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What Will the New Earth Be Like?

By David DeWitt

- **The dynamic contribution Jesus made to prophecy was to add an eternal perspective.** Although the Old Testament allows for an eternal hope (Job 19:25; Daniel 12:13), its primary perspective of the future is a kingdom on earth which fulfills God's promises to Abraham (Genesis 13:15). The author of Hebrews tells us, *by faith Abraham...was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God* (Hebrews 11:8-10). But we learn nothing about that from the account of Abraham in Genesis. **Jesus pushed the perspective of believers beyond that to an eternal city, which is not on this earth.** What Jesus and the apostles talked about was not just an eternal perspective, but an eternal **place**, a heavenly city, a New Jerusalem.

Some Things We Can Know about the New Earth

1. There will be a new earth

• **Revelation 21:1** *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away* There will be a new earth, and the new earth will not be a revision, renewal, or rebuilding of this present earth because *the first heaven and the first earth passed away*. Peter also said,

• **2 Peter 3:10** *the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.*

There are some confused teachers, who are saying, "Heaven Is a Place On Earth" (the title of a 2009 book by Michael E. Wittmer, although several others also promote this confusion). Their idea is that this earth is our final dwelling place, so we need to take care of it, protect it, etc. This teaching is supported by skipping clear statements that say this earth will pass away, taking millennial passages about Christ's Kingdom on earth as referring to the eternal state, and extending the promise that believers will live forever to say the earth they live on will last forever. It seems these guys think they have a better understanding of biblical texts that for centuries have for been understood to proclaim an eternal future for believers in a heavenly place.

2. The new earth will be surrounded by a new heaven

In the Bible, the word "heaven" is used for three different places: (1) the atmosphere surrounding the earth; (2) the universe of the stars, galaxies, and constellations; and (3) the place of the presence of God. Here, it probably refers to the atmosphere around the new earth, although if in the distant future there are things like stars and galaxies, they would probably also surround the new earth. So the new heaven may be a reference to the new atmosphere or stars.

3. The new earth has no sea

The only descriptive comment we are given about the new earth is *there is no longer any sea*. Undoubtedly, that means there is no large body of water. The absence of large bodies of water is a huge difference between this earth and the new one. Here is what we have on this earth. "The oceans cover 71 percent of the Earth's surface and contain 97 percent of the Earth's water. Less than 1 percent of the Earth's water is fresh water, and 2-3 percent is contained in glaciers and ice caps. Life here depends on huge bodies of water. There is water on the new earth, at least in the New Jerusalem. John said, *then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb* (Revelation 22:1). It does not accumulate into large bodies like our oceans. So the life dynamic is very different than for this earth.

4. The new earth is very large

The New Jerusalem is *fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal*. That means it's a cube, or a pyramid, or something like a mountain. But a city 1500 miles high would never fit on this earth. Most satellites orbit at 200 miles above the earth. That means the New Jerusalem is 7 1/2 times higher than where the satellites orbit the earth. Such a city sitting on this earth would look like an ice cream cone, or a smiley face wearing a party hat. If it is spherical like ours, in order to accommodate the New Jerusalem, the new earth would have to be more the size of one of the larger planets, something like Jupiter.

5. The new earth is lighted by the New Jerusalem

Revelation 21:23-25 *And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light... In the daytime (for there will be no night there) ...* John does not say "there is no sun or moon," but it doesn't seem like there is, or they aren't significant. Our old earth orbits around the sun and gets its warmth and light from the sun. But the sun's light also emits radiation, which is lethal for most planets close enough to a star to be warmed by it (like Mars). Except our earth has a magnetic field, that deflects the radiation, allowing us to be warmed safely. All that's completely different with the new earth, where its needs are met by the New Jerusalem supplying its light without danger. That also implies there might be a place away from the New Jerusalem of *outer darkness* (Matthew 8:12; 22:13 25:30). Such a place could be on the dark side of the new earth, or some other place inaccessible to the New Jerusalem.

* Learn more by checking out our study material on "The Far Distant Future" at relationalconcepts.org *

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