

WARM-UP

- Tell us about a place that always makes you feel happy and at peace. What about it makes you feel that way?
- What is one thing you wish you could change about your family or home environment? Why?
- Have you ever gone out of your way to help someone who was not a close friend or family member? What happened?

WORD *"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind."*

ISAIAH 65:17

Through the prophet Isaiah, God painted a picture of peace and flourishing for His people. It is a picture of life on earth where God's will is done here as it is in heaven. God has chosen us, His people, to participate in bringing this to pass. Here, we will see the kind of world we can look forward to as God works in and through us to build His kingdom on earth.

1 Joyful: A world of celebration and gladness, where old pains are forgotten

17"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. 18But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness. 19I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress."

ISAIAH 65:17-19

The world God wants for us is joyful. The city He promises to create is designed to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness. God wants to enjoy spending time with His people and blessing them. He even wants to remove any cause for the sound of weeping and the cry of distress. What does a joyful world look like to you?

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2 Fruitful: A world of abundance, with life and prosperity

20"No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed. 21They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. 22They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. 23They shall not labor in vain or bear children for calamity, for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the LORD, and their descendants with them."

ISAIAH 65:20-23

The world God wants for us is full of life and prosperity, where everyone reaches old age without fear of sickness or accidents; anyone who takes time to build a house will have time to live in it; and anyone who invests their resources will enjoy a stable livelihood. Even parenthood will be a time of joy in every instance. What do you think will change in the world God has for us?

3

Peaceful: A world where people enjoy intimacy with God and healthy relationships with others

²⁴“Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear. ²⁵The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain,” says the LORD.

ISAIAH 65:24-25

The world God wants for us is peaceful. God gives us a glimpse of the kingdom here: He will be so close to His people that He will answer before they call and hear them even as they begin to speak. Not even the animals considered natural enemies will hurt or destroy each other in His kingdom. How have you glimpsed God's kingdom peace on this earth?

APPLICATION

- Look at the three qualities of the world that God wants for us. Which one stands out to you? What makes you look forward to God's plan of renewal, and how differently will you live in light of this?
- What might God be telling you to do today to take part in His plan? How can you carry it out?
- Is there an action God is telling you to take within a specific community? How can you begin taking steps to serve them this week?

PRAYER

- Thank God for the wonderful world He has designed for you. Thank Him for His word and the glimpse of His kingdom on earth.
- Pray for more opportunities to actively take part in bringing about this *new heaven and new earth*. Ask God what you can do in your sphere of society.
- Ask God to show you how you can work with your community to bring relief and help to those in need. Pray to be salt and light on the earth.



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