” (Isaiah 60:18).

***God, our streetlight!*** Bright light literally changes brain chemistry for the better. Of the holy city John said, “Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal” (Revelation 21:11). “There shall be no night there. They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever” (Revelation 22:5).

***Notice harmony in diversity.*** The racial, ethnic, and national lines dividing us here will evaporate. Of the gates of the city, John says, “And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it” (Revelation 21:24). That word “nation” is the Greek *ethnos*, as in “ethnic.” The gates of God’s heart are open to all races, and the glory and honor of each culture make the city an interesting, enlivening place. We know as we are known, communing with holy beings, angels, and faithful ones, bound together as “the whole family in heaven and earth” (Ephesians 3:15).

***Learning never tires the mind.*** We continually surmount new heights of aspiration, wing our way to other planets, communing with, and studying alongside, unfallen beings. “All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God’s children . . . the years of eternity, as they roll, will continue to bring more glorious revelations.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-children>

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Faith I Live by* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 2000), 360.

***And the music!*** The mighty chorus of praise, with millions of voices, thunders to the heavens (Revelation 5:13). All our voices will be restored to pre-fall strength and beauty.

They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: “Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested.” Revelation 15:3

### **The Takeaway**

And forever and ever, the rolling years bring richer and deeper revelations of the love of God. With each epiphany will come a deepening love and reverence.

The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.<sup>4</sup>

This wayward planet, once plagued with war, disease, and death, has been recreated in its pristine Edenic state. Virginal forests and sparkling waters. Soft meadows and beckoning hills. In the center of everything stands the Holy City, the headquarters of God’s benevolent administration, free of corruption, pure as a young bride. Do you want to be there?

### **Quiz**

Our quiz this week will be two personal reflection questions:

What in the New Earth do you look forward to the most?

Do you feel confident you’ll be there? Would you like a phone call from a Bible worker who can pray with you?

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<sup>4</sup> *The Great Controversy*, p. 678.