

Infinite Possibilities

Isaiah 65:17-25

Most scholars believe these verses were written after 539 BCE when the people of Judah returned from exile in Babylon. Their return was not as triumphant as they had hoped. Their homeland was a shambles; much had to be rebuilt as they took up their lives again. The prophet speaks to those facing the daunting task of rebuilding Jerusalem.

The prophet speaks God's word of hope: God will not remember Israel's disobedience. The word remember in scripture means bringing a past event into the present with all the power of the original. Just as God will not bring past transgressions into the present, the people are called to leave behind the fear and anguish of exile and embrace the infinite possibilities of "new heavens and a new earth" (v. 17). They are to "be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating" (v. 18).

God is creating "new heavens and a new earth." In verses 20-24, this new Creation is described as a place where God's people will enjoy long and purposeful lives in a close relationship with God. The images reverse situations of human distress – premature death, hunger, having the fruits of one's labour taken by force – and speak a word of God's ultimate and infinite justice to all who have suffered.

God's people are participants in this new Creation. Though some have interpreted the word new as meaning that there is no need to care for Creation in its current state, God makes it clear that "I am creating" (v. 18). This work of creation is now and in the future; it involves human participation now and in the future.

In verse 25, the serpent is sentenced to "eat dust." In scripture, serpent refers to snake-like creatures in the Middle East. To the peoples of this region, serpents were symbols of wisdom and fertility and not necessarily evil. In Genesis 3:14, the serpent is "cursed" for its part in the disobedience of Adam and Eve.

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[2 Thessalonians 3:6-13](#)

[Luke 21:5-19](#)

Loving and mighty creator, speak your word into our weary world and make all things new. Guide us to live into the vision of your infinite realm of peace and justice, so that all your creatures may live in the harmony you intend. Amen.

