

GLORIFIED JERUSALEM

Isaiah 4:2-6, 60:1-9, 15-21, 62:1-7, 12, 65:17-25, 66:10-16, 22-24

Zechariah 8:2-8, 20-23

When prophesying about the future glory of Jerusalem, Isaiah talks about the Earth, the nations, the temple, offerings that kings will bring there, and his people Israel. On the other hand, the New Jerusalem described by the apostle John in the NT comes down from heaven (Rev 21:2-22:5). It exists in the heavenly realm, the Jerusalem that is above (Gal 4:26), the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb 12:22). So Jerusalem during the millennium will be a twin city; earthly and heavenly, intimately connected, but in overlapping realms; the physical and the spiritual. One is the home of the Church, the other is the capital city of God's chosen people, Israel. The throne of God and the Lamb are in New Jerusalem while the Messiah rules the Earth from Mount Zion. God will dwell with his people, both the Church and Israel. The Church will see his face, Israel will see his glory shining forth from the millennial temple.

The Lord will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day, and a glow of flaming fire by night, and over all the glory there will be a canopy. It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain (Isa 4:5-6). What is this canopy, if not the New Jerusalem? Jerusalem is told to arise and shine, for her light has come, the glory of the Lord has risen upon her, and his glory will be seen over her (Isa 60:1). The context is the second coming of the Messiah when darkness covers the Earth and thick darkness the peoples. In the new age, nations will travel to her light and kings will make pilgrimage to the brightness of her dawning. Perhaps Jerusalem will look like a daybreak, with the first rays of the sun piercing the sky. God will make her majestic forever, a joy from age to age.

The Lord himself will be her everlasting light and all her people will be righteous, because all Israel will be saved and Jerusalem will be the

center of worship for all nations, the praise of all the Earth. She will be called Beulah (married) because of all her Israeli inhabitants, she is no longer empty of her people. She is also called Hephzibah (my delight is in her) because Jerusalem is the city that God chose for himself and now she is a Holy City. Ezekiel's last word is that the city's name will be, "The Lord is there." Many passages stress that Israel will be the center of the world and their religion and culture will be the standard for the nations who will submit in reverence to Israel, the people of God.

Zion's righteousness will go forth as brightness, her salvation as a burning torch. The nations will see her righteousness and all the kings will see her glory. The Lord will create Jerusalem to be a joy and her people to be glad, and her inhabitants will live for hundreds of years. Jesus, the Lord and Messiah, will dwell in the temple in Jerusalem as stressed by Zechariah. Very old people will sit in her streets and boys and girls will play there in security. This is a snapshot of the earthly Jerusalem during the millennium, not the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem. Many peoples and strong nations will come to seek the Lord and to pray to him because they will recognize that God is with Israel. The OT prophets were, naturally enough, inspired to prophesy about the capital of the Messiah's earthly kingdom, rather than the heavenly New Jerusalem.

The Book of Revelation is not so concerned with this earthly city, because it is written to the churches and the heavenly Jerusalem is their future home. But the OT prophets, especially Isaiah and Ezekiel, wrote their prophecies for the people of Israel concerning the future earthly Jerusalem, the temple that will be built there, the Messiah's throne, and his reign over the Earth resulting in a peaceful world characterized by righteousness and the knowledge of the Lord. The OT prophets were interested in the future of the people of Israel, the Church was a mystery to them (Eph 3:6).

However, in contrast to earthly Jerusalem where the one who fails to reach 100 years will be considered accursed, Isaiah catches glimpses of the resurrected Church. "But your dead will live, Lord, their bodies will rise – let those who dwell in the dust wake up and shout for joy – your dew is like the dew of the morning; the Earth will give birth to

her dead” (Isa 26:19) and “On this mountain, the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples ... On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away tears from all faces; he will remove his people’s disgrace from all the Earth (Isa 25:6-9). This is the New Jerusalem where there is no more death or crying or pain. The context of Isaiah 24-26 is the Day of the Lord when the Messiah comes to reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem (Isa 24:23), when Babylon falls and the cities become heaps of rubble (Isa 25:2), when God’s people are warned that they should enter their rooms and shut the doors behind them until God’s wrath passes by because the Lord is coming out of his dwelling to punish the people of the Earth for their sins (Isa 26:20-21).

The Old Testament picture

Isaiah prophesies much about a future Jerusalem that possesses a glory that has never been seen. The picture is of a redeemed Israel in a transformed land with the nations of the world in submission. His audience, the people of Jerusalem and Judah, would only interpret these prophecies in one way: literally, and so should we. His prophecies about Jerusalem are numerous and consistent and supported in many places by the other prophets. If prophecy is not taken literally, it loses its power and becomes subjective, open to all manner of interpretation.

Jerusalem, the world capital

Isaiah 2:2-4 In the last days the mountain of the LORD’s temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.” The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into

pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.

This first passage is very comprehensive and is repeated in Micah 4:1-3. The following points should be immediately noted because they set the tone for the following prophecies made about Jerusalem throughout the book.

- The phrase ‘the last days’ or ‘the latter days’ speaks of a time beyond the horizon; commonly depicting the messianic reign. Compare Hosea 3:5, Daniel 2:28.
- There will be a temple of the Lord at Jerusalem.
- Jerusalem will be raised physically as the highest of the mountains. Some interpret this figuratively, but there are other prophecies that teach geographical transformation.
- The nations will continue to exist during the millennium.
- The nations will make pilgrimages to Jerusalem to worship the Lord.
- The word of the Lord will go forth from Jerusalem as instruction for the nations.
- The Messiah will rule and judge the nations and settle disputes.
- The millennium will be free from warfare.

Jerusalem, surrounded by God’s glory

Isaiah 4:2-6 In that day the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of the survivors in Israel. Those who are left in Zion, who remain in Jerusalem, will be called holy, all who are recorded among the living in Jerusalem. The Lord will wash away the filth of the women of Zion; he will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire. Then the LORD will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over everything, the

glory will be a canopy. It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain.

The Messiah is introduced as the Branch of the Lord, a title adopted by Jeremiah (23:5, 33:15) and Zechariah (3:8, 6:12). Isaiah uses agricultural terms (branch and fruit), but from these passages, we learn the following:

- ‘In that day’ refers to the day of the Lord, when the Messiah arises in the splendor of his majesty (Isaiah 2:20-21).
- The Messiah will be beautiful and glorious (Compare Isaiah 28:5), branching out from the Lord (his deity) but also described as the fruit of the earth (his humanity).
- The Messiah will be the pride and glory of the remnant of Israel during his reign, the millennium.
- The remnant of Israel will be holy, the whole nation being converted after a period of judgment, the great tribulation.
- Over and above Mount Zion and Jerusalem the Lord will create a roof that will be visible as a cloud during the day and as a flaming fire during the night, reminiscent of the pillar of fire and cloud that accompanied Israel in the wilderness (Numbers 14:14). The canopy will cover Mount Zion, its surroundings, its population, and maybe the whole land of Israel. The whole land will be turned into a plain with Jerusalem remaining aloft on its site (Zechariah 14:10). Geba is on the northern border of Judah and Rimmon is on the southern border.
- Jerusalem will be a glorious city, surrounded and protected by the presence of God in the cloud by day and the fire by night.

Jerusalem, the world’s future rallying point

Isaiah 11:9-12 They (dangerous animals) will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with

the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. On that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious. On that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the surviving remnant of his people from Assyria, Lower Egypt, Upper Egypt, Cush, Elam, Babylonia, Hamath, and the islands of the Mediterranean. He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth.

This classic messianic passage predicts the harmonization of nature. After destroying the wicked upon his return, the Messiah will rule the world with justice and righteousness. The earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the word of God goes forth from Jerusalem. The nations will seek counsel from the king of the Jews, Jesus, the descendant of David's father Jesse, whose resting place will be glorious. He will establish his reign at Jerusalem and be a signal or rallying point for the nations who will help the dispersed Jews return home.

Jerusalem, where immortals feast with their King

Isaiah 25:6-9 On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine—the best of meats and the finest of wines. On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove his people's disgrace from all the earth. The LORD has spoken. On that day they will say, "Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation."

Israel is not mentioned in this passage, but as it relates to Mount Zion, Israel must be involved. The Lord will make a feast for *all peoples*, his redeemed people who come from all nations. This is the resurrected church because these people are immortal. Death has been swallowed up forever, they suffer no more pain or sorrow or tears.

The feast is the marriage feast of the Lamb (Revelation 19:6-9), the celebration of the union of the Messiah and his church. It is the feast in the kingdom of God, where the righteous celebrate this union, based on the new covenant made in his blood. As we will see, the resurrected will not live in the earthly Jerusalem, but in the New Jerusalem which comes down out of heaven from God and be enshrouded in a cloud which will cover Mount Zion and its glory will light up the whole area. Isaiah refers again to this glory hovering above Jerusalem in chapter sixty.

Jerusalem comforted by the Messiah's arrival

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken" ... You who bring good news to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good news to Jerusalem, raise your voice with a shout, raise it, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!"

During the messianic reign, Jerusalem's sins will be forgiven, and she will no longer experience the horrors of war. The comfort will begin when the Messiah returns to Zion and grants Israel victory over her enemies. All peoples will see his return.

John the Baptist partially fulfilled the prophecy of verse three, when he preached a message of repentance and prepared the way for Jesus, but the rest of this prophecy must wait until the second coming. The two witnesses of Revelation 11, dressed in sackcloth and preaching in Jerusalem, will again prepare the way for Jesus during the last three and a half years before he returns and the glory of the Lord is revealed and all humanity sees it at once. Zechariah tells us that the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley.

Jerusalem will be raised and living waters will flow to both the Mediterranean and Dead Seas. The whole land of Judah, from Geba, north of Jerusalem, to Rimmon, 35 miles (56 km) southwest of Jerusalem, will be turned into a plain with Jerusalem remaining aloft on its site. And over the whole site of Mount Zion will be the glory of God (Isaiah 4:5).

Jerusalem can never be forgotten by the Lord

Isaiah 49:14-23 But Zion said, “The LORD has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me.” “Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me. Your children hasten back, and those who laid you waste depart from you. Lift your eyes and look around; all your children gather and come to you. As surely as I live,” declares the LORD, “you will wear them all as ornaments; you will put them on, like a bride. “Though you were ruined and made desolate and your land laid waste, now you will be too small for your people, and those who devoured you will be far away. The children born during your bereavement will yet say in your hearing, ‘This place is too small for us; give us more space to live in.’ Then you will say in your heart, ‘Who bore me these? I was bereaved and barren; I was exiled and rejected. Who brought these up? I was left all alone, but these—where have they come from?’ “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: “See, I will beckon to the nations, I will raise my banner to the peoples; they will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their hips. Kings will be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. They will bow down before you with their faces to the ground; they will lick the dust at your feet. Then you will know that I am the LORD; those who hope in me will not be disappointed.”

God never forgets those whom he has chosen, whether his nation, Israel, his city, Jerusalem, or his saints. Jerusalem lay forsaken for a long time, but she is very dear to God. Her name is engraved on his

hands, he loves her like a woman loves her newborn child. He promised that her children would return, and today, that has been fulfilled. Jerusalem is one of the leading capitals of the world, albeit still in unbelief. In 1950 Jerusalem's population was 120,000, today it is nearing a million. The nations have allowed their Jewish populations to migrate to Israel as Isaiah prophesied, but the prophecies will not be complete until the Messiah arrives, Israel is converted, their land enlarged, and the kings of the world come and bow at the Messiah's feet.

Jerusalem revived

Isaiah 51:3-4, 11, 16-17, 52:1-2, 7-10 The LORD will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; he will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the LORD. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of singing. "Listen to me, my people; hear me, my nation: Instruction will go out from me; my justice will become a light to the nations. ... Those the LORD has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away. ... I have put my words in your mouth and covered you with the shadow of my hand—I who set the heavens in place, who laid the foundations of the earth, and who say to Zion, 'You are my people.' "Awake, awake! Rise up, Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the LORD the cup of his wrath, you who have drained to its dregs the goblet that makes people stagger. ... Awake, awake, Zion, clothe yourself with strength! Put on your garments of splendor, Jerusalem, the holy city. The uncircumcised and defiled will not enter you again. Shake off your dust; rise up, and sit enthroned, Jerusalem. Free yourself from the chains on your neck, Daughter Zion, now a captive. ... How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!" Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices; together they shout for joy. When the LORD returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes. Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people, he has

redeemed Jerusalem. The LORD will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.

These verses speak of the city of Jerusalem, for many centuries forsaken, defeated, enslaved, and in ruins, and now told to awake and arise and embrace her salvation. The surrounding desert will become like the garden of Eden, joy and singing will be her new experience, and the word of God and justice will go forth from Jerusalem to the nations of the world. She will be dressed in splendor, a glorious holy city, where her old enemies and the ungodly will have no place. This is the Lord's doing. The Messiah will return to Zion with a display of strength, defeating the nations that lay siege to her and bringing about her salvation. The whole world will see this great conquest and will have no choice but to submit to the new, righteous, universal King. In verses 8-10, there is an emphasis on people seeing the Lord's return to Zion with their own eyes, when all the nations to the ends of the earth will see how God saves his people.

The future glory of Jerusalem

Isaiah 60:1-22 Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. "Lift up your eyes and look about you: All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the hip. Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come. Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah. And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the LORD. All Kedar's flocks will be gathered to you, the rams of Nebaioth will serve you; they will be accepted as offerings on my altar, and I will adorn my glorious temple. "Who are these that fly along like clouds, like doves to their nests? Surely the islands look to me; in the lead are the ships of Tarshish, bringing

your children from afar, with their silver and gold, to the honor of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendor. “Foreigners will rebuild your walls, and their kings will serve you. Though in anger I struck you, in favor I will show you compassion. Your gates will always stand open, they will never be shut, day or night, so that people may bring you the wealth of the nations— their kings led in triumphal procession. For the nation or kingdom that will not serve you will perish; it will be utterly ruined. “The glory of Lebanon will come to you, the juniper, the fir and the cypress together, to adorn my sanctuary; and I will glorify the place for my feet. The children of your oppressors will come bowing before you; all who despise you will bow down at your feet and will call you the City of the LORD, Zion of the Holy One of Israel. “Although you have been forsaken and hated, with no one traveling through, I will make you the everlasting pride and the joy of all generations. You will drink the milk of nations and be nursed at royal breasts. Then you will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior, your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. Instead of bronze, I will bring you gold, and silver in place of iron. Instead of wood, I will bring you bronze, and iron in place of stones. I will make peace your governor and well-being your ruler. No longer will violence be heard in your land, nor ruin or destruction within your borders, but you will call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise. The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more; the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end. Then all your people will be righteous and they will possess the land forever. They are the shoot I have planted, the work of my hands, for the display of my splendor. The least of you will become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation. I am the LORD; in its time I will do this swiftly.”

The whole of Isaiah 60 is spoken by the Lord to the future millennial city of Jerusalem (verse 14). Her sons and daughters are a future generation of Israel who will be gathered home to Jerusalem (4, 9) and made righteous (21). The nations will bring their wealth to glorify the millennial temple (7, 13). Jerusalem will be glorified, not figuratively,

but physically, by a great light, which Isaiah already spoke about (4:5), where the whole site of Mount Zion is covered by a cloud by day and a flaming fire by night. Darkness will cover the earth at the end of the great tribulation as a result of the nations fighting an atomic war and the great earthquake that will occur upon the Messiah's return. But the Lord will arise upon Jerusalem and his glory appear over it like a sunrise. This is not temporary; it is a permanent phenomenon to which the nations will be attracted.

The apostle John saw the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God (Revelation 21:2, 10). He does not give the destination; it comes down from heaven but is not located on earth. It is logical to believe that this heavenly city will be located in the sky directly over the earthly Jerusalem. The light shining over Jerusalem by day and night is the glory of God whose throne is in the New Jerusalem and which eclipses the light of the sun and the moon (19-20) so that she does not need them.

Isaiah said, "Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn." Alluding to this passage, John said, "The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it" (Revelation 21:24). John's heavenly Jerusalem is in the sky, its light and glory come from the throne of God and the Lamb which are in it. Isaiah's Jerusalem is on the earth, its light and glory shine upon it from above. John saw no temple in the New Jerusalem, but Isaiah says, "The glory of Lebanon will come to you (Jerusalem), the juniper, the fir and the cypress together, to adorn my sanctuary; and I will glorify the place for my feet." There is no clear indication that the Messiah will be visible during the millennium. His presence will be seen in the glory above.

All people of Jewish descent will return to Israel to live and lead in the worship of the Lord. The wealth of the nations will be brought there to beautify the Lord's temple, which is called a house of prayer for all nations (Isaiah 56:7). The Messiah will make this temple glorious with all the treasures of the world. It is the place of his feet, his footstool so to speak. His throne will be in the heavenly city above, his place of worship in the earthly city below. Jerusalem will be majestic forever, as long as the world exists, it will be a joy for many generations. All the inhabitants will be righteous because all Israel will be saved (Rom

11:26). Redeemed Israel will inhabit the earthly city while the resurrected church will inhabit the New Jerusalem above.

Jerusalem vindicated

Isaiah 62:1-12 For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet, till her vindication shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch. The nations will see your vindication, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will bestow. You will be a crown of splendor in the LORD's hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. No longer will they call you Deserted or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the LORD will take delight in you, and your land will be married. As a young man marries a young woman, so will your Builder marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you. I have posted watchmen on your walls, Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the LORD, give yourselves no rest and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth. The LORD has sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm: "Never again will I give your grain as food for your enemies, and never again will foreigners drink the new wine for which you have toiled; but those who harvest it will eat it and praise the LORD, and those who gather the grapes will drink it in the courts of my sanctuary." Pass through, pass through the gates! Prepare the way for the people. Build up, build up the highway! Remove the stones. Raise a banner for the nations. The LORD has made a proclamation to the ends of the earth: "Say to Daughter Zion, 'See, your Savior comes! See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.' "They will be called the Holy People, the Redeemed of the LORD; and you will be called Sought After, the City No Longer Deserted.

These words come from Isaiah, but they also come from the heart of God, because he has chosen Jerusalem to be his holy city, and he will not be content until the nations see her vindication which is intimately

tied to the vindication of Israel as God's people and the Messiah as his appointed regent. Just as the church will become the bride of Christ, Israel will be born again under the new covenant, filled with God's Spirit and united to him. The eternal holy city of Jerusalem will be the praise of all the earth. The call goes out to the daughter of Zion (the Jewish people in general) to prepare the way because their Savior comes and his reward is with him. Compare Zechariah 9:9: "Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious," which is quoted in Matthew 21:5 and refers to Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. The reward is the glory which will be bestowed on Israel as Messiah's people: a holy people, the redeemed of the LORD.

The millennial Jerusalem

Isaiah 65:17-25 "See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and crying will be heard in it no more. "Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; the one who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere child; the one who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the work of their hands. They will not labor in vain, nor will they bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them. Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, and dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain," says the LORD.

The Lord will create new heavens and new earth and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. These verses relate to Israel's messianic future and were never thought of in the sense of a new planet. Jeremiah speaks of the same future era when he talks about the ark of the covenant and says: "In those days, when your numbers have increased greatly in the land," declares the LORD, "people will no longer say, 'The ark of the covenant of the LORD.' It will never enter their minds or be remembered; it will not be missed, nor will another one be made. At that time, they will call Jerusalem: The Throne of the LORD, and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name of the LORD" (Jeremiah 3:16-17).

'New' is in the sense of being renewed, as is John's use of the phrase. There is no biblical teaching that God will create a new planet. The one he created is beautiful and was pronounced to be good before sin came into the world. The remainder of this passage makes it clear that the renewed earth and the renewed Jerusalem, in which the Lord will rejoice, are restored and regenerated, as is also the case with this quote from Zechariah: This is what the LORD Almighty says: "I am very jealous for Zion; I am burning with jealousy for her." This is what the LORD says: "I will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the Faithful City, and the mountain of the LORD Almighty will be called the Holy Mountain." This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Once again men and women of ripe old age will sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each of them with a cane in hand because of their age. The city streets will be filled with boys and girls playing there." (Zechariah 8:2-5). "And many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the LORD Almighty and to entreat him" (Zechariah 8:22).

Neither is the new earth to be regarded as the eternal state of blessing for the righteous. People who die at a hundred years there are regarded as young. People will build houses and plant vineyards without fear of enemies. Animals are there, and wild animals will not be harmful as has already been expressed in the millennial passage of Isaiah 11. The new earth spoken about here and by John (Revelation 21:1) and Peter (2 Peter 3:13) all relate to the messianic reign on earth.

Jerusalem gives birth to a new nation

Isaiah 66:7-14 Before she goes into labor, she gives birth; before the pains come upon her, she delivers a son. Who has ever heard of such things? Who has ever seen things like this? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children. Do I bring to the moment of birth and not give delivery?" says the LORD. "Do I close up the womb when I bring to delivery?" says your God. "Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice greatly with her, all you who mourn over her. For you will nurse and be satisfied at her comforting breasts; you will drink deeply and delight in her overflowing abundance." For this is what the LORD says: "I will extend peace to her like a river, and the wealth of nations like a flooding stream; you will nurse and be carried on her arm and dandled on her knees. As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem." When you see this, your heart will rejoice and you will flourish like grass; the hand of the LORD will be made known to his servants, but his fury will be shown to his foes.

Zion gives birth to a son, later defined as her children, her land, and her nation. To what historic event does this refer? Isaiah is a prophet to Israel and says nothing about the church. He always has his people Israel in mind, and from 65:17 on, he is thinking about the new heavens and the new earth at the end of the age when the Messiah comes. Just as Mother Israel gives birth to the Messiah in Revelation 12:1-2, so here, Mother Jerusalem gives birth to a son, a new redeemed nation. Israel exists as a nation today and was born in a day in 1948, but in unbelief. The true Israel of God will be born in one day when the Deliverer comes to Zion and banishes ungodliness from Jacob. Isaiah addresses his words to those who tremble at God's word. He tells those who love Jerusalem to rejoice with her and be glad for her, just as he did in the previous chapter, where God said he is creating new heavens and a new earth, and he is creating Jerusalem to be a joy and her people to be glad. God will extend to the millennial Jerusalem peace like a river and the wealth of the nations will flow to her as her king, the Messiah, rules the world. All humanity will come to worship the Lord at Jerusalem (66:23). The catalyst for this great change is the return of the Messiah when he comes with fire and anger

and fury to execute judgment on godless humanity at the battle of Armageddon (66:15-16). That is when the messianic Israel will be born in one day with a new king, a new government, new borders, and a newly converted population.