

2Peter 3:13 The New Heavens and the New Earth

2 Peter 3:13 ¹³ But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

When we look back at what Peter has been discussing throughout this second letter it is clear that this very portion is where he has been heading toward from the beginning. Let's start back in chapter 1.

2 Peter 1:10-11 ¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; ¹¹ for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

Peter reminds his readers of this salvation in Christ which leads to the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

And it has always been about the Kingdom of God regarding what this salvation actually accomplishes. Just listen to the opening words of our Lord Jesus in the gospel of Mark.

Mark 1:14-15 ¹⁴ Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, ¹⁵ and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

The gospel of Jesus Christ is intrinsically tied to the Kingdom of God. And so, as wonderful as it is to be forgiven of our sin and not to come under the wrath of God through our faith in Christ, this gospel is designed as an entrance into something, as Peter says in verse 11 of the first chapter; entrance into the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

This concept of entrance into the Kingdom of God through Christ is what Jesus was referring to when speaking with His disciples in John's gospel.

John 10:1-9 ^{NAU} "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. ² "But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. ³ "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ "When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of

them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ "A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers." ⁶ This figure of speech Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them. ⁷ So Jesus said to them again, "Truly, truly, I say to you, *I am the door of the sheep*.⁸ "All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. ⁹ "*I am the door; if anyone enters through Me*, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

It is Christ Jesus who is our entrance into His eternal Kingdom and so it is the Kingdom of God that should be our focus with our King on the throne deserving all of our praise and adoration.

And so, at the very beginning of this letter Peter reminds us of the reward we have to look forward to, but then he warns us to be careful not to fall into the trap of the false teachers who would distract us or lead astray from this truth.

2 Peter 2:1 ^{NAU} But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

The rest of chapter 2 describes how God will judge such people as He is fully aware of their intentions and how He will be there for His people. But chapter 3 reminds us of what these false teachers are trying to accomplish as they teach doctrines against the Christ.

2 Peter 3:3-4 ³ Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts, ⁴ and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For *ever* since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation."

Why does Peter introduce the second coming of Jesus Christ at this time? Because it is the second coming of Christ that ushers in the kingdom of God which is our hope. That hope of being resurrected from the dead, that hope of being in the presence of our Savior forever, that hope of taking full possession of our inheritance, that hope of ruling and reigning with Christ, that hope of dwelling with our God in the midst of the new heavens and new earth.

This is the Kingdom of God Jesus was speaking of all throughout the gospels and the Kingdom that the prophets of old and the New Testament apostles taught on.

But just as Peter promises that these false teachers, and for that matter, all who oppose Christ, will be judged on that final day, there is an event on that final day that should excite every believer on the Lord Jesus Christ.

And it is the event that we touched on last week; the destruction of this present world which ushers in the new world. The new heavens and the new earth which rise from the ashes of the old, now devoid of all of the curse and sin and ugliness that was thrust upon God's creation because of man's rebellion against God in the Garden of Eden.

The promise of the Kingdom will find its fulfillment on this final day as Jesus Christ takes up residence with His people on the New earth in the New Jerusalem to be with us forevermore.

Revelation 21:1-5 ^{NAU} Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." ⁵ And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."

This will be our focus today as Peter introduces this to us in our text.

2 Peter 3:13 ¹³ But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

Keep in mind that when Peter says, "according to His promise", it is assumed that the promise has already been in place and Peter is simply reminding us of what this promise is.

In fact, we know what this promise is as we go back to the Garden and discover that just as Paradise was taken away from Adam and Eve, because of their rebellion, it is inferred that through God's promise of the seed of the woman to destroy the work of Satan, and the subsequent war through the ages between these two seeds, that God would restore what man lost.

What did man lose? He lost the fellowship he once enjoyed with God face to face. He lost the comfort of the Kingdom and all of its perfect qualities. He lost the strength of being able to manage and have dominion over this kingdom as death was now a part of the life man was to live out the rest of his days. And he lost any ability to restore this life through any effort on his own.

Therefore, the promise that we are looking for must include all of the aspects of this Kingdom of God being fully restored, and then some, as we will see.

This original promise is expanded upon time and time again through God's word as He moved men by the Holy Spirit to record the promise of God. Undoubtedly, Adam and Eve spent the rest of their lives teaching this hope of the promise to their family.

Unfortunately, as that family grew much of it grew away from this hope as they too rebelled against the Lord very early on as we see in the murder of Abel by his brother Cain.

And it only got worse as time went on to where the entire world was practicing evil continually.

Genesis 6:5-7 ⁵ Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. ⁷ The LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them."

And of course, this led to God choosing Noah and his family, being the remnant of mankind, to be saved through the flood and starting anew as the promise from God would not be blotted out since He is faithful to His promises, despite the unfaithfulness of man.

This was the promise the father of Noah understood as he named his son with the name, Rest, which is what Noah means.

Genesis 5:28-29 ²⁸ Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and became the father of a son. ²⁹ Now he called his name Noah, saying, "This one will give us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands *arising* from the ground *which the LORD has cursed*."

The removal of the curse was an essential part of what the restoration of the Kingdom of God is all about, and Lamech understood this as the Lord revealed to him that Noah would be in the line of having that promise restored in full through the seed of the woman.

This covenant of hope from God would be further expanded upon as the Lord called Abraham and set him on a path that would lead to the fulfillment of that promise in the garden.

Genesis 12:7 ⁷ The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.

Later the Lord would tell Abraham who these descendants would include.

Genesis 17:4-8 ⁴ "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you will be the father of a multitude of nations. ⁵ "No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations. ⁶ "I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you. ⁷ "I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. ⁸ "I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, *for an everlasting possession*; and I will be their God."

This promise of the land certainly included the physical land of that day to a people descended physically from Abraham, but even Abraham understood that this was only to be a foretaste of the eternal promise indicated in the covenant that God made with him regarding the everlasting possession of the land through all nations.

That promise is brought out in the book of Hebrews.

Hebrews 11:8-10 ⁸ By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign *land*, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; ¹⁰ for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Abraham understood the promise of the Kingdom of God as being an inheritance that he and his seed would receive as an everlasting possession. That seed would include men from every tribe, nation and tongue.

Romans 4:16-18 ¹⁶ For this reason *it is* by faith, in order that *it may be* in accordance with grace, so that ***the promise*** will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, ¹⁷ (as it is written, "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU") in the presence of Him whom he believed, *even* God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. ¹⁸ In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE."

Abraham understood that the promise was to all who believed in the promises of God for a future Kingdom on this earth that would be for an everlasting possession. This was the promise fulfilled in the Messiah, Jesus, who came into this world proclaiming this promise.

Jesus spent all of His time on this earth teaching and preaching about the Kingdom of God, mostly in parables.

Mark 4:30-34 ³⁰ And He said, "How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or by what parable shall we present it? ³¹ *It is* like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the soil, though it is smaller than all the seeds that are upon the soil, ³² yet when it is sown, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and forms large branches; so that THE BIRDS OF THE AIR can NEST UNDER ITS SHADE." ³³ With many such parables He was speaking the word to them, so far as they were able to hear it; ³⁴ and He did not speak to them without a parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples.

Read all four gospels and discover for yourself all of the different references to Jesus preaching about the kingdom of God. Even after His death and resurrection what do we see Jesus doing during the forty days before ascending back to the Father?

Acts 1:3 ³ To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and ***speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.***

It is the kingdom of God that we as believers in Christ should long for; Paradise restored on this earth as was promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and to which Isaiah addressed.

Isaiah 65:17-19 ¹⁷ "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. ¹⁸ "But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem *for* rejoicing And her people *for* gladness. ¹⁹ "I will also rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in My people; And there will no longer be heard in her The voice of weeping and the sound of crying.

Isaiah 66:22-23 ²² "For just as the new heavens and the new earth Which I make will endure before Me," declares the LORD, "So your offspring and your name will endure. ²³ "And it shall be from new moon to new moon And from sabbath to sabbath, All mankind will come to bow down before Me," says the LORD.

This is the same new heavens and new earth that we see in the book of Revelation that we read about earlier in the chapter 21.

Unfortunately, there is very little teaching in the church today about this aspect of our salvation. While it is true that the forgiveness of our sins through the atoning work of Christ on the cross, and His bodily resurrection from the grave, and His ascension back to the Father, are essential aspects of the gift of salvation, it is equally true that this gift is more than reconciliation to our God because it also includes an inheritance.

Acts 26:18 ¹⁸ to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may *receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance* among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

Ephesians 1:13-14 ¹³ In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory.

We are reconciled for a purpose and that purpose is to share in Christ's eternal kingdom, with Jesus Christ being the entrance into that Kingdom, which is the inheritance that has been promised to all who are called to share in this Kingdom. This is precisely what Peter has already addressed with these folks to whom he is writing in his first letter.

1 Peter 1:3-4 ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

Why were we caused to be born again, according to Peter in verse 3? We were caused to be born again to a living hope. How were we translated into this hope? Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And to what end does this hope result? To obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away.

What is this inheritance? Whatever it is, Peter tells us that it is imperishable and undefiled. Now, this should set off some alarm bells because we've heard this language before relating to things that are imperishable.

1 Corinthians 15:51-57 ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be *raised imperishable*, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For *this perishable* must put on *the imperishable*, and this *mortal* must put on *immortality*. ⁵⁴ But when this *perishable* will have put on the *imperishable*, and this *mortal* will have put on *immortality*, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. ⁵⁵ "O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; ⁵⁷ but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

What is Paul talking about when he addresses that which is perishable and mortal putting on the imperishable and immortality? He's obviously talking about the bodily resurrection of believers. What this necessarily means is that the very physical bodies that you and I possess today are the very same bodies that will one day be transformed from that which is perishable, meaning that which can perish as in death, to that which is imperishable, meaning that which will never perish or die.

This is precisely why Paul sums up this section with the words, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. ⁵⁵ "O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the

law; ⁵⁷ but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (**1 Corinthians 15:54-57**)

What victory are we talking about? A victory over death as our new eternal life finds its full expression in a resurrected physical body never to die again. Well, if our physical resurrected bodies were once perishable, prone to die, and now have become imperishable, never to die again, what does this tell us about Peter's statement, "to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you," (**1 Peter 1:4**)

It tells us quite clearly that our future inheritance has substance that, despite its past of perishability and that which was defiled by the curse, will no longer be in that state, as Christ Himself has purchased for us this Kingdom in which righteousness dwells.

In other words, our imperishable and undefiled inheritance is the new earth and heavens, which will be transformed from that which is perishable and defiled to a new state of being imperishable and undefiled.

This is the end game, if you will, for God's plan of salvation for all of His people; to move us from a state of death and defilement to a new state of imperishability and immortality in a world that will also be imperishable and undefiled.

What this means is that the new heavens and new earth are a physical Kingdom that will be ruled by our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who is physically resurrected to rule and reign in a physical universe over a physical people with all of the qualities of being fully human without death and sin forever more.

It only makes sense that physical resurrected human beings would live in a physical universe where we were always intended to live, being of the earth, not in some place where only our spirits live as phantoms.

The resurrected Christ makes this abundantly clear when confronting His disciples prior to His ascension back to the Father.

Luke 24:39 ³⁹ "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."

To think that our eternal lives would be anything less than human, albeit resurrected humans, misses the point of what it means to be

redeemed human beings according to God's design. And so, our life with our God in His Kingdom is one of a physical eternal existence in time and space on a physical earth, which begs the question; what does this Kingdom look like?

You would think that with most of the writings out there on the kingdom of God that it is some sort of ethereal, incorporeal, and other worldly type of existence. But the word of God is very clear on the subject.

The Kingdom of God is a physical Kingdom with an eternal spiritual nature, with Christ being the center, as King. This is what He has purchased for us at the cross.

Revelation 5:9-10 ⁹ And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. ¹⁰ "You have made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

Again, reigning upon the earth, with God dwelling among His people forever, is not a new concept. This is what the Lord meant by reigning upon David's throne in Jerusalem.

Isaiah 9:6-7 ⁶ For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

This was fulfilled in Jesus Christ being born of a virgin.

Luke 1:31-33 ³¹ "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. ³² "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; ³³ and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

And the promise of Him reigning on the throne of David will ultimately be fulfilled when He comes back **on** the last day to set up His kingdom on this restored earth.

Revelation 22:16 ¹⁶ "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

The Kingdom of God will be a place for all of Christ's sheep to dwell with Him in righteousness, but it will be a place where we will enjoy all of the blessings of this new world. However, it must be understood that it will all take place in a world that will be very familiar to all of us.

As was the mandate for man in the beginning, God will reestablish that mandate and this time we will fulfill it in perfection. Remember what that mandate was?

Genesis 1:27-28 ²⁷ God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸ God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Since we are told that on the new earth there will be no marriage between humans, the part regarding multiplying through marriage will have been abrogated. But, God Himself will have multiplied His people as He chose them before the foundations of the world to be a part of this Kingdom as His bride as He secured them at the cross.

But the last part of that mandate will continue on forever more.

Genesis 1:28 subdue it [the earth]; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

When God placed man in the Garden and gave him this command to subdue the earth, it was a command to take control of the earth in such a way that man's management would produce good from the earth and glorify God in the process.

God is the creator of all things, but being made in His image He has made us to be creative with what He has given us. God essentially said to Adam, 'the entire world is yours to enjoy and to experiment with and to be creative with so as to benefit you and bring glory to Me.' In this way, Adam and Eve, along with all of their offspring, would rule and reign with Christ on the earth.

However, that mandate has been drastically altered because of sin, but it was never taken away from man by God. The mandate still exists which is why man continues to experiment with the earth to benefit himself, but unfortunately, for the most part, it has been relegated by man to be all about self instead of bringing glory to God.

In the Kingdom of God, on the new earth and heavens, all of that will be reversed to a state of glory that has never been seen before, not even on the earth prior to the fall.

But the way in which this control will be translated into a practical outworking of the mandate is essentially what it means to rule and reign with Christ forever more in the Kingdom. And this is why we must understand that the new earth is not some fairy tale ending but a promise that was given to Adam that Christ has fulfilled and will ultimately fulfill on the last day.

What will be some of the characteristics of the new earth? Well, for starters it's important to keep in mind that the new earth is still, earth. And so, it's not a matter of dreaming about what a new earth will look like as much as it is understanding what the present earth already is and then considering the present earth without the curse.

It would be much like understanding the characteristics of a resurrected person. Paul clearly tells us that the person who was laid in the grave corruptible is the same person who rises from the grave incorruptible. It's the same person without any of the curse-touched characteristics who comes out of the grave.

For example, if a person was born into this world with any malady, or a malady that was contracted later in life, that malady would not be a part of that person who rose from the dead.

For example, my cousin was not born with polio, but contracted it a few years after his birth. The resultant malady crippled him in such a way that his spine was severely affected and his upper torso was contorted.

I know him to be a believer in Christ and when he receives his resurrected body on the last day his body will take on the characteristics, proportions and vitality of one who never had such a disease, (probably a little taller), but he will still be the same person with the same DNA and the same smile I remember him with.

And so, it will be with all of God's people when they are resurrected to receive their new bodies. Their bodies will be same bodies that were placed in the ground but they will be bodies absent any aspect of the curse that affected them in this life, be it diabetes, stunted growth from genetic problems in the womb, blindness, either congenital or contracted during their lives, or any other physical degenerative problem. All of those things will not follow them in the resurrection.

All believers will be raised to a state of perfection as if sin and the curse had never existed, because now, in Christ, it will not exist forever more. And we will recognize each other, we will remember our former histories as there will be continuity from the old earth to the new, and we will continue on our relationships with those we knew and loved here as long as they also believe on Christ.

If there is any question about this we need only look at the relationships that continued with Christ and His disciples after His bodily resurrection after 3 days in the tomb. But, even though I digress, it is for a reason, because our bodily resurrection is tied directly to the new earth. And Paul makes this clear.

Romans 8:20-23 ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. ²³ And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

Just as there is continuity from the old corruptible body of believers placed in the tomb, being raised with the same body, now glorified without any taint of the curse, so too, will the old earth be razed and raised to a new earth with all the same characteristics as the old earth but without any of the curse affecting its new status.

There will still be beautiful sunsets despite the wrong thinking that the sun will shine no more since the glory of the Lord will be our light. This is taken in part from that passage in Revelation. Speaking of the New Jerusalem on the new earth John says this.

Revelation 21:23 ²³ 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.

Nowhere in the passage does it state that the moon or the sun does not exist, only that the brightness of the glory of God in the city does not need the sun or moon to illumine it. In fact, we are told that the sun and the moon are essential to carry on more than simply being luminaires for the earth.

Genesis 1:14-15 ¹⁴ Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years; ¹⁵ and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so.

The sun and the moon play a vital role for the earth to be signs, seasons and for days and years. This was designed by God before the fall of man and the curse that was subsequently placed on the earth and the universe. In fact, the role of the sun and the moon for these reasons was deemed very good after God completed His creation of the universe and all life on this planet in the span of 6 literal days.

So, simply because the glory of the Lord illumines the New Jerusalem doesn't negate the fact that the sun and the moon and the rest of creation will continue to exist after the resurrection and restoration of the universe.

When writing about the New covenant that will be established for God's people, the psalmist, Ethan the Ezrahite, intimates how the sun and the moon were designed by God to last forever, even as His covenant was to last forever.

Psalms 89:34-37 ³⁴ "My covenant I will not violate, Nor will I alter the utterance of My lips. ³⁵ "Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David. ³⁶ "His descendants shall endure forever And his throne as the sun before Me. ³⁷ "It shall be established forever like the moon, And the witness in the sky is faithful." Selah.

The heavens will still declare the glory of God for all of eternity and it is probable that in our new glorified state we will actually be able to accomplish enjoying the far reaches of God's universe in ways that we can only dream of today.

Psalms 148:1-6 ^{NAU} Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; Praise Him in the heights! ² Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! ³ Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise

Him, all stars of light! ⁴ Praise Him, highest heavens, And the waters that are above the heavens! ⁵ Let them praise the name of the LORD, For He commanded and they were created. ⁶ He has also established them forever and ever; He has made a decree which will not pass away.

So, we can look forward to enjoying all of God's creation as we set out to discover our first home here on earth, visiting some of the most beautiful places on the new earth; possibly places like the New Grand canyon, the New Matterhorn, the New Amazon Rain forest and of course the New Jerusalem where all the nations of the earth will come face to face with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as we bow in adoration and wonder in service to Him.

And just as the sun and moon were created by God, in part, to determine our seasons, days and years, so too on the new earth we can expect that our home will continue to rotate on its axis delivering beautiful seasons for us to enjoy; Spring with its wondrous time of freshness as we move from winter days of snow and cold, as flowers bloom with a vibrancy that will exceed all expectations as we will encounter plants, trees and shrubbery that once existed on this planet before the flood that we haven't experienced since that time.

In the summer days to come we can look forward to cook outs with brothers and sisters in Christ where the smell of grilled food will touch our new glorified senses of smell and taste. I look forward to that time since I'm olfactory challenged.

The summer showers in those days will be as refreshing as they are beautiful as the water replenishes the earth and enables us to grow our own veggies of varieties that we've never tasted before and which we'll be able to share with brand new friends in Christ.

We'll be able to jump into waters and swim and dive in oceans and lakes that are crystal clear, untouched by any contamination. On the new earth we'll travel and make new friends as we experience new cultures and peoples from every tribe, tongue and nation. And we'll all share stories of what it means to experience the grace and mercy of God as each of us point to our resurrected Savior in thanks and praise.

And the Autumn of the year will be spectacular with the magnificent color of leaves being drawn from a palette of deep oranges, yellows, browns, and we'll roll in the mounds of leaves

together and glory in the beauty our Lord has created for us to enjoy forever with Him.

The beauty that is in store for us on the new earth is breath-taking to think about. But we'll also be busy doing industrious work for our Lord as we rule and reign in a way where we take dominion of the earth. There will be many who will be in charge of caring for cattle for their milk products. We'll still be enjoying butter, yogurt and a variety of other benefits we derive from animals, all without any harm to them.

If you love gardening the Lord may put you in charge of one of the many Paradise Gardens He has planted all over the world, or the forests that we will manage for the production of wood to build and craft things with our hands. You may enjoy astronomy, and a quick trip to one of the far reaching galaxies to discover and ponder may be on your list.

All of the sciences will be available as we experiment and consider the wonder of how God's creation actually works and allows us to get a taste of the magnificent perfection of His creation. I love photography and I long for the chance to capture images of God's beauty everywhere. There are so many things to consider as we rule and reign with Him in glory forever.

We'll have dinosaurs as pets and lions to cuddle with as well as a likely reunion with those animals we lost on the old earth. I would love to see my old dog Tuffy. And why not? If God can resurrect a new earth and a new moon which are lifeless in themselves, why not resurrect a cherished pet we loved and who had the "breath of life" in them, and who loved us back with so many wonderful memories. These are the kinds of things we can anticipate on the new earth.

But best of all the new earth and the new heavens will be devoid of any sin and the curse, and all of the ugliness we have in this world will be swept to the side for eternity. No more mourning, no more death, no more pain. John sums it up best.

Revelation 21:1-5 ^{NAU} Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will

be among them, ⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." ⁵ And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him all creatures here below. Praise Him above all ye heavenly hosts. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen!