

The new creation:
heavenly hope from
the book of Hebrews

1–3 May 2020



Name: _____

Talk 1

The new creation: a world ruled by Jesus (Hebrews 2:5–18)

“If you do not know where you come from, then you don’t know where you are, and if you don’t know where you are, then you don’t know where you’re going. And if you don’t know where you’re going, you’re probably going wrong.”—Terry Pratchett

Introduction

Where is your life heading?

1. Where have we come from? Mankind was made to rule creation (Hebrews 2:5–8)

Hebrews 2 is making the case that there is a world to come (2:5)

Mankind’s special relationship with God

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. (Genesis 1:26)

Mankind’s special relationship to creation

And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Genesis 1:28)

They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:9)

Two implications:

Great dignity

God-given purpose

2. Where are we now? Jesus is rescuing men and women to rule a new creation (Hebrews 2:9–18)

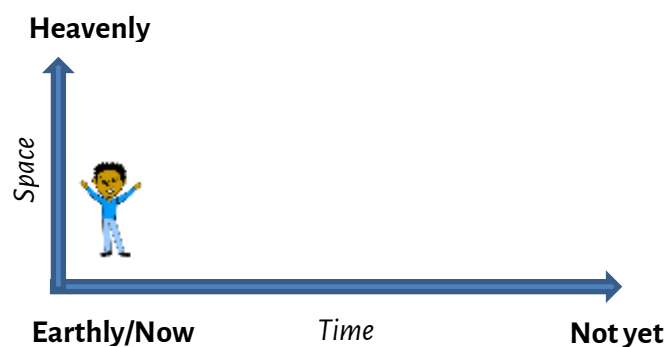
Jesus is the true human being, the fulfilment of Psalm 8

As the true human being, Jesus pioneers salvation (2:9–13)

As the true human being, Jesus delivers us from the fear of death (2:14–15)

As the true human being, Jesus makes propitiation for sin as our merciful high priest (2:16–18)

Intermission: inaugurated eschatology



Time

At present [ie **now**], we do **not yet** see everything in subjection to him. (Hebrews 2:8b)

Space

[God] raised us up with him and seated us with him in the **heavenly** places in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:6)

3. Where are we going? To the new creation, a world ruled by Jesus—and us!

The new creation will be a physical world

The new creation will be a world without death

The new creation is yours

Discussion questions for talk 1

1. Did you have any questions or comments that you would like to discuss?
2. How important is the new creation in your thinking at the moment? Why is/isn't it important in your life at the moment?
3. How does Hebrews 2 excite you about the world to come? What particular truths give us confidence in our future? What from this passage gives us encouragement now?
4. How would you like this weekend to change your view of the new creation?

Talk 2

The new creation: a holy place (Hebrews 9:1–28)

Introduction

What do you think will be the best thing about the new creation?

- The absence of bad things?
- The presence of good things?
- God?

Psalm 16:11; Psalm 63:3; Psalm 73:25–26 (cf. Ps. 84:1–2, 10–12)

Relationship with God is what the Bible is all about

Relationship with God has gone wrong

- God cannot dwell among us
- We cannot dwell with God
- “I will be your God and you shall be my people” (cf Gen 17:8; Ex 6:7; Ex 29:45; Lev 26:12; Jer 31:33; Ezek 34:30; Ezek 36:28; Rev 21:3)

1. God draws near to man (Exodus)

I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.’ (Exodus 6:7)

And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. (Exodus 25:8)

I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God. (Exodus 29:44)

The tabernacle as God's holy house

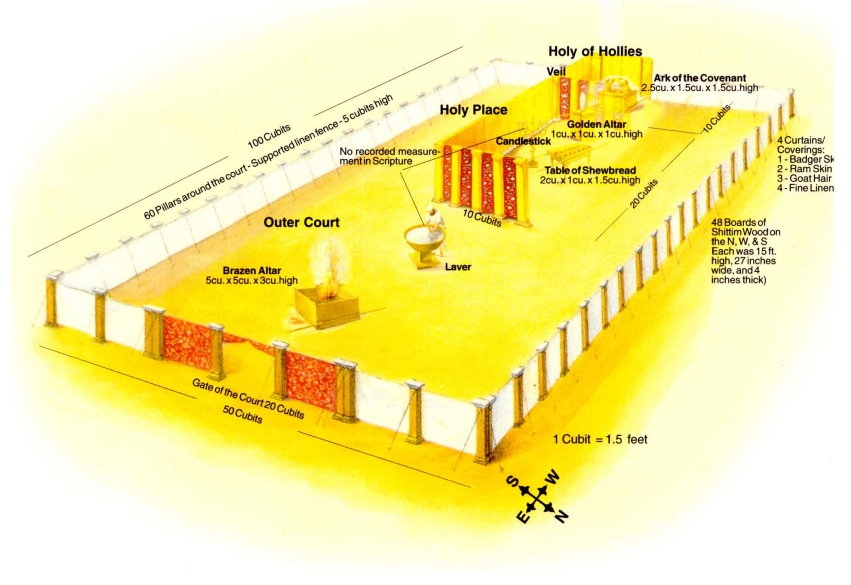
The architecture (cf Hebrews 9:1–5)

Three rooms:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Three rooms = three zones of Sinai (cf Ex. 19:17; 24:9-11; 24:16-17)

The Structure and Dimensions of the Tabernacle



The interior design

The tabernacle as a mini new creation

Reminiscent of Eden (cf Lev. 16:14 and Gen 3:24; Ex 26:1 and Gen 3:24; Ex 25:31-33)

Reminiscent of Genesis 1–2—Exodus 25–31 is made of seven speeches like seven days of creation (Ex. 25:1, 30:11, 30:17, 30:22, 30:34, 31:1, 31:12) and the wider context echoes the language of Genesis 1–2 (see table)

Genesis 1–2	Exodus 39–40
And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good (1:31)	And Moses saw all the work, and behold, they had done it (39:43)
Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them (2:1)	Thus all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was finished (39:32)
God finished his work that he had done (2:2)	So Moses finished the work (40:33)
So God blessed the seventh day... (2:3)	Then Moses blessed them (39:43)
...and made it holy (2:3)	...anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it... so that it may become holy (40:9)

Patterned after greater heavenly reality (Exodus 25:8)

The problem of Exodus 40:34–35

The solution that Leviticus provides

2. Man draws near to God (Leviticus)

Leviticus = 'And he called' in Hebrew (Leviticus 1:1)

Leviticus asks three broad questions:

1. How can man enter God's house? (Leviticus 1–9)

Atonement

Ascension

Exodus 40:35 → Leviticus 9:24

2. How can unclean man stay in God's house once inside? (Leviticus 10–16)

The Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16)

No one may be in the tent of meeting from the time he enters to make atonement in the Holy Place until he comes out and has made atonement for himself and for his house and for all the assembly of Israel.
(Leviticus 16:17)

The greater, cosmic Day of Atonement (cf Hebrews 9:8)

3. If one man can enjoy God's presence, what about the rest of mankind? And what about all this blood and ritual? (Leviticus 17–27)

"If you walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them, then I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. [...] I will make my dwelling among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people." (Leviticus 26:3–4, 11–12)

Hosea 1:9

3. I will be your God and you shall be my people (Hebrews 9:1–28)

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant... I will put my laws into their minds and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God and they shall be my people” (Heb. 8:8, 10)

Jesus is the ultimate high priest

Hebrews 9:11, 26

Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice for sin

Hebrews 9:12-14

Jesus enters the ultimate Most Holy Place, heaven itself

Hebrews 9:11–12, 23–24

Some implications

Holiness and hell

Holiness and the new creation

Waiting for the new creation (in isolation)

Ideas for personal reflection time (choose one or two)

1. Re-read Hebrews 9, give thanks and pray through some of the truths we've seen
2. Try and imagine what a completely holy world would be like—how would it be different from this current world?
3. Think about how Jesus' death gives you assurance to enter the new creation when you die (as well as to pray to God now)
4. Read through Revelation 21. How does it present the new creation as a holy place?

Talk 3

The new creation: a joyful homecoming (Hebrews 10:32–11:2, 11:8–16, 11:39–12:2)

Introduction

What does it mean to live for the new creation now?

And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. (Hebrews 6:11–12)

1. You are not at home in this world (10:32–39)

What do we need when we lose sight of our heavenly home?

2. Faith is a foretaste of our new creation home now (11:1–2, 8–16)

Faith is the assurance of the future in the present

Assurance = substance/nature [Greek = hypostasis]

He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature [hypostaseōs]. (Hebrews 1:3)

Hebrews 11:8–9, 13

Faith is specifically the assurance of our eternal home, the new creation, in the present

Hebrews 11:10, 14–16a

Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod [lit. wandering], east of Eden. Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. When he built a city, he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch. (Genesis 4:16–17)

Faith pleases God

Hebrews 11:2, 6, 16

3. Living for the new creation means running home to Jesus (11:39–12:2)

Discussion questions for talk 3

1. Do you have any questions or comments that you would like to discuss, from either talks 2 or 3?
2. In what ways do you **not** feel at home in this world? How does this help you desire the new creation more?
3. What stops us looking forward to the new creation in this life? Why is that and how might Hebrews 11 help you look forward to it more?
4. How does Jesus himself give us every reason to run the race with endurance? Think about how Jesus enables us to lay aside every weight and sin

Seminar: meditating on the new creation

Introduction

Daydreaming

1. Why do we need to think about the new creation?

The New Testament writers tell us we should

Ephesians 1:15–19a, 4:17–24, 6:10–20—‘that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you’ (1:18)

Colossians 3:1–4—‘set your mind on things that are above’ (v2)

Romans 8:1–30—‘set your mind on the things of the Spirit’ (v6)

Philippians 3:1–4:1—‘I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus’ (v14)

It is safe for you

Philippians 3:2—‘to write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you’

It is how the people of faith think

Hebrews 11—‘Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen’ (v1)

Sidebar: Changing what we mean by thinking (A Biblical view of the heart and mind)

Thinking this way is how the purpose of the Bible authors is achieved in us

2. Helping us to keep thinking about the new creation

Discussions questions for seminar (choose a few)

1. Why do we find it hard to think about the new creation?
2. Why can we sometimes find it embarrassing or awkward to speak about the new creation with one another?
3. If you were told that Jesus will return this week, how would you honestly feel? Why?
4. What most excites you about the new creation?
5. What questions do you have about what the new creation will be like?
6. What do you think the benefits would be a) for you and b) for us as a church family if we thought more about the new creation?
7. Look through day 1 of the devotional notes. How do you feel about trying this for yourself this week?

Talk 4

The new creation: an unshakable kingdom (Hebrews 12:18–13:6)

Introduction

What does it mean to live for the new creation now?

‘The journey is more important than the destination’—really?

1. God has spoken a great salvation (Hebrews 12:18–24)

Two words/two worlds (cf Hebrews 1:1–2)

Two mountains/two destinations (cf Hebrews 12:18–24)

Mount Sinai

Mount Zion

- ‘Mount Zion and the city of the living God’
- ‘Innumerable angels in festal gathering’
- ‘The assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven’
- ‘God, the judge of all’
- ‘The spirits of the righteous made perfect’
- ‘Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant’
- ‘The sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than Abel’

2. Do not refuse the salvation that God has spoken (Hebrews 12:25–27)

Intermission: can I lose my salvation?

What does it mean to be a genuine Christian?

For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. (Hebrews 3:14)

Assurance and warnings work together—don't jump out of the boat!

Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. (Hebrews 2:1)

Apostasy = moving away—are you listening today?

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts..." (Hebrews 3:7)

Seven litmus tests to work out whether we are refusing him who is speaking

1. Are you cultivating an attitude of gratitude? (12:28a)
2. Are you worshipping God with humble awe? (12:28b–29)
3. Are you persevering in love of your church family? (13:1)
4. Are you neglecting to show hospitality? (13:2)
5. Are you sharing in suffering? (13:3)
6. Are you holding marriage in honour? (13:4)
7. Are you content with what you have? (13:5a) Joshua 1:8; Psalm 118:6

Ideas for personal reflection time

1. Choose one or two aspects of this weekend that you've enjoyed—give thanks to God for them
2. Choose one or two areas in which this weekend has challenged you, perhaps from the litmus tests mentioned above—reflect on them and pray about them
3. Think about how has your thinking about the new creation changed since the beginning of this weekend. How will you ensure you continue to think about it after the weekend?