

What will the New Earth be like?

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The first Salvation Army Doctrine states:

- We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and that they only constitute the Divine rule of Christian faith and practice.
- We accept that the Bible says that God is unchanging, He always was, is, and will always be the same. The law as given in the Old Testament has not changed even though Christians are living under the new convenient.

Before Jesus Christ made the new covenant with man, man was judged against the Law as passed down from Moses, a law that was impossible to keep.

The Law is recorded twice in the Old Testament. It is stated that those who obey the Law will be Blessed and those who do not will be cursed (Deuteronomy 11:26) and repeated elsewhere. It is important to note that never are those under the Law, given the promise of eternal life or to be adopted into the family of God. Also note that there is no promise of eternal damnation either, only blessing or curse.

Read Isaiah 64:17 – 64:25

Note the reference to “in all my holy mountain” which simply implies that these conditions may not be universal but are only true in this place called “the holy mountain”.

Also note:

- New Heavens and a New Earth
- Former things not remembered (v 17)
- There will be a newly created Jerusalem (v.18)
- Weeping and crying not heard *in Jerusalem* (v 19)
- Infants will not die (implies birth and death)
- Long life, he who dies while failing to reach 100 years of age will be an accursed youth
- Will build houses and plant crops (v 21)
- Will bear children (v 23) and have descendants

This section of scripture reverses the curse promised under the Law.

Now skip to Revelation Chapter 21:1 – 22:5

- New heaven and earth.
- New Jerusalem
- God lives with men (on the new Earth)
- No more death
- He who overcomes will inherit all this and will be adopted as sons (v 21:7)
- City has 12 gates, each guarded by an angel, each named with the name of one of the tribes..
- The *city* is always lighted, there is no night, Christ, the Lamb of God, is the light.
- Gates are never closed but only those whose name is recorded in the book of life may enter
- The kings of the earth, the nations, will bring their splendor into it (who are they?)
- Nothing impure may enter. (if all is pure why the need for the rule?)
- The river of life flows from the throne of God, down the middle of the great street and the tree of life is on both sides.
- Each tree has 12 crops a year; the leaves are for the healing of the nations. Note that this makes no sense if there is nothing to heal, and also note the reference that this is for the nations..
- In verse 22:5 says that the servants, who serve God, will see His face and they will reign forever (eternal life)
- In verse 22:19 it refers to God taking away the share in the tree of life, and the city.

A side note: The tree of life is mentioned only twice in Scripture, the Garden of Eden and in the New City. It appears that eternal life comes from eating the fruit of the tree of life, and if access is lost, one becomes mortal. (reference Adam and Eve)

In Revelation 5:9-10 we read that the blood of Jesus purchased men for God from every tribe and language, every nation and people, to be a kingdom of priests to serve God, and they will reign on the [new] earth.. A priest is a servant to God and is also the one who would be a “go between” between God and those who are not priest. We who are under the blood are priest and therefore can directly approach God, those who are not [under the blood of Christ], cannot approach God directly and thus a priest is required. Jesus is our Priest in the present age.

The big question comes from the need to reconcile Isaiah with Revelation. Why are the descriptions of the new earth different? Why does the New Jerusalem have 12 gates that have rules of who can enter, and guards to enforce the rules? Who are the nations and why do they need healing and access to the tree of life that is only inside of the city?

A possible answer is that those who were under law have the curse reversed and removed. These people did not reject Christ (before he was born) and were still known as "God's People". The people did not reject the law but the law was impossible to not break, and we know one breaking of the law makes a person a lawbreaker. We also know that before Moses, there was no written law, only direct communication with God, as with Noah getting instruction to build the ark. Before the Law there were a series of prophets and judges who ruled God's people. There was not even a place of worship until Moses made the Tent of the Presence as instructed by God, and later the Temple after Salomon built the first one, again following instructions from God.

It could be that these people, who were neither promised eternal life, nor damnation, and do not qualify to be priest and adopted sons of God, will make up the nations and live outside of the city, but be ruled from the city. It would appear that only those who can enter the city and have access to the tree of life have eternal life.

All of the peoples of the earth that lived, and died, before Christ was born, had no path to salvation, as we know it. God's law is written on the hearts of everyone and the Bible tells us that they will be judged against the law in their hearts, However they do not meet the requirements to become "sons of God" nor do they meet the requirements to be condemned outright. This leaves room for them to be the ones who make up the nations spoken of in Revelation. Interestingly enough, there were not all that many people then since population has grown expediently and I have heard it said that there are more people alive at any given moment, than all of the people combined in history. I don't know if this is true, but it does make an interesting point.

One unresolved question does make me wonder; if one of the persons in "the nations" dies, what happens? They are already in 'heaven'.

What matters, of course, is our personal relationship with God. This study is only to help us to better understand God's Word.