



• Isaiah looks forward to salvation

Isaiah is looking forward with prophetic vision to the coming of salvation. He sees a new Jerusalem characterized by righteousness and purity of every kind.

1. God's redeemed people will be a distinctive people

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1 65:13-16

13Therefore this is what the Sovereign Yahweh says:

*'My servants will eat,
but you will go hungry;
my servants will drink,
but you will go thirsty;
my servants will rejoice,
but you will be put to shame.'*

• God's people have come to faith – joyful

Isaiah contrasts God's people with 'you'. The 'you' (the word is plural in verses 13b–15a) refers to the rebellious people of Isaiah 65:2–7, 11–12. God's people have all at one time been rebels but they have come to faith; those who defy salvation reap shame. God's people will be joyful; the ungodly will face agony.

• Those who defy salvation reap shame - agony

*14'My servants will sing
out of the joy of their hearts,
but you will cry out
from anguish of heart
and wail in brokenness of spirit.'*

• No name for the ungodly – God's judgement

The ungodly will fail to get a name for themselves. One of the themes of the Bible is getting a name. It was wanted from the beginning of the human race. Cain wanted to perpetuate a name¹. A little later people were saying, 'Let us make a name for ourselves'² – although the only name that arose was 'Babel', 'confusion'³. But when salvation was announced it included the promise, 'I will . . . make your name great'⁴. Alongside the promise of a name for the saved there was the name of the Saviour: 'People began to call upon the name of the Lord'⁵. Abraham 'built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord'⁶ (see also 13:4). But the ungodly lose any hope of having a name for themselves.

1 Gen 4:17
2 Gen 11:4
3 Gen 11:9
4 Gen 12:2
5 Gen 4:26
6 Gen 12:8

*15'You will leave your name
to my chosen ones as a curse;
and the sovereign Yahweh will put you to death.'*

• God's people will have a name which entitles them to the new Jerusalem – the privileges of the saved

God's people will have a name which entitles them to the new Jerusalem. Namelessness is God's judgement. The name of the Lord upon his people entitles them to the privileges of the saved.

*'But to his servants he will give another name,
16by which whoever enters into blessing in the land
will do so by the God of truth,
and he who takes an oath in the earth
will swear loyalty to the God of truth.
For the past troubles will be forgotten
and hidden from my eyes.'*

2. God's redeemed people are part of a new creation

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*17'For behold, I will create
new heavens and a new earth.
The former things will not be remembered,
nor will they come to mind.'*

¹⁸*But be glad and rejoice for ever in what I will create. For behold, I am going to create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy.*
¹⁹*I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people. And in Jerusalem there will never again be heard the sound of weeping or the sound of crying.*
²⁰*Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years. For the youngest shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner, even if he lives to be a hundred years old, will be accursed.'*

• What exactly is the new Jerusalem?

• 'Panoramic' principle of prophecy – ultimate hope is for the total abolition of death

Since there is reference to death here we might want to ask the question what exactly is the new Jerusalem? Is it the church? The age of the gospel? An epoch when the church has success? Is it the final state? But we must remember the 'panoramic' principle of prophecy in which everything of the future is seen, beginning from now and running on to the endless and undated future. Perhaps somewhere along the way to the final state is an epoch of glorious success for God's Zion, in which flourishing old age in the joy of the Lord is a part. But the ultimate hope is of course the total abolition of death.

3. God's redeemed people will enjoy city-life at its best

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²¹*They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit.*
²²*No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will use to the full the works of their hands.*
²³*They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by Yahweh, they and the line that proceeds from them.'*

• People will be secure in their homes

In the prophetic picture the people will be secure in their own homes. Although the place is a city, yet there are vineyards in it. The future of their children is assured.

• The city contains a vineyard

²⁴*Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.*
²⁵*The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain,' says Yahweh.*

• The future of the people's children is assured

• Not just a place of worldly prosperity – a place of spiritual power

The new Jerusalem is not just a place of worldly prosperity; it is also a place of spiritual power. Prayers are answered. Nature is changed so as to be full of harmony. The city is on a mountain (like the old Jerusalem) and it fills the world. Again we ask: what exactly is the new Jerusalem? Again I reply: the vision is prophetic, picturesque and 'panoramic'. It is the world as it ought to be. Perhaps it is an epoch of success for God's church; it is a symbolic pointer to the final state of the redeemed universe. We shall know more about it as the steps and stages come to pass. Meanwhile, we base our hopes on the pictures we are given and rejoice in the expectation that we who believe in Jesus will be with Jesus himself.

The world as it ought to be