

When Will These Things Be?

It would be impossible to consider 65:16-25 as a description of heaven. It has too many allusions to earthly activities, and even death is contained within the description. It must refer to a situation that is to exist upon this earth.

When will these things take place? There are only three possible answers to this question. Either (1) it is a figurative description of the church during the present age, (2) it is a description of conditions during the earthly reign of Christ after His return, or (3) it describes an eternal condition which is to exist after the final judgment and condemnation of the wicked.

Let us first examine the question whether this is a description of the church of the present age. While there are many passages in Isaiah which do indeed describe the present church, including parts of the first half of this chapter, this is certainly not true of our present passage. To take the specific, literal statements of this passage as a description of the church today in the midst of a world of sin and wickedness is to carry figurative language to the point where one can no longer be certain of the significance of any sentence. We have here definite promises of changes in the physical sphere, and the passage cannot be satisfactorily interpreted as a picture of the present age.

As to the second possibility, the most natural interpretation of the passage is to take it in connection with the descriptions of Isaiah 2 and Isaiah 11, and to recognize it as a picture of the period when Christ is to reign in righteousness upon this earth, immediately after His return. This millennial interpretation fits every aspect of the passage, though some of its aspects may seem surprising to those who have had a false idea of the Millennium. Thus we find described here the presence of death and of sin upon the earth, even though in a very limited degree. The Millennium is not a time when death no longer exists. Death is the last enemy that is to be destroyed. It is a time, indeed, when the glorified saints are to have glorified bodies and be free from death, but upon the earth there will still remain a certain amount of death and a certain amount of sin, even though greatly cut down. While God will reign unchallenged and