

Characteristics of the Promised Time of Blessing.

A survey of this passage shows that five elements stand out in it:

1. God alone is to be honored (brought out particularly in v. 16).
2. There are to be great changes in the physical creation. (This is stressed in many parts of the passage but is particularly clear in vv. 17 and 25).
3. Longevity is to be greatly increased. (Stressed particularly in vv. 19-23).
4. There is to be an end of war and trouble. (Also suggested in vv. 19-23).
5. The curse is to be removed. (Suggested in v. 17 and clearly stated in v. 25).

Verse 17 shows that there is to be a remarkable physical change, which can be described as a creation of new heavens and a new earth. The exact meaning of this phrase might perhaps be considered better after we have looked at the details of the passage.

Verse 18 seems to be a direct answer to the prayer in the previous chapter. The people have been sorrowing on account of the misery around them. They are now told to be glad and rejoice because of the fact that God is preparing something wonderful. He is going to "create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." While the word "create" suggests the making of something that is entirely new, it is here used in connection with something which has long existed. Very evidently it does not mean that there is an introduction of something which has not existed at all before, but rather that there is such a complete change that it can be considered as being entirely new. If this is true of Jerusalem in verse 18, it is at least worthy of consideration to ask whether it is also true of the phrase "new heavens and a new earth" in verse 17.

Verse 19 continues the general thought of this rejoicing, and states clearly that weeping and misery are no longer to be found in the new Jerusalem that will be established. Verse 20 clearly presents the thought of greatly increased longevity. No more will infants die when only a few days old, nor will a man be cut off in the prime of his strength before