

Bible description of the end of the wicked. “Hell-fire,” “unquenchable fire,” and “eternal fire” are all used equivalently.

The circumstances that make the final destructive fires necessary call the more attention to the gospel of Jesus Christ, which can deliver men from the fires and prepare them for the new world. The results of rebellion will be clearly demonstrated, and the eradication of the marks of sin will be complete. There will be no opportunity for sin to arise again and disrupt God’s plan for universal happiness.<sup>4</sup>

### TOPICS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What are the possible effects of the doctrine of an endlessly burning hell on the thinking of both good and wicked people?
2. Sometimes believers in endless burning say that “Seventh-day Adventists do not believe in hell.” How would you answer this?
3. Show how the Bible doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked is in harmony with God’s character and plan while endless burning is not.
4. Review the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (*Christian Beliefs*, chapter 20) including the excerpt from Josephus in the “Supplementary Material.” What light does it throw on our present topic and vice versa?

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<sup>4</sup> “The whole universe will have become witnesses to the nature and results of sin. And its utter extermination, which in the beginning would have brought fear to angels and dishonor to God, will now vindicate His love and establish His honor before the universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law. Never will evil again be manifest.”—*The Great Controversy*, page 504:1.

## Our Eternal Home

“I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.” Revelation 21:1. Cleansed by fire, this earth is to be re-created and prepared to be the home of the redeemed.

At their translation or resurrection the redeemed will be made immortal. °1 Corinthians 15:51-53. They will be taken to the abiding places Christ went to prepare for them after His first advent. John 14:2, 3. During the millennium the redeemed will be with Christ, engaged in a phase of judgment work. Revelation 20:4. Heaven is to be their home for a thousand years; after that they will enter their new home in the re-created earth. Revelation 21 and 22 give the clearest Bible picture of what is to be expected. The view is far from complete, but there is enough to thrill our hearts and fill us with happy anticipation.<sup>1</sup>

### I. A New Creation

The new creation is not new in the same sense that this earth was newly created in the beginning. God will use the purified elements of this present earth from which to make the new. It will be literally a re-creation. Even the word John uses for “new” in Revelation 21:1 seems to indicate this. It is the Greek word *kainos* which refers to something new in condition as contrasted with something worn or marred. Peter refers to this re-creation in fulfillment of God’s promise. °2 Peter 3:13.

We can fill some details into the picture from Isaiah 65:17-25. But we must remember that this passage primarily describes what would have happened if Israel had fulfilled God’s purpose for them. Since Israel failed, the prophecy will be fulfilled in principle in the new heavens and earth to follow the millennium, but it cannot be applied then in every detail as it would have been under the earlier circumstances. Trying to

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<sup>1</sup> “A fear of making the future inheritance seem too material has led many to spiritualize away the very truths which lead us to look upon it as our home. . . . Those who accept the teachings of God’s word will not be wholly ignorant concerning the heavenly abode.”—*The Great Controversy*, pages 674:4 to 675:0.

apply every detail to the future re-creation presents several difficulties which are avoided if we remember the original purpose of the passage. See 65:20, 23; 66:24. °Study Isaiah 65:17-25 and see what you can find to help complete the picture of the new creation and the conditions in the new earth as described below in section II.

In the earth made new we shall see the final fulfillment of the promise, “The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever.” Psalm 37:29.

## II. Changed Conditions

“He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.” Revelation 21:5. Everything that surrounds the redeemed in the re-created earth will be new. Plant life, animal life, and the surface of the earth will all be new. °Study Revelation 21; 22. Compare Isaiah 65:17-25. What surroundings will be different in the new earth from those we now have? Distinguish between what is said of the New Jerusalem and what seems to have more general application in the new earth. Describe the New Jerusalem. °Cite texts in each case.

In the same passages see how the lives and relationships of the redeemed differ from their present existence and relationships. Not only is the earth new, but its inhabitants are those who were first spiritually transformed and later physically changed and made immortal.

What opportunities are open to the redeemed?<sup>2</sup> See:

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<sup>2</sup> “There, immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There will be no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body.

“All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God’s redeemed. Unfettered by mortality, they wing their tireless flight to worlds afar—worlds that thrilled with sorrow at the spectacle of human woe and rang with songs of gladness at the tidings of a ransomed soul. With unutterable delight the children of earth enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. They share the treasures of knowledge and understanding gained through ages upon ages in contemplation of God’s handiwork. With undimmed vision they gaze upon the glory of creation—suns and stars and systems, all in their appointed order circling the throne of Deity. Upon all things, from the least to the greatest, the Creator’s name is written, and in all are the riches of His power displayed.”—*The Great Controversy*, page 677:2, 3.

\*Matthew 25:34

\*Revelation 3:12

\*Revelation 21:3

\*1 Corinthians 13:12

\*Revelation 7:14-17

What particular privilege is to be granted the 144,000? °See Revelation 14:1-4.

Despite the tragic loss of an enormous number of human beings, the future of the universe will be unmarred. The fellowship with God that Adam and Eve enjoyed will be the privilege of each of the redeemed. Once again there will be unity and harmony throughout the universe, with no discordant voice. Nowhere outside the Bible is the restored harmony more graphically and beautifully portrayed than in the closing paragraph of *The Great Controversy*:

“The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.”—*The Great Controversy*, page 678:3.

See also *Education*, pages 301-309.

“One reminder alone remains: Our Redeemer will ever bear the marks of His crucifixion. Upon His wounded head, upon His side, His hands and feet, are the only traces of the cruel work that sin has wrought. Says the prophet, beholding Christ in His glory: ‘He had bright beams coming out of His side: and there was the hiding of His power.’ Habakkuk 3:4, margin. That pierced side whence flowed the crimson stream that reconciled man to God—there is the Saviour’s glory, there ‘the hiding of His power.’”—*The Great Controversy*, page 674:2.