

Life in the resurrection

Introduction

This is a doctrine that everyone has questions about and which almost nobody expounds in any depth. Indeed, this is because it is a mysterious subject, which will not be fully revealed until the Second Coming.

However, there are various clues within God's word that actually tell us quite a lot about this situation, but which are rarely pulled together.

This paper, therefore, is an attempt to piece together what information we have in God's word to give folk encouragement about the reality of life in the new world when heaven and earth meet.

The material new world

We first have to explain to people, that have not looked at this subject fully, what happens after the resurrection.

The schedule of the very end is as follows:

- The return of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory and power.¹
- The departed souls of believers come with Christ and meet the living saints on earth in the air.²
- All dead saints are resurrected with new spiritual bodies; all living saints are transformed.³
- All men on earth die.⁴
- The earth is burned up and restored to new.⁵
- All sinners throughout all history are resurrected to meet God on the Day of Judgment and give an account for sin.⁶
- All sinners are condemned to hell for eternity.⁷ There are degrees of punishment.⁸
- All saints give an account of their lives to God at the tribunal of Christ. Rewards and penalties (loss of rewards) are given out.⁹
- Saints are brought to the renewed earth to dwell with Christ forever.¹⁰ The dwelling of God is now with men on earth. Heaven and earth meet.¹¹

¹ 'Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.' (Matt 24:30)

² 'For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.' (1 Thess 4:16-17)

³ 1 Cor 15:22, 52; Lk 20:36; 1 Jn 3:2.

⁴ The presence of the Lord in glory and holiness kills anything tainted by sin immediately. Antichrist is destroyed by the mere breath of his mouth (2 Tim 2:8) and all his followers with him. 2 Thess 1:7-9.

⁵ 2 Pt 3:7, 10.

⁶ Rev 1:7; 2 Tim 4:1; Acts 17:31.

⁷ Matt 10:28; Mk 9:47-49.

⁸ Lk 12:48; Jn 19:11.

⁹ 1 Cor 4:5; 2 Cor 5:10; Mk 9:41; Rev 22:12.

¹⁰ Jn 17:24; 2 Cor 5:8;

Heaven on earth

This is a return to the situation that prevailed before the Fall where Adam walked with God in Eden. After the Fall man lost all ability to fellowship with God face to face.¹² In the new world heaven is on earth because God again dwells with men.

God dwelling with men

This was God's original purpose in creation and was expressed in the original typology of the Tabernacle where the Lord dwelt above the Ark, between the golden cherubim.

The LORD of hosts, who dwells *between* the cherubim. 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; 2 Kg 19:5; Ps 80:1, 91:1

You will bring them in and plant them In the mountain of Your inheritance, *in* the place, O LORD, *which* You have made for Your own dwelling, the sanctuary, O LORD, *which* Your hands have established. Ex 15:17

What was true only in type (symbolism) in the OT and in the Spirit under the New Covenant [both in the living saints on earth (1 Cor 3:16) and dead saints in heaven (Rev 7:15)] is now true in material actuality.

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 with them *and be* their God'. Rev 21:3

Thus God permanently dwells with redeemed man in the new world.

A new creation

The old creation is burned up with a fervent heat at the Second Coming of the Lord (2 Pt 3:7, 10, 12). After this the Lord rebuilds the earth and restores it to its former glory and beauty at the time of creation.

Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. 2 Pt 3:13

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Rev 21:1

For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. Isa 65:1

'For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me', says the LORD. Isa 66:22

The new earth is according to the same pattern as the old earth in geography and topography because old homelands will be recognised. Thus the patriarchs were at pains to be buried near their fathers so that they could be raised with them (Gen 50:25; Ex 13:19; Jos 24:32; Heb 11:22). Also the land that was promised to Abraham was everlasting in scope (Gen 12:7, 13:15, 15:18, 17:8) as well as land promised to others (Jos 24:33).

¹¹ Rev 21:1-3.

¹² Texts which seem to imply that certain men did are figurative. Enoch walked with God in righteousness and in spirit, but not physically (Gen 5:24). When Moses saw God on the mount he fellowshiped closely with him but did not see his face (Ex 33:22-23). Ex 33:11, Deut 34:10 and Num 12:8 refer to the intimacy of conversation between Moses and God, not that Moses saw God physically.

But all that was of man and sin will be burned away. Thus general geography will be the same but there will be no cities, roads or anything of human construction. Thus I will recognise the British South Downs where I live, but they will probably be forested as they originally were before the wood was cut down for the Royal Navy by Henry VIII.

The restoration of all things

Whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. Acts 3:21

This means what it says and has nothing to do with the Restorationist claims of Charismatic churches about the restoration of apostolic authority in the current church. It is a restoration of all the things that were lost by the Fall.

Key texts

'For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem *as a rejoicing*, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying. No more shall an infant from there *live but a few days*, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner *being* one hundred years old shall be accursed. They shall build houses and inhabit *them*; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree, *so shall be* the days of My people, and My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth children for trouble; for they *shall be* the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, And their offspring with them. It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust *shall be* the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,' Says the LORD. Isa 65:17-25

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned 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 with them and be their God. And God will 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." Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he

measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoptase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honour into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). And they shall bring the glory and the honour of the nations into it. But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Rev 21:1-27

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, *was* the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each *tree* yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name *shall be* on their foreheads. 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. Rev 22:1-5

Certain general properties of life in the new world

Everlasting life and order

And they shall reign forever and ever. Rev 22:5

The believer today has the experience of eternal life in his spirit but not his body. After the general resurrection the believer's body will be like that of Jesus and will be able to sustain eternal life in complete holiness. Physical life will be everlasting.

But it is not only everlasting, it is a reign. Believers reign in eternal life with Jesus. We will have responsibilities and jobs as princes. Some have more responsibility and authority than others (Matt 25:21; Lk 19:16-19, 22:30; Rev 2:26).

This means that there is a ruling class, with degrees of authority under Christ, and a class of workers. Yet all the elect are equal and there is no feeling of disgruntlement of any kind. All are pleased to serve God in their capacity, but some have greater authority than others to ensure good order. There is equality but difference of function.

In the same way angels have ranks and captains but no angel feels hard done by.

There is also the situation that the elect judge angels, 'Do you not know that we shall judge angels?' (1 Cor 6:3). However, since the elect angels do not sin they do not require judging. The third of angels that sinned with Satan are the ones that are judged on the Day of Judgment.

God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast *them* down to hell and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment. 2 Pt 2:4

the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day. Jude 1:6

Thus the elect's judging of fallen angels appears to me to refer to the one-off Day of Judgment when we will assist God in some way.

No pain, no tears, no suffering

And God will 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. Rev 21:4

This needs no further comment.

No more curse

There shall be no more curse. Rev 22:3

The cross and resurrection life have reversed the curse, which is no longer upon men. Today we experience this in spiritual terms in our spirit, but in the new world any material effects of the curse have also disappeared (such as the need to work by the sweat of one's brow in order to eat – Gen 3:19).

No persecution

There can be no persecution because every enemy of God has been cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev 19:20; Rev 20:10, 14-15, 21:8).

No sinners

But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. Rev 21:8

This needs no further comment.

Nothing of the old world

Since the old world will have been burned up at the Coming of Jesus, there is nothing left of the world of sinful man whatsoever.

Everything is holy

Since all vestiges of sin have been removed and burned up, everything on earth is holy. Indeed, it could not be otherwise since God dwells on a material earth, therefore, everything has to be holy, as God is holy.

The saints are holy. The land is holy. All animals and plants are holy. This means that everything is pure and separated unto to God. Nothing misses its target of fully glorifying God.

This means that everything, probably, will shine with the glory of God. That which is holy, shines with glory.

No more night

The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honour into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). Rev 21:23-25

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. Rev 22:5

Darkness is synonymous with danger, death and wickedness. In the new world there is not even the suggestion of these since there is no night. Now this may be a symbolic statement coming after the description of the city, but it is a repeated statement that has the ring of being a material fact. We are specifically told, for example, that there was no need of the sun.

This is another situation that baffles scientists but we have to stop thinking in terms of this world when we talk about life in the resurrection. God is the light of the world and the earth (at least) is not illuminated by the sun any longer. We have something greater than the sun in our midst.

No more sea?

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Rev 21:1

This is difficult to interpret because 'sea' has been used in Revelation to symbolise peoples and populations, but also as literal oceans (Rev 15:13, 7:1). Does it mean the material sea here or does it mean the raging propulsions of the unbelieving world?

Since John has used 'sea' in the symbolic sense elsewhere (Rev 10:2, 12:12, 13:1, 18:21) I prefer to take the word symbolically here. Also, since the new world's geography is essentially the same as the old with recognisable topographic features, then there must be physical seas and oceans. How could it be a restored world if there were no oceans, no fish, no dolphins, no whales, no beaches, no islands etc.?

The city of God

"Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysolite, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. Rev 21:9-22

This need not take much time here as the passage is symbolic. We know this because it is prefaced with, 'I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife' and then the city is described. The city is the resurrected church. So we are not looking for a material city made from gemstones sticking miles into the atmosphere.

We could spend a whole book examining the symbolic details of the description, but that is for another paper. One problem is that we do not know for sure what some of the gems are; such as jasper, which glowed with blue, purple, green and brass colours at different times, and yet was clear as crystal (thus some think it is a diamond).

Some names used are descriptive for the whole people of God: 'holy Jerusalem', '12 tribes of Israel', while others show historic function, such as the foundation of the apostles, referring to the actual apostles of the Lamb that formed the foundation of the church in the New Testament (Eph 2:20).

The light of the city is the testimony of the church to glorify God.

The repeated number 12 refers to the concept of covenant. The whole church (city) is based upon God's covenant with man. $144 = 12 \times 12$.

The pearl gates refer to the entrance being through the suffering of Christ.

I avoid the temptation to go into greater detail about the symbolism here, which is a distraction from my purpose in this paper.

Speculative details of life in the new world: being like Jesus

One of the key principles here is that we are told that we will be like Jesus in his resurrection body:

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 1 Jn 3:2

As we have borne the image of the *man* of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly *Man*. 1 Cor 15:49

The Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. Phil 3:21

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Rm 8:29

You may be partakers of the divine nature. 2 Pt 1:4

As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness. Ps 17:15

Chiefly this means that we will walk in holiness and bear spiritual fruit; however, it may also imply that our spiritual bodies will have the same properties that the resurrected body of Christ demonstrated after the resurrection but before the ascension.

Teleportation

After the resurrection Jesus suddenly appeared amongst men in a room (Mk 16:14) or suddenly disappeared (Lk 24:31). In at least one case this was entering a locked room (Jn 20:19).¹³ Thus the risen Lord had the power to overcome molecular obstacles and pass through them.

¹³ Ten appearances of the risen Jesus are recorded in the NT. 1. To Mary Magdalene alone. (Jn 20:11-18). 2. To certain women, the other Mary, Salome, Joanna, and others (Matt 28:1-10). 3. To Peter alone (Lk 24:34). 4. To two disciples on the way to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-35). 5. To ten disciples (Thomas being absent) plus others at Jerusalem (Jn 20:19-24). To the 11 disciples (Thomas being present) at Jerusalem (Mk 16:14-18; Lk

Since we are to be like Jesus we can speculate that we may also have this power; unless it is reserved for God alone.

Mind reading

During his incarnation Jesus knew men's thoughts by the power of the Holy Spirit, not as a human trait. However, after the resurrection Jesus appears to know men's thoughts by virtue of his resurrected human life (Mk 16:14; Lk 24:38; Jn 20:27).

Since we are to be like Jesus we can speculate that we may also have this power; unless it is reserved for Jesus alone.

The new bodies may be able to eat food but it won't be necessary and won't have a digestion system like today

The risen Jesus was able to eat food without any problem (Jn 21:15). Angelic bodies would not require any human food and, being spirits, would not be able to eat it. Jesus also prophesied that he would drink wine in the resurrection with his people (Matt 26:29; Mk 14:25; Lk 22:18).

Now there is no death in Jesus; nothing of death could be associated with his resurrected body. Jesus defeated death. Therefore Jesus could not have a normal human digestive system which relies on fermentation or decomposition.¹⁴ Similarly, as perfected man in a spiritual but material body, he presumably does not even require food.

So Jesus can eat food and yet does not require food.

Since we are to be like Jesus we can speculate that we may also have this power; unless it is reserved for Jesus alone. However, Isaiah implies that we can eat ('they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit').

Do we remember the past?

We cannot say for sure. We will certainly remember the cross since the marks of Jesus' tribulation remain on his resurrected body. How could we ever forget what it cost God to secure our salvation. In heaven the saints and angels praise God right now for the sacrifice of Jesus (e.g. Rev 5:8-9). Worship of Jesus for his atoning work is part of the fabric of heaven.

But what of our sorrows on earth, the loved ones lost, the tribulations suffered, the pets lost, the achievements gained and so on; are all these forgotten?

If we remembered these things then we would suffer in the new world; but there is no suffering. Thus it seems likely that we will not remember all that went on in this world or we would be constantly full of grief.

Isaiah perhaps points to this when he says,

Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, Now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness *and* rivers in the desert. The beast of the field will honour Me, the jackals and the ostriches, because I give

24:33-40; Jn 20:26-28). 7. To the disciples when fishing at the Sea of Galilee (Jn 21:1-23). 8. To the eleven, and above 500 brethren at once, in Galilee (1 Cor 15:6). 9. To James (1 Cor 15:7). 10. To the apostles immediately before the ascension (Mk 16:19; Lk 24:50-52; Acts 1:4-10).

¹⁴ Food is decomposed by enzymes and heat.

waters in the wilderness *and* rivers in the desert, to give drink to My people, My chosen. This people I have formed for Myself; they shall declare My praise. Isa 43:18-21

For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem *as* a rejoicing, and her people a joy. Isa 65:17-18

Heaven on earth is a place of rejoicing; thus the former things will not be brought to mind.

The new world being like the Garden of Eden

Another principle is that the resurrection world is a restoration; it is a restoration of what God originally purposed in Eden but which man ruined by sin. Therefore, many of the properties of Eden that prevailed before sin will probably be available for us.

Man walks with God in perfect fellowship

Before the Fall Adam and Eve walked with God in perfect fellowship. There was no hindrance in communication and intimacy of any sort since both were holy. After committing sin and before the curse Adam and Eve hid from God's presence (Gen 3:8). After the curse they were cast out from God's presence.

In Jesus we are again united with God in spiritual fellowship. After the resurrection this fellowship became fully material as well as spiritual. Thus, in the new world, believers will fellowship with God openly.

Man has dominion, under God, over creation

Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth'. So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth'. Gen 1:26-28

Salvation sees the restoration of the principle that man is created under God in order to have dominion over the earth as God's representative. Man is lord of the animals and is the steward over the earth.

No violence among animals, which return to being vegetarian

And God said, 'See, I have given you every herb *that* yields seed which *is* on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which *there is* life, *I have given* every green herb for food'; and it was so. Gen 1:29-30

In Eden before the Fall animals were vegetarian. This is just a plain fact. In the resurrection animals will revert to this original plan of God.

The entrance of sin into the world caused predation and carnivorous feeding; the banishment of sin will mean that there is no more death; thus no carnivores.

Therefore, there is no predation of one animal upon another; no killing in the animal world. This is in line with Isaiah's prediction that, 'The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain'.

Thus no parasites and no saprophytes

Now this bugs scientists, as well as any suggestion of changes to what we observe today in such matters as digestion or soil composition, which rely upon animals and microbes feeding on death. But in these matters all reliance upon human wisdom and observation have to be jettisoned; we are not talking about a creation that is like that of today, which has been damaged severely by the fall and the entrance of sin.

If there is no death in the resurrection (since death results from sin), and if everything is energised by divine eternal life, then there cannot be anything that feeds on death in any form. Things have changed. Things in this creation that rely upon death (predators, saprophytes) will have to change. Predators will become vegetarians.¹⁵ Saprophytes will feed on something else or not feed at all.

There may be special communication between men and animals

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Has God indeed said, "You shall not eat of every tree of the garden"?' And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God has said, "You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die."' Gen 3:1-3

Eve saw nothing unusual in a serpent communicating with her. Adam's ability to name the animals may have arisen from observation (though this was unlikely considering the number of animals and the time allowed) but it may also have arisen from communication with them. Of a certainty the serpent spoke.

Since animal communication existed pre-fall, it is possible that it may again occur post-resurrection.

Being like angels

Jesus categorically tells us that in the resurrection our form, or at least our situation, will be like angels.

In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. Matt 22:30

For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. Mk 12:25

Angels are only ever given male names¹⁶ and are only ever stated to appear in male form whenever they appear (e.g. Gen 18:2; Lk 24:4; Acts 1:10).

This tells us these things:

- There is no marriage in the new world.
- There is apparently no gender in the new world.
- There are no sexual relations in the new world.
- There is no procreation in the new world.

This gives us some difficulty in speculating what occurs in the new world. As far as I can see, there are only these options:

¹⁵ Vegetables have no soul although they do have a sort of lower life than animals. Eating vegetables will not be causing death.

¹⁶ Michael, Gabriel.

- Every elect person in the new world is male.
- Every elect person in the new world is a new kind of human that is neither male nor female.
- The elect are like angels in that they do not marry but are not like angels in form. In which case there may be gender, but not marriage.

We can say no more with any definitive certainty.

This then leads to speculation that since no children will be reproduced, there may be children who remain as they were when they died. We have the text in Isaiah that implies that children are in the new world, therefore, they have to come from somewhere.

No more shall an infant from there *live but a few days*, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old. Isa 65:20

The sense of this verse gives weight to the speculation; ‘dying one hundred years old’ being a euphemism for eternal life.

The statement in Isaiah that the elect will have offspring¹⁷ need not refer to procreation but the resurrection of whole families. Indeed, this seems most likely. Salvation has always been intended to be a covenant within families.

Further reasonable speculation

Cosmic exploration: the earth is only the beginning

I have no textual apologetic for this claim but it seems to be entirely in accordance with my understanding of the plan of God and the revelation of Scripture.

Why would God create vast swathes of cosmic objects if we never ventured anywhere near them? Furthermore, the purpose of God creating the elect in the first place was for man to be the living embodiment of the testimony of the invisible God to the universe. We are the means of spreading the glory of God everywhere in creation. Surely this cannot be restricted to one planet in one small solar system?

Furthermore, since salvation appears to apply to a third of human population,¹⁸ the earth would be rather small to contain the elect for eternity.

It is my belief that we are to progress from glorifying God on earth, no doubt building cities and structures, and then spreading out to harness what lies in the universe and bringing the physical glory of God to these places also.

Construction, gardening and invention

It is within man’s nature (created by God) to invent, to build, to construct. There are clues in Scripture that in the resurrection this will continue; mankind will build cities, create gardens, construct vineyards etc.

God is a gardener and one of his first projects was planting a garden (Gen 2:8). It seems logical that we will build gardens to glorify the Lord. In fact the word ‘paradise’ means ‘garden’ or ‘a royal park’.

¹⁷ ‘They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth children for trouble; for they *shall be* the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.’

¹⁸ Zech 13:8-9.

Jesus said that he would drink wine in the resurrection; therefore there has to be vineyards to tend to. Isaiah confirmed this (Isa 65:21).

The chief symbol for the church in the new world is a city (Rev 21:2). It seems logical that we would build communities in the new world. In fact, the patriarchs looked forward to heavenly cities that lasted forever (Heb 11:10).

Since our job is to praise God in all we do, it seems logical that we will use our talents to do this creatively. I am an artist and a musician; I fully expect to build musical instruments on which to praise God in songs that I write. There will be no shortage of time to do this.

Mysteries

There are various statements in Scripture that are not explained and which may refer to the new world. There are clues here and there but we cannot form definite statements; we can only speculate.

For example,

In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. Rev 22:2

The clear question here is, 'what are these nations that need healing?'. Many commentaries ignore this question; some mention it but give no answer; a few attempt to.

At first sight it seems to not be referring to the church, which is healed and has no pain or suffering. The elect are in the city already as the servants of God. The nations, or peoples (*ethnos*), could be implied to be outside.

One suggestion has been that the church on earth is resurrected as the servants of God in the city but all those who died as infants or without reaching the age of rationality are saved as the nations; a sort of second class of citizen. However, this is mere speculation and the idea of second class citizens contravenes the doctrines of grace.

In fact there may be a more prosaic interpretation. 'Healing' may be too limited a translation. The word *therapeia* (from whence we get 'therapeutic') means a service rendered by one to another, which can include the idea of medical service [curing, healing] but may just imply therapy or even ministering. Thus the leaves of the tree (Christ) promote life to all and is not about healing from sickness. Eternal life is connected to our relationship to Christ. I prefer this interpretation. The use of *ethnos* thus means the various people types amongst the elect ('a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne'; Rev 7:9).

Such is the confusion that can be caused by obscure passages.

Since these various mysterious statements cannot be certainly interpreted to refer to the glory, I see no point listing them or speculating.

Conclusion

The depths of life in the new world are hidden from us but they are going to be spectacular: But as it is written: '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 Cor 2:9

However, Paul goes on to add that:

But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. 1 Cor 2:10-12

Though Paul is chiefly referring to the doctrines of grace, Paul also taught us a number of things about the end and the life hereafter.

This paper seeks to highlight some of these things that are certain, and also some things that seem to be perfectly reasonable speculation.

I am aware that this paper is only a start in describing life in the new world, and I challenge others to make further studies in this direction for the edification of God's people.

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