

BIBLICAL PROPHECY



FROM NOW UNTIL FOREVER

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Introduction

What does the Bible tell us about our future? What will happen from now until the time of Christ's Return—and far beyond that?

What person on earth would not want to know?

The surprising answer is that God revealed thousands of years ago, in the pages of the Bible, what is going to happen, beginning very soon. While some aspects of His master plan are a little vague, others are presented with astounding precision and detail.

We present in this booklet a timeline of prophecy, beginning with events that are already unfolding, as well as events that are yet to occur.

We encourage you to look up the scriptural references as you read this booklet, so as to enrich your understanding of world events from a biblical perspective.

Chapter 1

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

When John was on the island of Patmos, around 90 A.D., he saw, in a vision, events which would take place in the future. John saw how God the Father gave a scroll with seven seals to Jesus Christ, asking Him to open it, as no one else was able to do it (compare Revelation 5:1–9; 6:1). John wrote down what he saw so that we can know today what the future holds.

In order to understand these seven seals, we need to study the words of Jesus Christ. The first six of the seven seals are recorded in Revelation 6, and they are explained, as we will see, in the accounts of Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21.

THE FIRST FOUR SEALS

When Christ opened the first four seals (compare Revelation 6:2–8), John saw, in the vision, the famous “four horsemen of the Apocalypse.” When comparing Revelation 6:2–8 with Christ’s sayings in Matthew 24:4–7 and Luke 21:8–11, the meaning of the four horsemen or the first four seals becomes clear.

Turning to Matthew 24, let us note what Christ tells His disciples, beginning with the first seal.

THE FIRST SEAL—RELIGIOUS DECEPTION

In verses 1–2 of Matthew 24, Christ pointed out that the glorious Jewish temple would be destroyed. This actually happened in 70 A.D. when the Romans conquered Jerusalem. Beginning with verse 3, four of Christ’s disciples (compare Mark 13:3) asked Him privately when these things would be; and what would be the sign of His coming and of the end of the age.

Christ responded in verses 4 and 5 by warning them against **religious deception**, stating that *many* would come in His name, proclaiming

that He was the Christ, yet their messages would be deceiving. This deception actually began shortly after Christ's resurrection and the birth of the New Testament Church. The apostle Paul would later say that there were many of his time who preached *another gospel and another Jesus* (2 Corinthians 11:4; Galatians 1:6)—one who had come to do away with the law of God. By the time of the destruction of the temple, much of the truth had been lost due to false teachings that had entered the Church. Subsequently, John was compelled to emphasize that anyone who would proclaim God but refuse to keep His law would be a liar, and no truth would be in him (1 John 2:4).

The religious deception that Christ warned against would be ongoing. Even in the end time, just prior to and during the Great Tribulation (see below), religious deception would abound (verses 11, 24; compare Mark 13:22). And so, turning to the book of Revelation, we can see that the **first seal** in Revelation 6:2 that describes a rider on a white horse, who has a bow and a crown and who goes out to conquer, is a description of a false religion, one that “professes” Christ but deceives the majority of people with a false message about Him and the gospel. The true Christ is described in Revelation 19:11–12, 15 as One who has many crowns and who has a sharp sword. He is riding a white horse as well, showing that the false representation of Christ will bear some resemblance with the true Christ; otherwise, no one would be deceived! We must take a closer look and realize that the differences are striking! First, the true Christ will return *after* the Great Tribulation, while the false representation of Christ will already have conquered many people *before* that time. Secondly, the true Christ has a *sword* and *many crowns*, while the false representation of Christ has a *bow* and just *one* crown.

Yes, religious deception began in the early New Testament Church, but it was to continue throughout the ages and reach the beginning of its culmination when the **first seal** is broken and the **first horseman of the Apocalypse** begins to ride (compare Matthew 24:3–5; Luke 21:8).

THE SECOND SEAL—WARS

In Matthew 24:6–7, Christ continues to warn of **wars and rumors of wars** (as well as commotions, compare Luke 21:9), with nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. This is depicted in

Revelation 6:3–4 as the **second seal**—when the rider on a fiery red horse goes out with a great sword to take away the peace from the earth and when people kill each other. Even though wars and commotions and rumors of wars have existed throughout the ages, Christ is pointing out that the wars would become bigger and more all-encompassing, from nations fighting against nations to kingdoms fighting against kingdoms. We have experienced two World Wars in the 20th century, and the Bible shows that in the not-too-distant future, another terrible and most destructive World War will engulf the entire globe.

THE THIRD SEAL—FAMINE

Turning again to Matthew 24:7, we note that Christ next warned of **famine**. The **third seal** in Revelation 6:5–6 also depicts famine. A black horse begins to ride and the rider has a pair of scales in his hand, indicating scarcity of food, measuring small quantities of food for comparatively huge amounts of money. While there still is some wheat and barley available for a high price, oil and wine are not to be “harmed” or “touched.” The *People’s New Testament* states: “Oil and wine, though common foods, are entirely prohibited. An age of war, mourning, calamity and famine is certainly symbolized.” The *Ryrie Study Bible* adds: “A severe shortage of food is indicated.” The parallel account in Luke 21:11 adds that at that time, earthquakes will increase in frequency and magnitude as well.

THE FOURTH SEAL—DISEASE EPIDEMICS

The third horse of the Apocalypse (mainly famine) is followed, according to Revelation 6:7–8, by a pale horse, whose rider’s name is “Death, and Hades [or “the Grave”] followed him.” Christ says in Matthew 24:7 that famines will be followed by *pestilences* [see also Luke 21:11].

Oftentimes religious deception leads to wars, directly or indirectly. Wars, in turn, lead to famine and *diseases*. Historically, the Black Death alone killed upwards of one-third of the people living in Europe in the 14th century. The Spanish flu pandemic lasted from March, 1918 to June, 1920, spreading even to the Arctic and remote Pacific islands. While older estimates put the number of those who were killed at 40 to 50 million people, current estimates are that 50 to 100 million

people worldwide died, possibly more than what succumbed to the Black Death.

So, the **fourth horse of the Apocalypse** describes **pestilences or disease epidemics**, but not exclusively. Christ also speaks in Matthew 24:7 of earthquakes in various places. We see then that **earthquake activity** will continue and will increase throughout that time.

Luke 21:11 also states that at that time, fearful sights and great signs from heaven will be observed. It appears that certain frightful signs will begin to occur right after the pestilences will be spread throughout the earth. Notice that Luke 21:11 is followed by a description of the Great Tribulation in verses 12–24, and verse 25 continues to describe the heavenly signs, after the beginning of the Great Tribulation. Unless we conclude that verses 11 and 25 refer to the same incident—which is unlikely, given the other descriptions in verse 11, such as earthquakes, famines and pestilences—it appears that certain “fearful sights and great signs from heaven” will occur even prior to the beginning of the Great Tribulation.

ONE-FOURTH OF MANKIND WILL BE KILLED

Revelation 6:8 adds that one-fourth of mankind will be killed by the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, and that these killings will be carried out with the sword (political and also religiously-motivated wars), with hunger (a result of famine), with death (resulting from pestilences), and also with the **beasts of the earth**. Many times, contagious diseases are communicated by sick animals carrying deadly viruses (remember the Ebola virus, the bird flu or the mad cow disease).

In addition, note the following comments by *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*. This commentary points out that the four horsemen will “kill with sword - In war and discord... And with hunger - With famine - one of the accompaniments of war - where armies ravage a nation, trampling down the crops of grain; consuming the provisions laid up... and shutting up the people in besieged cities to perish by hunger. Famine has been not an infrequent accompaniment of war; and we are to look for the fulfillment of this in its extensive prevalence...

“And with death... This would well denote the pestilence - not an infrequent accompaniment of war. For nothing is better suited to produce this than the unburied bodies of the slain; the filth of a

camp; the want of food; and the crowding together of multitudes in a besieged city; and, accordingly, the pestilence... has been often closely connected with war...

“And with the beasts of the earth - With wild beasts. This, too, would be one of the consequences of war, famine, and pestilence. Lands would be depopulated, and wild beasts would be multiplied... Compare Ezekiel 14:21, ‘I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence...’”

Chapter 2

Religious and National Persecution

Christ warns us that following the events of the first four seals, an organized and worldwide martyrdom of true Christians will occur next. Matthew 24:9–13, 21–22 describes this time in vivid terms (compare also Mark 13:11–13; Luke 21:12–19).

THE FIFTH SEAL—GREAT TRIBULATION

These events are identified as the “Great Tribulation,” and they are also described as the **fifth seal** in Revelation 6:9–11. The Great Tribulation will apparently last three-and-one-half years, but it could be shortened.

RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

The vision of the souls under the altar in Revelation 6:9–11 makes clear that religious persecution has occurred throughout the history of the true Church (compare verses 9–10) but that in the end time, a terrible and unparalleled persecution will happen once again (compare verse 11).

This religious persecution will be brought about by the “beast”—an end-time military leader in Europe.

While these terrible events unfold, God has promised some of His people protection here on earth (Revelation 3:10). First, He offers them a “place of safety” (Revelation 12:14–16). Later, protection will be granted to 144,000 Israelites and a great multitude of “non-Israelite” people out of all tribes and nations and tongues (Revelation 7:1–17).

WAR AGAINST MODERN ISRAEL AND JUDAH

At the same time this religious persecution of God’s servants during the “Great Tribulation” is taking place, the **modern nations and peoples of Judah** (the Jews) and of the **house of Israel** (the English-speaking

nations of the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and others) **will be attacked and destroyed in war**, mainly by a European power bloc (Matthew 24:15–28; Mark 13:14–20; Luke 21:20–24; Daniel 12:1; Jeremiah 30:10; Hosea 9:3; 13: 16; Amos 6:7; 7:17). The Great Tribulation is Satan’s wrath directed against true Christians—spiritual Israelites—and the modern physical descendants of the ancient houses of Israel and Judah.

The military political leader of Europe, called the beast, will invade the Middle East and conquer Jerusalem, and his forces will, at the same time, successfully attack the USA and the UK—apparently using nuclear weapons, as all the major cities of the USA and the UK will be destroyed or laid waste in this war (compare Ezekiel 6:6; 35:4).

We are told in Hosea 5:5, in the *Authorized Version*, that “Israel and Ephraim” will “fall in their iniquity” and that “Judah also shall fall *with them*.” This is an end-time prophecy that has yet to be fulfilled. In the past, Israel and Judah “fell” at different times, but never together or at the same time. The *Tanakh* says: “Israel’s pride shall be humbled before his very eyes, As Israel and Ephraim fall because of their sin (And Judah falls with them).”

As mentioned, the beast will also launch a religious attack on *spiritual* Israel (the Church of God) at approximately the same time he attacks the modern nations of Israel and Judah.

Chapter 3

Heavenly Signs and Disturbances

Following the beginning of the Great Tribulation, Christ warns in Matthew 24:29 of **heavenly signs**—the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. The parallel account in Luke 21:25–26 adds that at that time, there will be distress of nations on this earth, with perplexity, and the sea and the waves will be roaring, and men’s hearts will fail them for fear and expectation of those things which will be coming on the earth, because the powers of heaven will be shaken.

THE SIXTH SEAL

The “heavenly signs” or cosmic disturbances are depicted by the **sixth seal** in Revelation 6:12–14, which are introduced once again by a great earthquake.

We need to understand, however, that the persecution of national and spiritual Israel and the heavenly signs *will continue* until Christ’s return. That is, the religious and national *tribulation* of Israel (Israelite nations as well as true Christians) *will not end when the heavenly signs begin*. The defeat of modern Israel and Judah will have continuing effects. Their downfall is not limited to just the time when the Great Tribulation begins.

We read in Jeremiah 30:7 that the Day of the Lord [depicted by the *seventh seal*] is “great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob’s trouble, But he shall be saved out of it.” As we will see, Jacob, or Israel, will be led into captivity and will be suffering greatly from the hands of their captors—including during the Day of the Lord, the time of the seventh seal—until Jesus Christ frees them from captivity **AFTER** His Second Coming.

Chapter 4

The Day of the Lord

The cosmic disturbances precede the “**Day of the Lord,**” the **seventh seal** of the book of Revelation. Revelation 6:17 refers to the Day of the Lord as the “great day of His wrath” (compare Joel 2:30–31; 3: 14–15), culminating in and leading to the return of Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:27, 30; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27).

The time span of the Day of the Lord, which will begin perhaps two-and-one-half years after the beginning of the Great Tribulation and one year prior to Christ’s return, is described as a time of Godly retribution (Isaiah 2:10–21; 13:6–16; Zephaniah 1:14–18). Note, however, that *the heavenly signs will not end when the Day of the Lord begins.*

THE SEVENTH SEAL

This planet will face tumultuous events during the Day of the Lord that will engulf the entire earth. In fact, the Bible says that the “**seventh seal**” of the book of Revelation, describing the Day of the Lord, **consists of seven trumpets**, and it is very specific as to what will occur when those seven trumpets will be blown.

THE SEVEN TRUMPETS OF THE SEVENTH SEAL

The SEVEN TRUMPETS are blown by seven angels (Revelation 8:2, 6). The first FOUR trumpets are described in Revelation 8:7–12.

The FIRST TRUMPET describes, what appears to be, a firestorm that is destroying one-third of the trees and all the grass (compare Revelation 8:7).

The SECOND TRUMPET depicts, what appears to be, a huge burning meteorite falling into the sea, destroying one-third of all sea creatures and one-third of all ocean ships (Revelation 8:8–9).

Some have wondered whether this is just a description of dying animals in the Mediterranean Sea. However, the Bible does not limit its

description to just one local area, and this assumption is contradicted by the fact that God will pour out His wrath over ALL nations and the *entire* earth (Isaiah 2:12–22).

The THIRD TRUMPET describes, what appears to be, another huge fiery comet or asteroid, destroying or poisoning one-third of all the sweet drinking water (Revelation 8:10–11).

The FOURTH TRUMPET brings further cosmic disturbances, blocking one-third of the light of the sun, moon and stars (Revelation 8:12–13). Revelation 8:13 speaks of the last three remaining trumpets as the last “three woes”—because of their great and extreme severity.

EUROPEAN POWERS ATTACK FAR EASTERN NATIONS

The FIFTH TRUMPET, the first of the last three woes, is described in Revelation 9:1–12. It identifies the final European resurrection of the Roman Empire coming out of a “bottomless pit” (Revelation 9:1–3; compare Revelation 11:7; 17:8). This is an end-time European power bloc, referred to as the “beast” elsewhere. [Please note that the term “beast” can refer to the European *power bloc*, and mainly to ten core European nations or groups of nations, as well as to the *human leader* of that bloc.] It is depicted as being at war with other nations. Its instruments of war are symbolically portrayed as “locusts” (Revelation 9:3) or possibly helicopters, causing pain and harm on humans for five months, without killing them (Revelation 9:4–5, 10).

The real ruler of this power bloc is “the angel of the bottomless pit” (Revelation 9:11), Satan the devil. This war occurs after the Great Tribulation has commenced, after the time of war between Europe and the modern nations of the houses of Israel and Judah. By that time, the modern nations of the houses of Israel and Judah will already have been defeated, and their surviving people will have become captives of this European power. The war depicted in Revelation 9 is alluded to more fully in Daniel 11, commencing with verse 41.

The European forces will attack Russia, China, Japan and other Asian countries, after rumors from those areas will have disturbed the beast, perhaps indicating that these Asian nations are planning an attack on Europe and the Middle East. Interestingly enough, the European nations will use weapons that will not kill, but only torment the Asian peoples for five months (Revelation 9:5).

KINGS FROM THE EAST RETALIATE AGAINST EUROPE

The SIXTH TRUMPET (the “second woe”) is described in Revelation 9:13–21, foretelling the appearance of an invading army of 200 million soldiers (Revelation 9:16) from the East (Revelation 9:14)—shortly after Europe’s invasion of the Middle East (Daniel 11:41–43, 45)—to kill “a third of mankind” (Revelation 9:15). Apparently, this is the second stage of a total world war between, at that time, mainly the European power bloc and a power bloc of eastern nations (compare Revelation 9:17 with Joel 2: 4). This second stage is also alluded to in Daniel 11:44.

The tormented Asian nations will respond with a counter attack, but their actions will be ruthless and merciless. They will use nuclear weapons of mass destruction and kill one-third of mankind, showing that the effect of their actions will kill many Europeans, although it will not be limited to just European nations. Other passages tell us that ultimately, Europe will be destroyed by these Asian nations, and the beginning of this destruction will undoubtedly commence with this counter attack, but additional attacks will follow. This also shows that these Asian nations were not altogether unprepared for such military action, and that the beast’s concern of an Asian attack will not have been unjustified.

KINGS FROM THE EAST INVADE EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Let us focus a little more on the fact that at the time of the sixth trumpet, the kings from the East will attack *European* and *non-European* countries, including the *Middle East*. Remember that their attacks will cause the death of a THIRD of mankind, and that the beast and the false prophet will apparently reside by then, at least at times, in Jerusalem (compare Daniel 11:45; 2 Thessalonians 2:3–4; Revelation 11:7–8). In addition, some of the beast’s armies will have conquered Jerusalem and will be stationed there.

Revelation 16:10–11 shows us that even shortly after the time of the retaliatory brutal attack of the Asiatic hordes, the “throne of the beast” will still be in Europe. Daniel 11:44–45 merely tells us that after he has conquered the Middle East [during the Great Tribulation of the fifth seal], and after his attack on the Far East [depicted by the

fifth trumpet of the seventh seal], the beast or “king of the North” shall “plant *the tents* of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain”—in Jerusalem.

But the planting of TENTS indicates a temporary dwelling and not a permanent or exclusive place of residence, reminding us of events during World War II when Adolf Hitler had several places in different areas where he would reside from time to time. On occasion, all these places would be called “headquarters,” including “Wolfsschanze” in East Prussia/Poland (where Claus von Stauffenberg tried to kill Hitler); “Wehrwolf” in the Ukraine; “Felsennest” in Muenstereifel, Germany; Berghof and Eagle’s Nest in Obersalzburg, Austria; and the “Fuehrerbunker” in Berlin, where Hitler committed suicide.

The SEVENTH TRUMPET (the “third woe”) consists of SEVEN LAST PLAGUES, which are described in Revelation 16:1–21. Seven angels pour out these seven last plagues, also referred to as the seven bowls of the wrath of God (Revelation 15:7; 16:1), with which God’s wrath will be completed (compare Revelation 15:1).

THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES OF THE SEVENTH TRUMPET

It is vitally important to understand that the SEVENTH SEAL consists of SEVEN TRUMPETS, and the SEVENTH TRUMPET consists of SEVEN PLAGUES.

THE BEAST AND ITS IMAGE

The FIRST OF THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES or bowls [of the SEVENTH trumpet] causes “a foul and loathsome sore” on those who worship the *beast* and *its image*, and who have accepted the mark of the beast (Revelation 16:2).

Remember that “the beast,” when referring to the *person*, is a very charismatic political and military leader over Europe who will work hand in hand with a religious leader, who is also called “the false prophet.” But the term “beast” can also be a reference to the European *power bloc*—the final resurrection of the ancient Roman Empire—and the false prophet represents the religious system under his control.

It is apparently this religious system which is referred to in Revelation 16:2, in part, with the “*image*” of the first beast. This religious system is structured and patterned after the first beast—the political

and military system. The religious system is also identified in Revelation 17 as the woman riding or influencing the political and military system, showing how both systems “supplement” each other. (For an additional stunning possibility as to what may be meant with the “image” of the beast, please read chapter 14 of our free booklet, “*Is That in the Bible?—The Mysteries of the Book of Revelation.*”)

We also read that the first beast will have a mark—a particular sign of identification—that will be imposed on and accepted by all those who are going to be deceived by Satan to adore and even worship the political and religious leaders of the European power bloc and the entire political and religious system they will represent (called Babylon in Revelation 17 and 18).

THE MARK OF THE BEAST

Simply put, the mark of the beast is tantamount to a political and religious philosophy detrimental to the true worship of God. It includes the *mandatory and legally enforced celebration of pagan religious holidays*, such as Sunday, Christmas and Easter, and the rejection of God’s weekly and annual **Holy Days**, including the weekly Saturday-Sabbath and, for instance, the Feast of Tabernacles. It also includes humanly devised and ungodly ideas such as fighting in war or supporting and embracing a religion which preaches a false Jesus or a false gospel.

The **SECOND OF THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES** causes every living creature in the sea to die (Revelation 16:3).

Remember that during the time of the second trumpet, one-third of all sea creatures will die (Revelation 8:8–9). Now we read that when the *second plague* of the seventh trumpet of the seventh seal is poured out, **ALL** sea creatures will die! No animal in our oceans will survive.

As mentioned, this is not just a reference to a limited area or one local sea, such as the Mediterranean Sea. Rather, all sea creatures will die. Note the description of the all-encompassing worldwide effects of God’s punishment in passages such as Hosea 4:3 and Zephaniah 1:3. In the book of Revelation, the reference to “sea” is used consistently to describe all oceans on earth (compare Revelation 5:3, 13; 7:1–3; 12:12; 14:7; 20:8, 13).

The **THIRD OF THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES** causes the sweet water supply to become “blood”—that is, undrinkable (Revelation 16:4–7).

Remember that at the time of the third trumpet of the *seventh seal*, one-third of all the sweet drinking water was poisoned (Revelation 8:10–11), causing the death of one-third of the animals living in sweet water. Now, we are told that at the time of the *third plague of the seventh trumpet of the seventh seal*, ALL the sweet water in the rivers and springs will become blood, apparently causing the death of all sweet-water animals. This seems to indicate that no animal living in our rivers and springs will survive.

The FOURTH OF THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES brings about increased solar radiation, which horribly scorches mankind. Despite this punishment from God for their sins, man will not repent, but rather will blaspheme God (Revelation 16:8–9).

The FIFTH OF THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES causes total darkness to cover the headquarters of the beast in *Europe*. Again, people will blaspheme God and will refuse to repent, even then (Revelation 16:10–11).

The SIXTH OF THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES will dry up the waters of the “great river Euphrates” (Revelation 16:12) to enable the “kings from the East” to advance to the place of “Armageddon” (Revelation 16:16) to “gather” there in preparation for “the battle of that great day of God Almighty” (Revelation 16:14, 16).

AGAIN—THE KINGS FROM THE EAST

Now, at the time of the sixth plague of the seventh trumpet of the seventh seal, we are again introduced to the kings from the East.

To appreciate the full scope and involvement of the kings of the east in the end time, let us return briefly to the fifth and sixth trumpets of the *seventh seal*.

Recall that the *fifth and sixth trumpets of the seventh seal* depict a cruel and horrible war between the kings from the East and Europe. That war ensued, after the four angels who were “bound” at the great river Euphrates were “released” (Revelation 9:14). At that time, we don’t read that the river was drying up—only, that the kings of the east were allowed to attack Europe and other nations, including countries in the Middle East.

Returning now to the time of the sixth plague of the seventh trumpet, we are re-introduced to the kings from the East, and we are told that they are now preparing to strike a *final blow* in an effort to win the

war. They will be crossing the dried-up river Euphrates to move their armies and equipment to a place called “Armageddon,” to assemble there with the apparent desire to advance toward Jerusalem to defeat the beast (who will by that time be in Jerusalem, having planted “his tent of his palace” there) and to wipe out his European armies that have conquered the Middle East and are mainly stationed in Jerusalem.

But the kings from the East will suddenly feel threatened by another “enemy,” and being influenced by Satan and his demonic powers, they will combine their forces with the kings of the whole world (including the beast power) to attempt to defeat that common foe. That “foe” is none other than the returning Jesus Christ, His saints, and His angelic armies. (Of note: We are reminded in Luke 23:12 that due to a common foe—Jesus Christ—Pilate and Herod became friends, even though they had been prior enemies.)

ARMAGEDDON

These kings from the East, as well as all of the other kings of the earth, will be influenced by Satan and the demonically possessed beast and the false prophet (Revelation 16:13–14). They will gather at “Armageddon” or the “hill of Megiddo” (“har” meaning “hill” in Hebrew), about 55 miles or 90 kilometers north of Jerusalem, and about 15 miles or 25 kilometers inland from the Mediterranean Sea.

Megiddo is a huge mound with a commanding view of the long and fertile valley of Jezreel—an ideal place for armies to gather. They will then converge on Jerusalem. Their initial intent was to fight against the beast, but they will change their mind to combine their forces with the beast’s armies to fight the returning Christ. We don’t read that there will be a battle *at* Armageddon—the battle will be fought farther south in the valley of Jehoshaphat, which is called today the “Kidron Valley,” which borders Jerusalem on the east.

In fact, that battle is described in the 19th chapter of the book of Revelation, which pictures the return of Jesus Christ. However, before this battle unfolds, other important events will take place at the time when the seventh plague of the seventh or last trumpet is being poured out.

The SEVENTH OF THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES describes a tremendous earthquake to shake the earth “as had not occurred since men

were on the earth" (Revelation 16:17–18; compare Isaiah 2:12–19; 13:6–13; 24:1–20), causing the "great city" of Jerusalem to be "divided into three parts" and "all the cities of the nations" to fall (Revelation 16:19). Further, every island will disappear and mountains will be leveled (Revelation 16:20). A great hail of tremendous size will destroy everything in its path. Again, man will not repent, but will continue to blaspheme God because of the hail (Revelation 16:21).

THE SAINTS ARE MADE IMMORTAL

When the seventh angel sounds and Christ returns, the saints—converted Christians—will either be *resurrected* to immortality if they have already died, or they will be *changed to immortality* if they are still alive at that time (1 Corinthians 15:50–56; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18). They will all meet Christ in the air and then descend with Him, *on that same 24-hour-day*, onto the Mount of Olives. Zechariah 14:3–5 indicates that, apparently due to the great earthquake depicted by the *seventh plague* (mentioned in Revelation 16:17–18), the Mount of Olives shall split in two, making a very large valley, which is where the final battle of God Almighty will take place.

Christ will overcome the armies that will be trying to fight Him, as well as the modern leaders of modern "Babylon"—the military ruler ("the beast") and the religious leader ("the false prophet") (compare Revelation 19:19–21). The destruction of the armies is more fully described in Zechariah 14:12, 15. The beast and the false prophet will be cast into "the lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Revelation 19:20).

Revelation 14:19–20 informs us, in regard to that "battle" in the valley of Jehoshaphat or the Kidron Valley, that the "great winepress of the wrath of God... was trampled outside the city [of Jerusalem], and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs [lit. stadia, about 184 miles in all]."

TEN EUROPEAN KINGS, THE BEAST AND THE FALLEN WOMAN

In addition, we read that ten European kings or kingdoms had given their authority to the beast (Revelation 17:12–13). They will also participate in the battle against Christ, but they will likewise be defeated (Revelation 17:14). This could refer to the fate of those ten literal

leaders or “kings” and/or the armies of the ten nations or groups of nations (“kingdoms” and “kings” are often times used interchangeably in Scripture). They had endowed the beast with dictatorial authority and placed their armies under his autocratic rule.

We also find that, even prior to that final battle, these ten kings or kingdoms will turn against the religious power and “make her desolate” (verse 16), apparently confiscating her property. This depicts the coming strong European alliance between church and state, which is prophesied to crumble. Ultimately, modern Babylon—the religious and economic European system, as well as the city of Rome (Revelation 17:9, 18)—will be destroyed in one day (Revelation 18:8) and in one hour (verse 17).

THE DESTRUCTION OF EUROPE

The Bible shows that after the ten European nations, under the authority of modern Assyria (“the Babylonian system”) subdue and conquer many nations, they themselves will be defeated in war by the modern Medes. Compare Isaiah 13:17, which describes the destruction of modern “Babylon” through the hand of the modern “Medes” or Russians and Ukrainians. Verses 6, 9 and 13 designate the timing as occurring during the “day of the LORD.” Compare also Isaiah 21:2 and Jeremiah 51:11, 27–29.

It appears that before or while moving toward the place called Armageddon in the Middle East (after the Euphrates river has dried up)—depicted by the sixth plague of the seventh trumpet—at least parts of the armies of the kings of the east will apparently sweep through Europe, creating devastating havoc there and destroying the city of Rome. Jeremiah 51:27–28 refers to horses as coming up against Babylon like bristling locusts, indicating that they will use some of their tanks and their air force to destroy modern Babylon. They will be led primarily by the modern “Medes” or Russians and Ukrainians. At that time, the beast and the false prophet will apparently be dwelling in Jerusalem, so they will not be personally affected by these attacks on Europe. Neither will the ten kings and their armies. They, too, will apparently be in or move towards Jerusalem at that time, as they will fight with the beast against the returning Christ (compare again Revelation 17:15).

GOD'S PUNISHMENT ON THOSE WHO FOLLOW THE BEAST

God's punishment and His wrath will be poured out over everyone who worships the beast and his image, and who receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand. We read that he "shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the PRESENCE of the Lamb" (Revelation 14:10).

Compare also 2 Thessalonians 1:7–9, which explains what will happen "when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. They shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the PRESENCE of the Lord and from the glory of His power."

Even before fire destroys them, they will live in fear of their future. Compare Luke 21:26–27: "...men's hearts [will be] failing them from fear and expectation of those things which are coming on the earth... Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the cloud with power and great glory." Because of their fearful expectations, they will be having "no rest day or night" prior to their death (Revelation 14:11).

Some might erroneously think that the blowing of the seventh trumpet depicts only the event of the resurrection or change of the saints to immortality that will occur within a time span of a few seconds. It is true that when Christ returns, the saints will be resurrected or changed "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," at the time of the blowing of the seventh and last trumpet (1 Corinthians 15:52). As was pointed out above, the resurrected and the changed saints will be "caught up together... in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air," and they will from then on "always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:17). They will welcome the returning Christ and meet Him in the air. They will not go back to heaven with Him, but all will descend to the Mount of Olives on that same day, and it is then when the armies of the powers of the world will be destroyed.

Some have felt that the resurrection of the saints will take place at the very beginning of the blast of the seventh trumpet. This cannot be the case. As we have seen, the seventh trumpet will "blow" for quite

a while, as it consists of the seven last plagues which will begin to occur prior to Christ's return. For example, during the sixth plague, the armies of the world will move to and assemble at Armageddon. Obviously, it will take those armies a certain amount of time to get there. Then they will move toward Jerusalem to fight against Christ, again, requiring some time to move to Jerusalem. All of these events could not occur within 24 hours, but we read that when Christ returns and the resurrected and changed saints meet Him in the air, they will all descend on the Mount of Olives on the very same day (Zechariah 14:7).

The resurrection of the saints will take place towards the end of the last trumpet's blast. As immortal beings and born-again members of the Family and Kingdom of God, Christ's true followers will descend with Christ on the Mount of Olives, where Christ's decisive battle against the evil forces of this world will take place.

CHRIST'S DECISIVE BATTLE AGAINST HOSTILE ARMIES

The book of Zechariah describes in vivid terms the outcome of that battle. The last chapter of the book of Zechariah (chapter 14) gives us, without a doubt, the great crescendo or final climax of the fate of the city of Jerusalem, picturing first its terrible future destruction and then its subsequent glorious destiny.

The battle will be swift. Revelation 19:11–21 gives us further information on the return of Jesus Christ with His mighty angels, and the outcome of Christ's battle with the hostile and deceived armies of this world.

The beast and the false prophet as well as their armies and supporters will be killed when Christ returns. This includes the kings from the East and also the ten kings mentioned in Revelation 17, who will give their power and authority to the beast. It will even include drafted soldiers ("slaves," compare Revelation 19:18) and those who act as volunteers or mercenaries ("free," verse 18). Everyone who opposes the returning Christ must and will be killed—whether "small" or "great" (compare verse 18).

We read in Revelation 17:12–14, regarding the ten kings or future European powers and leaders:

"The ten horns which you saw are ten kings... [which] receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. These will

make war with the Lamb [Jesus Christ], and the Lamb will overcome them; for He is the Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are called, chosen and faithful.”

Daniel 2 confirms the destruction of the ten kings or ten toes, and their kingdoms, during this decisive battle outside Jerusalem. We read in Daniel 2:44:

“And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.”

THE KINGDOM OF GOD HERE ON EARTH

Indeed, the Kingdom of God will rule on and over this earth, and Christ’s called and chosen and faithful disciples will inherit eternal life in His Kingdom and rule with and under Him. Daniel 7:21–22, 26–27 explains:

“I was watching; and the same horn [the little horn—a religious power, which will be led by the end-time false prophet] was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days [Jesus Christ, the Lamb] came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High [God the Father], and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom... But the court shall be seated, And they shall take away his [the little horn’s] dominion, To consume and destroy it forever. Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.”

RULE ON EARTH

The book of Revelation confirms that the saints will rule on and over this earth, under Jesus Christ. Revelation 20:4–6 tells us:

“And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years... This is the first resurrection. Blessed and

holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death (the eternal death in the ultimate lake of fire after the Millennium and the Great White Throne Judgment) has no power, but they shall be priests of God (the Father) and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

Compare also Revelation 5:9–10, quoting a song of angels about Christ's faithful elect:

"You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; for You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God, and we shall reign on the earth."

Returning to Christ's battle with the deceived armies of this world, please note Joel 3:2, 11–14, where it is revealed that at the time of Jesus Christ's return, ALL nations—referring to their armies—will assemble in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, just outside Jerusalem, in order to fight there. At that time, the modern nations of Israel and Judah will have already been defeated in war and will have become captives of Gentile powers (Joel 3:1, 6; compare Jeremiah 30:10). The book of Joel informs us further that Jesus Christ will return to Jerusalem to fight for it, and THEN "Jerusalem shall be holy" (verse 17). He and His saints will overcome all of God's enemies, including the king of the North, the man of sin and their armies, as well as the kings of the East, and their attempt to fight Christ and His saints will be defeated (Revelation 17:14).

THE KING OF THE NORTH

The king of the North is identical with the beast, and the man of sin (mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2:3) is none other than the false prophet. They will be cast alive into a lake of fire, to be devoured and burned up there. But this is not their final fate. As all who die "in Adam" will be resurrected "in Christ" in their due time (1 Corinthians 15:22), the beast and the false prophet will be raised in the second or third resurrection—depending on whether or not they committed the unpardonable sin. We feel that they will be raised in the second resurrection to obtain their first *opportunity* for godly repentance, belief and salvation (For more information, please read our free booklet, "*Do We Have an Immortal Soul?*").

Chapter 5

Satan's Banishment

After Christ's return and His battle with the hostile armies of this world, He will deal with the real author of destruction and deception—Satan the devil, along with his demons.

We read in Revelation 20:1–3:

“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold on the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.”

We read that Satan will be thrown into the “bottomless pit.” As we will see, that same fate awaits all the demons under his control.

The Bible tells us that one-third of God's angels sinned in times past, thus becoming demons. God did not prevent them from sinning. He created them as free moral agents and He knew that they could sin. The angels who sinned are presently in *chains* of darkness, to be reserved for future judgment (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). They are living today in a *state* of darkness. They are *spiritually* imprisoned by their own perversions. They are *not literally* imprisoned and jailed at a certain place. Rather, they are roaming to and fro on this earth. Satan is compared to a roaring lion, walking about, to see whom he can devour (1 Peter 5:8).

Demons are waiting for their judgment. Demons asked Christ whether He had come to “torment” them “before the time” (Matthew 8:29). Luke 8:31 adds that they begged Christ not to command them “to go out into the abyss.” At this point in time, they are not yet in that “abyss.” Satan is not in it either; rather, he will be placed in it at the beginning of the Millennium (Revelation 20:1–3, 7—the word “abyss” is translated there as “bottomless pit”).

THE ABYSS OR BOTTOMLESS PIT

What is the “abyss?” The word is used in Romans 10:7, where we read, “Who will descend into the abyss? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).” In Romans 10, the “abyss” is used as an analogy in association with the dead who are buried. It is also used as an analogy in Luke 8 and in Revelation 20. When Satan and his demons will be placed in the “abyss” at the beginning of the Millennium, they will be as good as dead—unable to influence and deceive the nations any longer during that time period (compare Revelation 20:3). The fact that they won’t be able to destroy others will give them spiritual torment—that is why they asked Christ whether He had come to torment them before “the time.”

THE LAKE OF FIRE

Satan’s spiritual torment, and that of his angels, will continue. After a time period called the Great White Throne Judgment, Satan and his demons will be cast into the lake of fire and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever (Revelation 20:10; Matthew 25:41). Their torment will be spiritual, as they will see all of their evil works destroyed by fire (compare 2 Peter 3:10–13), and their influence on others will be gone forever. Their final fate might be revealed in Jude 13, referring to “wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.” Compare, too, 2 Peter 2:17.

Even though only Satan the Devil is specifically mentioned in Revelation 20:1–3, as the one who is being thrown into the abyss, it is obvious that the demons are included. This also becomes clear when reviewing carefully the fate of Satan and his angels at the time when the Millennium ends. Revelation 20:10 says that the Devil will be cast in the lake of fire, and that “they” will be tormented day and night. Some claim that the reference is to the beast and the false prophet, but this is not the case. They were killed and burned up in the lake of fire 1,000 years earlier.

We need to understand for WHOM the lake of fire was prepared. We read in Matthew 25:41 that the lake of fire was “prepared for the devil and his angels.” Therefore, it will be the devil and his demons who will be tormented in the lake of fire, for as long as that lake exists. Since spirit beings cannot die (compare Luke 20:36), they will

be tormented—in a spiritual way—while being confined to the lake of fire, when they come to the realization that they are unable to deceive man anymore, and when they see all their “works” and evil “accomplishments” replaced by the good and prosperous ways of God.

DEMONS IN THE ABYSS

The same is true for Revelation 20:1–3, which mentions that Satan—the ruler of the demonic world—will be bound in the abyss or bottomless pit for a thousand years. Even though only the ruler over the demons is mentioned here, the demons themselves are included as well.

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT PICTURES SATAN’S BANISHMENT

The capture of Satan is symbolically portrayed by the Day of Atonement—one of God’s seven annual Holy Days. Notice the following regarding an ancient procedure in Old Testament times—the removal of the “Azazel Goat,” which pictures Satan the Devil.

Leviticus 16:21 explains that Aaron had to lay both his hands on the head of the Azazel goat; confess over it all the iniquities, sins and transgressions of the Israelites; put them on the head of the Azazel goat; and send it away alive into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. Leviticus 16:22 continues to instruct that the Azazel goat, bearing all the iniquities of the Israelites, was to be let go alive in an uninhabited land—a wilderness. Modern Babylon, a city built on seven hills, and, at the same time, a description of a military, religious and economic system—symbolizing the end-time generation of this evil world—will become such a wilderness (compare Isaiah 13:19–22; Revelation 18:2).

The removal of Satan is described in Revelation 20:1–3. Let us quote this passage again, by inserting a few explanatory comments:

“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He [the angel, pictured by the suitable man who took the Azazel goat into the wilderness] laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan [pictured by the Azazel goat], and bound him for a thousand years; and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set

a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. [This is pictured by the fact that the Azazel goat was not killed, but placed alive in the wilderness, far away from the camp of Israel.]

WHAT IS THE BOTTOMLESS PIT?

What exactly is that bottomless pit, mentioned in Revelation 20:1–3, where Satan and his demons will be bound? It is not a mystical fiery “hell” way down under the surface of the earth—such a “hell” simply does not exist, and nowhere in the Bible is it remotely mentioned. Even the lake of fire in which Satan and his demons will be cast before the Great White Throne Judgment begins, will be ON the earth, not UNDER the earth.

Now note the reference to modern Babylon in Revelation 18:2: “And he [an angel] cried mightily with a loud voice, saying ‘Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of DEMONS, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird.’”

In this passage, Satan is also included as the highest demon and the ruler over the demons.

What, then, is the relationship between the bottomless pit or the abyss and the wilderness of the modern city of Babylon, which is built on seven hills?

THE MODERN CITY OF BABYLON

Note the following regarding Zechariah’s seventh vision, pertaining to a wicked woman in a basket, which pictures the modern system and city of Babylon.

Some commentaries identify the woman in the basket [in Zechariah 5:5–11] as the woman or harlot riding the beast, described in the 17th chapter of the book of Revelation. There, she is called “Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth” (Revelation 17:5). She is also described as a religious city built on seven hills (Revelation 17:9, 18, *New International Version, Living Bible*)—in other words, Babylon the great, in the book of Revelation, signifies a false religious, political, military and economic system.

We read in Zechariah 5 that the woman, personifying worldwide

wickedness or iniquity, is confined to a basket or container, but she is trying, unsuccessfully, to escape from her prison (verses 7–8). This gives us the time setting of Zechariah’s vision—the woman’s future judgment, which will occur when Jesus Christ returns. The modern CITY of Babylon the great, as well as the SYSTEM which it represents, will be destroyed with fire (Revelation 18:8, 21; 19:3). Depending on the translation, it will become a “dwelling place” or a “habitation” or a “house” or a “home” (*New International Version*) of “demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird” (Revelation 18:2).

This fact explains why two women with wings of a stork (Zechariah 5:9)—perhaps angels—carry the imprisoned woman to the land of [Shinar or] Babylon, to build a house or dwelling place for her (verse 11). The two women will assist in removing “wickedness”—the wicked system—from this earth. Wickedness will be placed “forever in Babylon” (compare *Geneva Study Bible*); that is, the burned and destroyed location and area of the modern city of Babylon will become a “house” for demons during the time of the Millennium.

We see, then, that the abyss or the bottomless pit, where Satan and his demons will be shut up, describes the destroyed areas where currently the modern city of Babylon—Rome—is situated. We read that the modern city of Babylon will never be rebuilt and inhabited again (Isaiah 13:19–22).

Chapter 6

True Freedom for Israel and Judah

After Satan and his demons are confined to the bottomless pit or abyss of the wilderness of modern Babylon, unable to deceive the nations anymore during the time of the Millennium, Jesus Christ will proceed with freeing the enslaved peoples of the modern houses of Israel and Judah who survived the horrors of war and slavery, and are still alive at the beginning of the Millennium. (Of course, they will not be changed to immortal beings at that time. They will first continue to be physical human beings, but with the *potential* of ultimately entering eternal life and the Family of God).

THE MISSING THREE-AND-ONE-HALF YEARS OF CHRIST'S PUBLIC MINISTRY

Let us focus for a moment on Daniel 9, where it was prophesied that Jesus, the Messiah, would appear and begin His public ministry in 27 A.D. *Halley's Bible Handbook* explains:

"The Captivity, which was then drawing to a close, had lasted 70 years. Daniel is here told by the angel that it would yet be '70 weeks' till the coming of the Messiah [see verse 24]. The '70 weeks' is generally understood to mean 70 weeks of years, that is, 70 sevens of years, or seven times 70 years, that is 490 years. As if the angel were saying, The Captivity has been 70 years; the period between the Captivity and the Coming of the Messiah will be seven times that long...

"The date from which the 70 weeks was to be counted was the decree to re-build Jerusalem [see verse 25]. There were three decrees issued by Persian kings for this purpose ... The principal one of these was 457 B C [the one given by Artaxerxes]. The 70 weeks is subdivided into 7 weeks, 62 weeks, and 1 week [see verses 25 and 27]. It is difficult to see the application of the '7 weeks'; but the 69 weeks (including the 7) equal 483 days, that is, on the year-day theory, Ezek[iel] 4:6, which

is the commonly accepted interpretation, 483 years... the 483 years is the period between the decree to re-build Jerusalem and the coming of the 'Anointed One,' [see verse 25]. The decree to re-build Jerusalem, as noted above, was 457 B C. Adding 483 years to 457 B C brings us to 26 A D [actually, 27 A.D., as Halley overlooked that there was no year Zero], the very year that Jesus was baptized and began his public ministry."

But Daniel 9 also prophesied another important fact; namely, that Jesus would be *cut off* after His public ministry, but not for Himself (verse 26); and that He would confirm a covenant for a week; but that in the middle of the week, He would bring an end to sacrifice and offering (verse 27). Jesus Christ was killed quite literally in the middle of the week—on a Wednesday—in 31 A.D. In addition, He began His public ministry of one prophetic week [of seven prophetic days or seven literal years, applying the principle of "one day for one year" (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:3–6)], but He was killed or cut off after three-and-one-half years of His public ministry. He began preaching publically in the year of 27 A.D., and He died three-and-one-half years later. When He died, He did away with the need for sacrifices and offerings, as they are no longer required today. Also, He confirmed the New Covenant through His death, after having preached about it for three-and-one-half years. He will continue the missing three-and-one-half years of His public ministry after His return.

CHRIST TO COMPLETE THREE-AND-ONE-HALF YEARS OF HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY

What will Jesus Christ do during those three-and-one-half years needed to complete the seven years of His public ministry?

We find one clue in His statement to the original apostles and others that He was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel when here on earth during the time of His first coming (Matthew 15:24). At that time, He did not preach and confirm the New Covenant—including the physical and spiritual blessings contained therein—to any of the lost tribes of Israel, except for the Jews—those from the house of Judah. (Recall that the 12 tribes of Israel or Jacob consisted of and still do consist of many tribes which were and still are scattered into many areas in the world.) Later, Christ's original apostles would preach to all of the lost tribes of the house of Israel (Matthew 10:5–6; compare

James 1:1; 1 Peter 1:1), but Christ Himself did not do so during His public ministry. Rather, He will do this after His return, during the remaining three-and-one-half years of His ministry which will have to be completed.

As we will recall, both the house of Judah (the Jews) and the house of Israel (consisting of the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and other English-speaking nations) will have been defeated in a war with Europe and will be suffering under the yoke of captivity. Upon His return, Christ will begin to free those captives and bring them back to the Promised Land, to settle them there and to use them to rebuild the ruins and restore the waste places. This will occur during the three-and-one-half years of His public ministry to the houses of Israel and Judah after His return.

THE FUTURE EXODUS

Note how this Exodus from captivity is described and how it is compared many times with the ancient Exodus of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery. Some who understand that Christ will free the slaves of Israel from captivity and bring them to the Promised Land might think that this will happen in an instant and supernaturally; that they may be somehow transported through the air from one place to another. But this is not how the Bible describes the coming Exodus.

Isaiah 27:13 tells us the following, using the phrase “in that day,” which always describes a time in the future, *beginning* with about one year prior to Christ’s return, but *not ending* with His return:

“So it shall be in that day: The great trumpet will be blown; They will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, And they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.”

Since Jesus will not free the captives of Israel and Judah until *after* His return, we know that the great trumpet referred to in this passage must be the seventh and last trumpet, when Christ returns. There can only be ONE last trumpet. But how exactly will the former slaves of Israel and Judah reach the point of being willing to worship the true God?

ENSLAVED IN MANY COUNTRIES

Isaiah 11:11, 16 sheds more light on this question, stating: “It shall

come to pass in that day That the LORD shall set His hand again the SECOND time to recover the remnant of His people who are left, From Assyria (Germany) and Egypt, From Pathros (upper Egypt) and Cush (Ethiopia), From Elam (Persia or Iran) and Shinar (part of Babylon), From Hamath (descendants of Ham's son Canaan) and the islands of the sea (including the British isles)... There will be a highway for the remnant of His people Who will be left from Assyria, AS IT WAS FOR ISRAEL IN THE DAY THAT HE CAME UP FROM THE LAND OF EGYPT."

AS IN THE DAYS OF THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT

Further facts are given to us in Isaiah 51:10–11: "Are You not the One who DRIED UP THE SEA, The waters of the great deep; That made the depths of the sea a road for the redeemed to cross over, SO the ransomed of the LORD SHALL RETURN, and come to Zion with singing, With everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness; sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

From these passages, it appears that many of the freed captives will WALK to the Promised Land—but not directly and immediately, as will be explained below. In any event, this journey will undoubtedly take some time, and to some extent, the LORD—Jesus Christ—will have an active part in this.

Jeremiah continues comparing the ancient Exodus from Egypt with Israel's and Judah's future Exodus.

We read in Jeremiah 16:14–15: "'Therefore behold, the days are coming,' says the LORD, 'that it shall no more be said, "The LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt," but, "The LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north and from all the lands where He had driven them.' For I will bring them back into their land which I gave to their fathers."

Jeremiah 23:7–8 makes clear that an end-time Exodus of the modern house of Israel is being referred to: "'Therefore, behold, the days are coming,' says the LORD, 'that they shall no longer say, "as the LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt," but, "As the LORD lives who brought up and LED the DESCENDANTS OF THE HOUSE of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them. And they shall dwell in their own land.'"

Even though one will emphasize the coming Exodus over the

previous one, the parallels between both are obvious. Note Micah 7:14–15: “Shepherd Your people with Your staff, The flock of Your heritage... As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them wonders.”

What wonders God will work at that future time is not clearly revealed, except that He will apparently again create a way through the sea to enable the Israelites and Jews to cross it on their way to the Promised Land.

Notice, too, Jeremiah 46:27: “But do not fear, O My servant Jacob, And do not be dismayed, O Israel! For behold, I will save you from afar, And your offspring from the land of their captivity; Jacob shall return, have rest and be at ease; No one shall make him afraid.”

RETURN TO THE PROMISED LAND

BOTH houses of Israel and Judah will return TOGETHER to the Promised Land. Jeremiah 3:18 states: “In those days the house of Judah shall WALK WITH the house of Israel, and they shall come TOGETHER out of the land of the north to the land that I have given as an inheritance to your fathers.”

This is also confirmed in Jeremiah 30:3, 8–10: “‘For behold, the days are coming,’ says the LORD, ‘that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel AND Judah,’ says the LORD, ‘And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it’... ‘For it shall come to pass in that day,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘That I will break his yoke from your neck, And will burst your bonds; Foreigners shall no more enslave them. But they shall serve the LORD their God, And David their king, Whom I will raise up for them. Therefore, do not fear, O My servant Jacob,’ says the LORD, ‘Nor be dismayed, O Israel; for behold, I will save you from afar, And your seed from the land of their captivity...’”

DAVID THEIR KING

As David will be resurrected at the time of Christ’s return, this is clearly a prophecy for the future. We read in Micah 2:12–13 what seems to be a reference to the resurrected King David: “I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together like sheep of the fold, Like a flock in the midst of their

pasture; they shall make a loud noise because of so many people. The one who breaks open will come up before them; they will break out, Pass through the gate, and go out by it; THEIR KING will pass before them, WITH THE LORD at their head."

So we see that when Jesus Christ begins to gather the remnant of the captives of Israel and Judah to bring them back to the Promised Land, He will apparently be accompanied by the resurrected and immortal King David.

Hosea 3:4–5 says that when the modern houses of Israel and Judah are in captivity, they will have been without a king for "many days," at least for three-and-one-half years during the time of the Great Tribulation. (At the present time, the tribe of Ephraim—the UK—is being ruled by Queen Elizabeth, but if she is not alive at that time, it would be a king—Prince Charles or in the case of his death, Prince William being the heir apparent):

"For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim. Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days."

Here we see that when the captives are freed, they will seek God [Jesus Christ] and King David.

Jeremiah 50:4–8 confirms this: "'In those days and in that time,' says the LORD, 'The children of Israel shall come, They and the children of Judah together; With continual weeping they shall come, And seek the LORD their God. They shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces toward it, saying, Come and let us join ourselves to the LORD In a perpetual covenant That will not be forgotten.'"

When the freed captives of Israel and Judah are looking for God and King David, help will be given to them. Strangers will even participate in that process.

Isaiah 14:1–3 states: "For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will still choose Israel, and settle them in their own land. The strangers will be joined with them, and they will cling to the house of Jacob. Then people WILL TAKE THEM AND BRING THEM TO THEIR PLACE, and the house of Israel will possess them for servants and maids in the land of the LORD..."

INTO THE WILDERNESS...

But before they are allowed to enter the Promised Land, Christ will have to fulfill an important part of His public ministry. Since they will all have been held by their captors in different places around the world, it will be necessary that on their way to seek God and King David, they will first move or be led to a certain place to be gathered there. This will be a place in the wilderness.

Ezekiel 20:34–38, 42–44 states: “I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the WILDERNESS of the peoples, and there I will plead My case with you face to face, Just as I pleaded My case with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will plead My case with you,” says the LORD God. “I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. I will purge the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against Me... they shall not enter the land of Israel... Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for which I raised My hand in an oath to give to your fathers. And there you shall remember your ways and all your doings with which you were defiled; and you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight because of all the evils that you have committed. Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have dealt with you for My name’s sake, not according to your wicked ways nor according to your corrupt doings, O house of Israel,” says the LORD God.”

So we see that Christ (and apparently King David at His side) will bring the people into the wilderness and meet them there to teach them and show them their iniquity and sin, and they will repent. (As we will discuss below, they will already have begun to repent while in captivity, but repentance is a process and requires time.) Notice what else will take place while they are in the wilderness, as revealed in Hosea 12:9: “But I am the LORD your God, Ever since the land of Egypt; I will again make you dwell in tents, As in the days of the *appointed feast* [referring here to the Feast of Tabernacles].”

REPENTANCE BEGINS IN CAPTIVITY

Israel in particular will be taught, as well as the entire world, that

God's annual festivals are still binding today, and they will begin keeping them. But as mentioned, Israel will already begin to repent while still in captivity. Notice Deuteronomy 30:1–6, 8:

“Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you, and you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, that the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you. If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He shall prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live... And you will again obey the voice of the LORD and do all His commandments which I command you today...”

Once they show a willingness to obey God in the wilderness, He will then bring them back into the Promised Land, and it is there that their conversion will continue until they are ultimately ready to be changed into immortal Spirit beings.

REPENTANCE IS A PROCESS

Ezekiel 36:24–28 describes their conversion and receipt of the Holy Spirit:

“For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.”

Jeremiah 32:37–40 adds: “Behold, I will gather them out of all countries where I have driven them in My anger, in My fury, and in great wrath; I will bring them back to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. They shall be My people, and I will be their God; then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me.”

WHAT THEY WILL DO IN THE PROMISED LAND

What will they physically do after they have returned to the Promised Land?

Amos 9:14 tells us: “I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them. I will plant them in their land, And no longer shall they be pulled up From the land I have given them,’ says the LORD your God.”

Jeremiah 33:7–8 confirms:

“And I will cause the captives of Judah and the captives of Israel to return, and will rebuild those places as at the first. I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned and by which they have transgressed against Me.”

But before the Millennium of universal peace and happiness can really begin to flourish, another striking event will take place, showing that it is not that easy to unlearn old habits.

Chapter 7

Asiatic Hordes Will Invade the Promised Land

An invasion of Asiatic hordes is described in Ezekiel 38 and 39. It will occur after Christ's return, at the very beginning of His rule over mankind—*not* 1,000 years later. Remember that Jesus Christ will have to complete the remaining three-and-one-half years of His public ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel before His rule over all nations in the Millennium can really begin to flourish. We saw that Christ will free the modern descendants of the houses of Israel and Judah from captivity and ultimately bring them into the Promised Land. They will build the waste cities and inhabit them, live in peace and safety, and God will forgive all their iniquities and enter into the conditions of the New Covenant with them.

To live God's way of life is a process of learning and doing it. For instance, we read in the book of Isaiah that Gentile nations will hear about the law of God which will be taught by Christ in Jerusalem, and they will flock there to learn God's laws as well (Isaiah 2:1–3). They will reach the point where they will not want to learn war anymore (verse 4). We also read that some nations will at first refuse to live by God's law to observe His annual holy days (Zechariah 14:16–19). So Jesus will have to deal with all these problems.

WAR AND REBELLION WILL BE STOPPED

We read in Ezekiel 38 and 39 that a great army from mostly Far Eastern countries will try to fight against the modern descendants of the houses of Israel and Judah who had returned to the Promised Land and who will be living peacefully. God will allow those Gentile nations to advance against Jerusalem for several reasons. He will show these nations that He is LORD and that war and rebellion will not be permitted under Christ's rule—so He will deal with those hostile armies very quickly.

Also note that these events will apparently take place during the remaining three-and-one-half years of Christ's public ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. This ministry will include, first and foremost, the important teaching that man is not to fight in war—ever! Before Israel can become a model nation that can peacefully coexist with other nations, they have to learn to embrace this understanding themselves. After all, Israel has been a war-waging nation throughout most of its existence, without ever really trusting God to fight their battles for them. Simply put, Christ told Peter to put his sword away (Matthew 26:52), and this is the same teaching that Christ will bring to all of the survivors of Israel and Judah, as well as to the rest of the world.

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MILLENNIUM...

Ezekiel 38:8, 16, tells us that the events will occur "in the latter years" or in the "latter days." Verse 8 emphasizes that they will happen at the time when those living in the land have been "brought back from the sword and gathered from among many people." We are also told that "they were brought out of the nations" and led to "the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate." It is emphasized that they are NOW dwelling "safely."

Verse 12 also reiterates that these former "waste places" are "again inhabited," and that the people of Israel, who were gathered from the nations, "have acquired livestock and goods." Since there will be no desolate mountains of Israel throughout the Millennium, and since the people of Israel will be living in safety during the Millennium, and since they were gathered out of the nations and brought to the Promised Land at the time of Christ's return, it is clear that the events described in Ezekiel 38 and 39 do not occur 1,000 years AFTER Christ's return, as some are teaching.

At the same time, it is evident that these events do NOT take place PRIOR to Christ's return. We read in Ezekiel 38:11 that the people of Israel will live in "unwalled villages"; that they are a "peaceful people, who dwell safely," "without walls, and having neither bars nor gates." This shows that the events will not occur PRIOR to Christ's return, as the modern descendants of the houses of Israel and Judah—mainly the USA, the UK, Canada and the state of Israel—do not live in peace

today, and they will not live in peace, without walls, bars or gates, prior to Christ's return. Also, Ezekiel 38:8 refers to the "mountains of Israel" where the modern houses of Israel and Judah will live at that time—but the modern house of Israel does not presently reside there at all, nor will they live there prior to Christ's return.

GOD WILL HELP

To fully grasp the importance of the events described in Ezekiel 38 and 39, we must realize that God will be intervening very mightily. He will show mankind that He does not need their help in fighting against His enemies, as Moses told the Israelites at the time of their Exodus from Egypt: "The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace" (Exodus 14:14).

Ezekiel 39 emphasizes in numerous places that God will destroy the invading army, and that because of God's intervention, the nations, and especially the nation of Israel, will know that He is the Lord. Verse 22 states: "So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day forward." This is clearly a reference to the BEGINNING of the Millennium—not to the END, when God will have ruled over not only Israel, but the entire world for 1,000 years. Verses 23–29 add that the Gentiles will know by then that "the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity"—a reference to the coming slavery of the modern house of Israel, prior to Christ's return. Christ will free the modern nations of Israel and Judah out of their slavery when He returns—not 1,000 years later (compare verses 25, 27–28). It is THEN that God will begin to convert the survivors of the modern houses of Israel and Judah (verse 29)—not 1,000 years later.

The Gentile nations mentioned in these passages who will build a coalition against Israel and Judah, include peoples from China, Russia, Iran, Libya, Ethiopia, India, Pakistan, as well as peoples from the vast regions in northern Eurasia, extending from the Baltic to the Pacific. But when they do attack, GOD will do the fighting for His people! He would do the same for our peoples today, IF we would only let Him do so by submitting to HIM and being obedient to His commands.

ANOTHER ATTACK MUCH LATER...

A similar attack on Jerusalem will occur about 1,000 years later,

after Satan has been “released from his prison.” He will “go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea” (Revelation 20:7–8). They will try to conquer Jerusalem, but God will destroy them (verse 9). Again, no human being will fight against those warring and attacking nations—it will be GOD who will do the fighting for His people! This is the last time that we read that humans—deceived by Satan the devil—will fight. Satan will be removed forever, unable to deceive humans anymore to fight and kill in war. Ultimately, “God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:4).

At the beginning of the Millennium, after Christ has returned and while He is fulfilling the remaining three-and-one-half years of His public ministry, hostile nations will try to attack Israel and Judah because they still have Satanically-inspired feelings and habits to contend with. After 1,000 years of God’s rule, the peoples in the Millennium will not have experienced Satan and his demons who were imprisoned during that time. They will be unaware of the powerful influence of Satan and his evil devices. Once he is released from prison for a short while, he will go out to deceive the nations, just as he deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden; and as Eve fell for Satan’s deception, so will those people, choosing to believe Satan rather than God. Having lived all this time in a peaceful “Garden of Eden,” they will still want to believe Satan.

This shows us how powerful Satan is; we must never underestimate him! Today, he is still very much free, roaming around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he can devour (1 Peter 5:8). But God will make a quick end to Satan’s influence then, just as He promises to do for us now, IF we are submitting to Him and letting Him fight our battles (James 4:7; Romans 16:20).

Chapter 8

Animal Sacrifices in the Millennium

The Bible shows that at the beginning of the Millennium, after Gog's armies are destroyed (compare Ezekiel 38 and 39), God will reinstitute animal sacrifices at a newly built temple in Jerusalem. It is possible that the Jews will build a third temple PRIOR to Christ's return, which will survive the partial end-time destruction of the city of Jerusalem and which will be identical with the millennial temple, described in the book of Ezekiel.

It is very possible that the sacrifices will only be given during the remaining three-and-one-half years of Christ's public ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Note that the millennial temple and the sacrifices are only mentioned in relationship with the house of Israel.

MILLENNIAL SACRIFICES IN GOD'S TEMPLE

We read in Ezekiel 43:10: "Son of man, describe the temple to the house of Israel..."

Ezekiel 44:6, 9 states: "Now say to the rebellious, to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "O house of Israel, let us have no more of all your abominations... No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart or uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter My sanctuary [the temple], including any foreigner who is among the children of Israel...""

When addressing the millennial sacrifices, Zechariah 14:21 adds: "In that day there shall no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts [the temple]."

In Ezekiel 43:18, 22, 27, we read: "And He said to me, 'Son of man, thus says the Lord God: "These are the ordinances for the altar on the day when it is made, for sacrificing *burnt offerings* on it... On the second day you shall offer a kid of the goats without blemish for a sin offering... When these days are over it shall be, on the eighth day and thereafter, that the priest shall offer your *burnt offerings* and your *peace offerings* on the altar...""

Timeline of Prophetic Events

THE SEVEN SEALS IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION



First seal (white horse of the Apocalypse) depicts religious deception and a false Christ (Revelation 6:2)



Second seal (red horse of the Apocalypse) depicts war (Revelation 6:3–4)



Third seal (black horse of the Apocalypse) depicts famine (Revelation 6:5–6)



Fourth seal (pale horse of the Apocalypse) depicts pestilence (Revelation 6:7–8)



Fifth seal depicts the great tribulation of spiritual and physical Israel (Revelation 6:9–11), while some will be protected at a place of safety (Revelation 12:14–16)



Sixth seal depicts cosmic disturbances or heavenly signs (Revelation 6:12–14)



Seventh seal—the Day of the Lord—consists of seven trumpets (Revelation 8:2, 6) and follows sealing of 144,000 and great multitude (Revelation 7:1–17)

THE SEVEN TRUMPETS



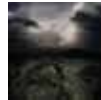
First trumpet destroys one third of all trees and of the grass (Revelation 8:7)



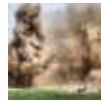
Second trumpet destroys one third of all sea creatures and of all the ocean ships (Revelation 8:8–9)



Third trumpet poisons one third of all the sweet drinking water (Revelation 8:10–11)



Fourth trumpet blocks one third of the light of the sun, moon and stars (Revelation 8:12–13)



Fifth trumpet depicts a war caused by Europe (Revelation 9:1–12)



Sixth trumpet depicts retaliating Asian powers (Revelation 9:16)



Seventh trumpet consists of the seven last plagues (Revelation 16:1). It also consists of Christ's return (Revelation 19:1–16); the resurrection of the saints (1 Corinthians 15:50–56; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18); and the battle at Jehoshaphat (Zechariah 14:3–15; Revelation 17:14; 19:19–21)

THE SEVEN PLAGUES



First plague causes "a foul and loathsome sore" (Revelation 16: 2)



Second plague causes every living creature in the sea to die (Revelation 16:3)



Third plague causes the sweet water supply to become "blood" (Revelation 16:4-7)



Fourth plague scorches mankind (Revelation 16:8-9)



Fifth plague causes total darkness (Revelation 16:10-11)



Sixth plague prepares for "Armageddon" (Revelation 16:16), following the destruction of Europe



Seventh plague causes the greatest earthquake of all time (Revelation 16:17-18)

EVENTS AFTER THE SOUNDING OF THE SEVENTH TRUMPET

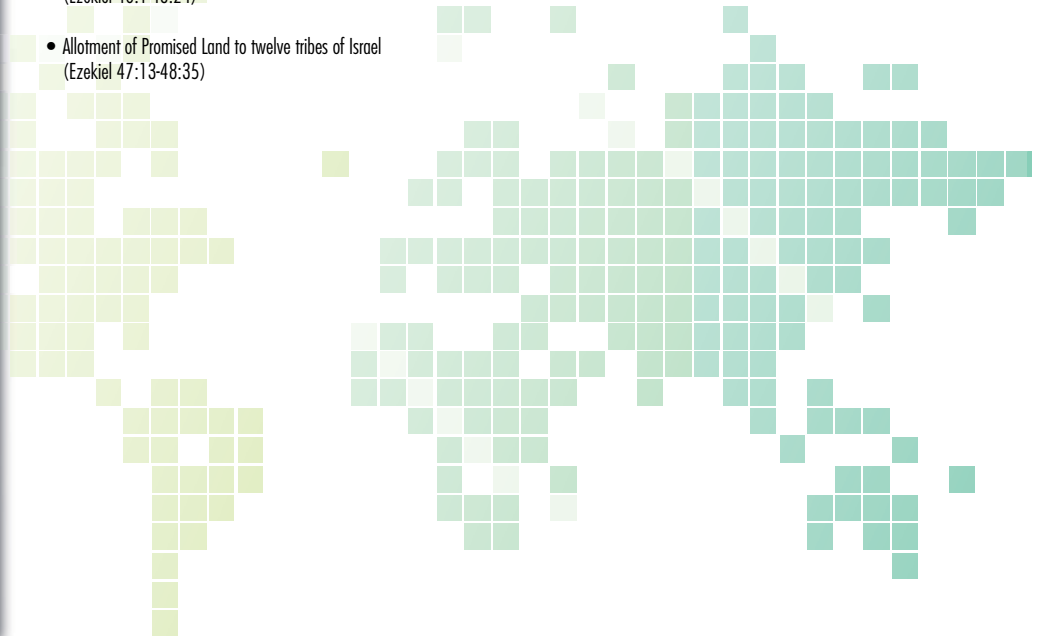


- Establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth (Daniel 7:26-27; Revelation 20:4-6)
- Banishment of Satan and his demons (Revelation 20:1-3)
- Delivery of Israel and Judah from captivity (Isaiah 27:13; 11:11, 16); return to the Promised Land (Jeremiah 33:7-8; Amos 9:14-15)
- Asiatic hordes invade the Promised Land (Ezekiel 38 and 39)
- Establishment of animal sacrifices in God's temple (Ezekiel 40:1-46:24)
- Allotment of Promised Land to twelve tribes of Israel (Ezekiel 47:13-48:35)

EVENTS AFTER THE MILLENNIUM



- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment, following Satan's temporary release from prison and final deception (Revelation 20:5, 7-12)
- The Third Resurrection (Revelation 20:13-15)
- The Father and heavenly Jerusalem coming down out of heaven (Revelation 21:1-22:4); eternal rule of the saints, under God, over new heavens and new earth (Romans 8:32; 2 Peter 3:7, 10-13; Isaiah 65:17; Revelation 22:5)



Other passages that describe the time of the Millennium are Ezekiel 40:38–43 and Ezekiel 44:15, 29–30. They refer to the offering of fat and blood, as well as *burnt offerings*, *grain offerings*, *sin offerings* and *trespass offerings*. Describing the same time setting, Zechariah 14:21 says that “Everyone who sacrifices shall come” to the LORD’S house—a new temple in Jerusalem.

From these Scriptures, we see clearly that burnt offerings, peace offerings, grain offerings, sin offerings and trespass offerings will be given in the Millennium. We also understand that the Jews will give offerings again, for a while, *just prior* to the return of Jesus Christ. In Malachi 3:2–4, these offerings, which apparently may not be pleasing to God, are compared with the offerings that will be given in the Millennium, which WILL be pleasing to God.

NO REPEAT OF THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM

Yes, in the future, sacrifices will be reinstated—at least on a temporary basis—but GOD will NOT reinstate the Old Testament sacrificial SYSTEM. That is, the sacrifices that will be given *just before* Christ’s return (Daniel 12:11), and those given *in the Millennium*, are not the same as those that were part of the old covenants with the nations of Israel and Judah. The New Testament tells us that the sacrifices—as part of the Old Testament system—are no longer valid. The Levites will still officiate over sacrifices, but these sacrifices will not be given pursuant to the same *system* that existed in the Old Testament, under Moses.

The Bible also indicates that, at the beginning of the Millennium, new moons will be kept in conjunction with the bringing of sacrifices (Ezekiel 45:17, 46:1, 3, 6; Isaiah 66:20–23). However, there is no Biblical injunction for us today that would compel us to either celebrate new moons or bring sacrifices.

WHY ANIMAL SACRIFICES WILL BE GIVEN... AND WHY NOT

It is important to understand that the millennial sacrifices will *NOT be brought for the purpose of forgiveness of sin!* Only Christ’s shed blood accomplished this—once and for all! But God introduced the sacrificial system to ancient Israel because Israel had sinned and the sacrifices served as a *reminder* of their sins. Apparently, for the same

reason in the Millennium, sacrifices will be brought so that carnal, unconverted people can begin to appreciate the awesome purpose and meaning of Christ's Sacrifice and how God looks at sin.

We read in the New Testament that animal sacrifices did not forgive sin, nor did they clean or purify the ancient Israelites from an evil conscience. That was never the purpose of the animal sacrifices. Forgiveness of sin and the opportunity to inherit eternal life was only made possible through the supreme Sacrifice of Jesus Christ (John 3:14–17). The same is true for the millennial sacrifices.

Hebrews 10:1–4 makes it very clear that animal sacrifices were just reminders of sins. They could not take away or forgive sin. Animal sacrifices provided a means of permitting the ancient Israelite who had sinned unintentionally, to remain in the community of the nation, under God's rule, and to be spared from physical punishment. In case of an unintentional sin by the entire congregation, animal sacrifices prevented God from turning His back on them and forsaking them. These sacrifices did not provide spiritual forgiveness.

ANIMALS SACRIFICES DO NOT FORGIVE SIN

Animal sacrifices were and will be a means of maintaining a relationship between God and man, by "forgiving" the physical transgression and allowing the transgressor to remain within the community of Israel. They were never meant to, nor will they ever provide spiritual "forgiveness" of sin. They never abolished or superseded the spiritual penalty for sin, which is eternal death (Romans 6:23), nor did they make possible the means of inheriting eternal life. This will be true in the Millennium as well. Only the Sacrifice of Christ can bring about such spiritual forgiveness and allow us to continue on our righteous path (1 John 1:8–9; Romans 8:3–4), to ultimately being given eternal life.

GOD'S COVENANT WITH LEVI

At the time of Moses, God chose to make a covenant with a part of the nation of Israel—Aaron, of the house of Levi, and his descendants (Numbers 18:19; Leviticus 24:5, 8–9; compare Numbers 25:11–13; Nehemiah 13:29–30). God utters a very strict and stern warning in the prophetic book of Malachi, addressing specifically the failure of the Levites—both the physical descendants and the spiritual ministers

of God—to stand strong for God’s law in the sight of adversity and compromise (Malachi 2:4–9).

This prophecy, for our day, tells us in verse 4 that God’s covenant with Levi will continue. This means that it is still in force and effect today. We find this also confirmed in the 33rd chapter of the book of Jeremiah where there is an unconditional promise for the perpetual validity of God’s covenant with Levi (Jeremiah 33:18–22).

These passages clearly tell us that God’s covenant with Levi was to continue; that it is therefore still in force and effect today, and that it will remain so in the future. As long as, and whenever biblical sacrifices are being brought to God in Jerusalem, they will be brought through the descendants of Aaron and [his son] Phinehas. The millennial sacrifices will be brought by “the [physical] priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok” (Ezekiel 44:15, 29, 30).

The millennial rule of Jesus Christ will be administered by spirit beings—those who are part of the first resurrection. But there will also be an ongoing *physical* priesthood serving at that time. The physical sacrifices in existence at that future time will be brought to the temple in Jerusalem and will be part of the new administration that God’s Kingdom will usher in.

We see then that the covenant between God and Levi does continue to exist, and that physical Levitical priests will continue to offer sacrifices in Jerusalem for carnal, unconverted people, *both prior to and subsequent* to the return of Christ. But Jesus Christ became the High Priest for converted people. Unless one accepts the Sacrifice of Christ, one has no part of that priesthood. However, once we do accept Christ’s Sacrifice, our High Priest will then live in us, intervene for us, and lead us to perfection. The physical Levitical priesthood was not given the function or responsibility to lead carnal people to spiritual perfection. Rather, they presided and will preside over the administration of sacrifices as a *reminder* of sin—not for the purpose of forgiving sin.

Physical Israelites will bring animal sacrifices to a new temple in Jerusalem at the beginning of the Millennium. These sacrifices will not be given for the purpose of obtaining spiritual forgiveness, but just to remind the people that they had sinned, and help them to focus on the ultimate Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. As it was the case in Old Testament times, these sacrifices will be *temporary* and will be administered by physical Levites to physical unconverted people, so as to allow the transgressor to remain within the community of Israel.

Chapter 9

Allotment of Promised Land to Twelve Tribes of Israel

After Christ has returned, freed the tribes of Israel from slavery, brought them into the Promised Land, dealt with the hostile Asiatic hordes, and begun the reinstatement of the temple service, He will allot the Promised Land to the twelve tribes. This will apparently occur during the remaining three-and-one-half years of Christ's ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Beginning with Ezekiel 47:13 and continuing until the end of chapter 48, we are introduced to the description of the borders by which the Promised Land will be divided as an inheritance among the twelve tribes of Israel. Joseph will have two portions in his two sons—Ephraim and Manasseh—who will each have a separate inheritance. The priestly tribe of Levi will receive a special area (Ezekiel 45:1–8; 48:8–14), but since Joseph's inheritance is divided into two tribes to compensate for Levi, the number of twelve for the tribes will be maintained.

NEW ARRANGEMENT OF THE TRIBES

As the *Nelson Study Bible* and the *Ryrie Study Bible* explain, the tribes will not be arranged as they were historically under Joshua. A reason for this deviation is not expressly given, but some indications can be deduced, as explained below. To the north of the central district around Jerusalem, which will be set aside for religion and government, will be the seven tribes of Dan, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, Reuben and Judah. To the south will be the remaining five tribes; i.e., Benjamin, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulon and Gad.

The *Nelson Study Bible* includes the following interesting comments:

“The tribes resulting from the offspring of Jacob and his wives' servants are given lands farthest from the most holy areas..., while

the descendants of Jacob's wives occupy a central position... the tribe of Judah is most favored, for it produced the Davidic and messianic line.... Historically, the tribe of Dan had occupied the northern limits of the land... Its idolatry was well known—Jeroboam had placed a golden calf there... Benjamin like Judah is favored."

BOUNDARIES IN THE PROMISED LAND

Some, like *Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*, maintain that the boundaries of the Promised Land and the borders are different than they were under Joshua—that they will be much larger and more extensive, being similar to the borders and boundaries under David and Solomon—while others state that the boundaries "are substantially the same as those given by Moses in Nu[mbers] 34:1–29; they here begin with the north, but in Numbers they begin with the south (Nu[mbers] 34:3)" (compare *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*).

Barnes' Notes on the Bible agrees, adding: "The borders of the land follow closely Numbers 34, where they begin from the south, as the people came up from Egypt; in Ezekiel, they begin from the north, as they might return from Babylon."

The *Ryrie Study Bible* summarizes the boundaries in Ezekiel 47 in this way:

"The northern border of Israel's land will run from the Mediterranean north of Tyre to a point near Damascus (vv. 15–17); the eastern border will be formed by the Jordan River and the Dead Sea (v. 18); the southern boundary will run from a little below the Dead Sea to the river of Egypt (v. 19... [Note that some commentaries feel that the reference to the "river of Egypt" is not identical with the Nile]); and the western border will be the Mediterranean. This particular area will be allotted to the Israelites for their residences, though apparently they will control all the land from the Nile to the Euphrates (cf. Gen. 15:18)."

RIGHT OF INHERITANCE FOR STRANGERS

Ezekiel 47:21–23 specifically adds that strangers who will join and live among the tribes of Israel, will also obtain the right of inheritance. That was not the case under Moses and Joshua, showing further distinctions between the original distribution of the Promised Land under Joshua and the future allotment of the Promised Land, as foreseen by the prophet Ezekiel.

NEW GATES

We also read that there will be exits of the city of Jerusalem and that the gates of these exits will be named after the tribes of Israel. Note the following comments by the *Nelson Study Bible*:

“The northern gates are Reuben (the firstborn), Judah (the tribe of the messianic line), and Levi (the priestly tribe)—all descendants of Jacob and Leah [Jacob’s first wife, even though Jacob was tricked into this marriage by his uncle Laban]... On the eastern side the gates represent Joseph, Benjamin, and Dan. While the first two were children of Jacob and Rachel [Jacob’s second wife whom he really loved and wanted to get married to in the first place], the third [Dan] was the child of Jacob and Rachel’s servant Bilhah... South of the city, the three other offsprings of Jacob and Leah have gates named for them: Simeon, Issachar and Zebulun... The three western gates are named after Gad and Asher—the sons of Jacob and Leah’s maidservant Zilpah—and Naphtali—a son of Jacob and Bilhah.”

Chapter 10

Conditions in the Millennium

When Christ returns to rule on this earth (John 14:3; Isaiah 9:6–7; Luke 1:30–33; Daniel 2:44; Daniel 7:13–14), born-again Christians will rule with and under Him (Daniel 7:27; Luke 13:28; Jeremiah 30:7–9; Ezekiel 37:24–25; Ezekiel 34:23–24; Isaiah 30:20–21; Luke 22:29–30; Matthew 19:28; Revelation 2:26–27; Revelation 20:4, 6).

SAINTS WILL RULE ON EARTH

It is specifically said that they will rule on the earth (Revelation 5:10. Note the correct rendering: “You have made them kings and priests to our God; and they shall reign on the earth.”). They will not rule from heaven over the earth, but they will be on this earth and rule on the earth. There is no Scripture in the Bible telling us that we will go to heaven when we die—or when Christ returns. Christ told Nicodemus that no one “ascends” or would ascend to heaven (compare the *old Luther Bible*) except for the Son of Man. The teaching in its various forms and disguises that Christ will return (secretly or openly) to take us to heaven (either to celebrate the marriage supper there, Revelation 19:7–9, and then to return again with Him, or to stay in heaven and to rule from heaven), is without any biblical foundation whatsoever. We won’t go to heaven, but Christ will return ONCE (not twice, compare Hebrews 9:28) to be with His disciples, here on earth.

Christ will come to confirm to His disciples the promises to the fathers, which include the “promise of the eternal inheritance” of everlasting life in the Kingdom of God (Hebrews 9:15; compare 1 John 2:25; Titus 1:1–2) and the promise of rulership on the earth (Romans 15:8; Romans 4:13). Note that the promises made to the fathers will begin to be fulfilled when Christ returns (Hebrews 11:39–40).

SPIRITUAL RESTORATION

We read that Christ will come to restore all things on this earth (Acts 3:19–21). This includes, of course, the establishment of the government of God here on earth.

It also includes the fact that mankind will be brought to repentance and that the Holy Spirit will be offered to them, to become converted and obtain God's nature (2 Peter 1:4; compare Ezekiel 36:26–27; Jeremiah 31:33). As most people will accept God's teachings (Isaiah 29:24), and even Gentile kings will want to please God (Psalm 68:28–29), Israelites and non-Israelites alike will keep the Ten Commandments and observe God's annual Holy Days, including the Feast of Tabernacles (Hosea 12:9; Zechariah 14:16).

PHYSICAL RESTORATION

This spiritual restoration will be accompanied by a physical restoration.

WILD ANIMALS BECOME PEACEFUL

For instance, even though not all animals will become domesticated (compare Ezekiel 39:17 together with Revelation 18:2), "wild animals" with aggressive natures will not exist anymore to threaten human beings (Hosea 2:18; Isaiah 11:6–9; Ezekiel 34:25). There will be no more "evil" or vicious animals. Their wild nature will be changed so that they become peaceful and tame—not merely "tamed."

WARS WILL CEASE

Apart from a war at the very beginning and another war at the very end of the Millennium, there will be no more wars (Micah 4:1–4; Isaiah 2:1–4). People will be taught the way to peace—something which they do not know at this time (Romans 3:10–18).

CITIES WILL BE REBUILT

The cities which had been destroyed in the wars prior to Christ's return will be rebuilt (Ezekiel 36:33–35). But those cities will be quite different from the violent, depressing, congested and dirty cities of today. The inhabitants in those future cities will be truly happy, and they will be living securely (Jeremiah 33:10–14; Ezekiel 28:25–26).

NO MORE SICKNESS

In the Millennium, sick, injured and impaired people will be healed, and there will be no more sickness and disease (Isaiah 33:24; Isaiah 35:3–6; Jeremiah 30:17). People will not be allowed to harm or injure others or themselves; unhealthy habits such as excessive drinking, smoking or the consumption of drugs and wrong foods will become a thing of the past.

NO MORE FOOD SHORTAGES

Neither will there be any more food shortages (Ezekiel 34:26–27; Isaiah 30:23; Jeremiah 31:12; Amos 9:13). Rather, people will enjoy their harvests and the property that they will own (Isaiah 62:8–9). Governments will not confiscate their property nor enforce ridiculous rules to limit food production.

WASTE PLACES WILL BECOME FERTILE

Another dramatic change in the conditions of this earth will be that waste places—desolate unusable land—will become fertile (Isaiah 41:17–20; Isaiah 35:1–2, 7; Isaiah 51:3). Deserts will become fruitful. In fact, desolate lands could already be fertile today if enough water was available for such areas. God will see to it that this won't be a problem in the future, as He will provide rain in due season.

JERUSALEM, THE CENTER OF WORSHIP

The city of Jerusalem will again be chosen as the center of worship (Zechariah 8:3; Jeremiah 3:17; Isaiah 62:1–2, 7). Even though Jerusalem is not now the primary place of worship (John 4:21)—and it is unbiblical to insist that the Feast of Tabernacles must be observed in Jerusalem today—it will become the center of worship in the Millennium and during the Great White Throne Judgment period. After God has created new heavens and a new earth, the heavenly Jerusalem will become God's Headquarters on the new earth (Revelation 21:1–3).

A PURE LANGUAGE

And finally, at the start of the Millennium, one pure language will be restored to the people (Zephaniah 3:9) so that they will be able to understand each other without the need for translators or the gift of

tongues (compare for a unique episode in this regard, Acts 2:5–11). God’s curse on the people at the time of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:7–9) will be lifted and removed.

CONVERSION OF THE GENTILES

How, exactly, will “Gentile” nations in the Millennium come to know the truth and accept it?

The Bible makes it very clear that after Christ’s return, He will sit on the throne of David in Jerusalem (Luke 1:32) to rule the entire world. But all the nations will not automatically and immediately know and embrace the truth; they will have to be taught and their minds will have to be opened. Their conversion will be a process—the same as ours is today.

Jesus Christ will deal at first with the survivors of the modern descendants of the houses of Israel and Judah. He will convert them and bring them back to the Promised Land, under the resurrected David, their king (Jeremiah 31:8–9). They will submit to Christ’s rule. We also read that the original apostles will sit on thrones and rule the tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28).

GENTILES WILL SEEK CHRIST

Under Christ’s rule, there will be no more hurt nor destruction in all His holy mountain, and ultimately, the earth will become full of the knowledge of the LORD, and the Gentiles will seek Him, as we read in Isaiah 11:6–10.

Why will the Gentiles seek Him?

Isaiah 2:2–4 gives us a clue. We are told that the Gentiles will hear or somehow learn about the righteous rule in Jerusalem, and they will want to learn more about it. They may at first send ambassadors or messengers to Jerusalem to inquire more about what they have heard, and to report back to them (compare Isaiah 14:32. For historic examples, see Jeremiah 27:2–3 and 2 Chronicles 32:31). As a consequence, since God will be opening their minds, the Gentile nations will be led to forsake war and choose peace (compare Zechariah 9:10).

But this is a process. Recall that at the beginning of the Millennium, Asiatic hordes will try to conquer the land of Israel (compare chapters 38 and 39 of the book of Ezekiel). But notice WHY God will deal

with the hordes supernaturally, mightily and swiftly: For one reason, He wants to have the survivors of Israel and Judah understand, once and for all, HOW powerful God is, and that He will always defend them, and that there is **never** a need for them to fight in war. In fact, God wants them to realize that it would always be wrong for them to fight in war.

Notice Ezekiel 39:22: “So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day forward.” Compare also verse 7, first part: “So I will make My holy name known in the midst of My people Israel. And I will not let them profane My holy name anymore.”

ISRAEL HAD PROFANED GOD’S HOLY NAME

In passing, how did Israel profane God’s holy name? They did so by violating His commandments and by refusing to make a difference between the holy or clean things and the unholy or unclean things (Ezekiel 22:26). They violated His holy Sabbath and His annual Holy Days, and substituted them with human holidays and religious practices which had been invented for the purpose of worshipping pagan gods and demons (Ezekiel 20:11–13, 16, 18–21, 23–24; compare Psalm 106:35–38). **Even though God had commanded them to keep His Law for their own good (Deuteronomy 6:24) and not to worship or offer sacrifices to demons (Leviticus 17:7), they continued to do so (Deuteronomy 32:17; Amos 5:25–26).**

And so, as God had “given them up” to the worship of idols in the wilderness (Acts 7:42–43)—that is, He did not force them to keep His Law, but gave them free will to decide—so He later “gave them up” to statutes that were not good (Ezekiel 20:25). Such is the case with the modern descendants of ancient Israel—as is the case with all of mankind—even though Paul warns us that we are not to engage in the worship services of unbelievers, as they are serving demons and not God (1 Corinthians 10:20–21).

But once Christ rules on earth, all of this will change.

EVENTS IN EZEKIEL 38 AND 39 HELP CONVERSION OF GENTILES

The second part of Ezekiel 39:7 tells us this:

“Then the *nations* shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One of Israel.”

Notice also Ezekiel 38:23:

“Then I will magnify Myself and sanctify Myself, and I will be known in the eyes of *many nations*. Then they shall know that I am the LORD.”

God’s mighty intervention for Israel at that time, after He allowed them to go into slavery and become captives of war, will help to cause an interesting *change in the minds of the nations*, and it will reinforce in Israel’s mind the need to glorify God and obey Him.

Note Ezekiel 39:23:

“The Gentiles shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity; because they were unfaithful to Me, therefore I hid My face from them. I gave them into the hand of their enemies, and they all fell by the sword.”

But when God intervenes for Israel and when He brings the Far Eastern nations into judgment with a great earthquake, pestilence and bloodshed, flooding rain, great hailstones, fire and brimstone (Ezekiel 38:19, 22), so that even the troops of the hostile armies will begin to fight each other (verse 21), then it will become clear to the nations that God is now hallowed in Israel, and that Israel’s former sins have been forgiven. But equally importantly, Israel will know and understand this too (compare Ezekiel 39:27–29).

These events will also make clear to all peoples that God will not allow compromise with His holy Law (compare Isaiah 11:4).

GENTILES WILL WANT TO KNOW...

Undoubtedly, that message and the word of those events will spread. People will want to know what is happening in Jerusalem and the Promised Land, and why God is acting so powerfully on behalf of Israel. And so, ambassadors and messengers will appear in Jerusalem to see and understand what has happened, and they will return to their countries and give a report, telling them about Jesus Christ’s rule with mercy, justice and righteousness, and what the requirements are to please God (compare Psalm 98:1–9). Some of these requirements will be the abolishment of war and the destruction of all weapons of war, and the observance of the Feast of Tabernacles.

But not every nation is going to be willing to obey God immediately and to keep His Sabbath and His Holy Days. We read in Zechariah 14:16–19, that not every nation will immediately worship

God in the right way—some will refuse for a while to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. When this happens, God will deal with them. He will withhold certain blessings—rain in due season, which is necessary for a good harvest—and so they will learn swiftly that it does not pay to disobey God.

INCREASE OF CHRIST'S GOVERNMENT

People will have to be taught, Israelites and Gentiles alike. Christ's government and peace will increase. His rule will start in Jerusalem with the nations of Israel and Judah, but it will spread from there to the entire world (compare Isaiah 9:5–7). Isaiah 60:1–3 explains that the Gentiles will come to Christ—quite literally, by sending ambassadors first, and then appearing in Jerusalem themselves, for instance, during the Feast of Tabernacles. They will also come to the Father and Jesus Christ in a spiritual sense, in that they will then accept the Way of God and are “come to Him” in spirit and truth, as we do today. They will come to the right understanding, as Jeremiah 16:19–21 explains. Even Gentile kings will want to please God (Psalm 68:28–29). They will be drawn to Christ the King (Isaiah 49:5–7).

Gentiles will recognize that God, through Jesus Christ, is ruling in Jerusalem and that Israel and Judah have been responding to God's call. And so, Gentiles will want to show their respect, not just for God, but also for modern Israel and Judah (Isaiah 60:14; 61:9; Jeremiah 33:9). Gentiles will want to seek Jesus Christ, the LORD, in Jerusalem. They will realize that God is with the Jews, and so they will ask them for help (Zechariah 8:20–23).

ISRAELITES AND JEWS WILL TEACH GENTILES

In addition, we are told that both Israelites and Jews will be sent to foreign lands to teach the Gentiles (Isaiah 66:19). They will declare God's glory to them and the Gentiles will come to see His glory (verse 18). Note that some of those peoples include survivors from the country of Tubal, who had sent their armies previously against the Promised Land, as we read in Ezekiel 38.

IMMORTAL SAINTS WILL LEAD

But as Jesus Christ will deal and work directly with the Gentile

nations, so will His born-again disciples who have become immortal members of the Family of God. As they will help Israelites and Jews (Isaiah 30:20–22), so they will help other nations as well.

We read in Obadiah 21 that they will become “saviors” to judge the “mountains of Esau,” when the Kingdom of God has been established on earth. They will be saviors in the sense that they will help the nations to come to salvation. As Christ will rule with uncompromising righteousness and mercy (Psalm 2:8–9), so will they (Revelation 2:25–27; Psalm 149:5–9).

During the entire Millennium (1,000 years) they will rule under Christ on this earth (Matthew 5:5; Romans 4:13; Revelation 5:10; 20:4, 6; compare also Daniel 7:27, clarifying that their rule will be on earth, as the Kingdom of God will be established “under the whole heaven”). Their rule will spread from Jerusalem, until God’s peaceful and righteous way of life engulfs the entire earth, as water covers the sea (Habakkuk 2:14).

When physical Israelites, Jews and Gentiles, living in the Millennium, have qualified, they too will be changed to immortal Spirit God beings, entering the very Family and Kingdom of God.

Chapter 11

The Great White Throne Judgment and Physical Conditions on Earth

After the Millennium, there will be a Second Resurrection when God will resurrect all those who did not commit the unpardonable sin, and who were not already changed into Spirit in the First Resurrection or during or at the end of the Millennium. Everyone who died without having been given an opportunity to accept the truth and to live God's way of life will receive that opportunity then. They will be resurrected as a human being, in a physical state, here on earth, and will live for about 100 years (compare Isaiah 65:20). During that time, they will also be given the opportunity to qualify to enter the Kingdom of God.

This Second Resurrection is also commonly referred to as the "Great White Throne Judgment" period, during which all persons who have ever lived and who were never called by God for salvation during their lifetime, will have their first opportunity to accept Christ as their Savior.

THE SECOND RESURRECTION TO PHYSICAL LIFE

Many Scriptures prove that those who died without having been true Christians at the time of their death, will be brought back to physical life. Those who had not been called in their lifetime (and who did *not rebel* against the truth, after having been given the opportunity and spiritual understanding to accept God's way of life), will be raised as physical human beings in the "Judgment" of the Second Resurrection.

WHO WILL BE IN THE SECOND RESURRECTION?

We explained the following about the Second Resurrection in our free booklet, *"Is That in the Bible?—The Mysteries of the Book of Revelation,"* on pages 127–128:

"Revelation 20:5, 11–12 describes the SECOND resurrection: 'But

the REST OF THE DEAD [who were not in the FIRST resurrection] did not live again UNTIL the thousand years [the Millennium] were finished... Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it... And I saw the dead, small and great, STANDING before God... And the dead were JUDGED...'

"Ezekiel 37:7–11 describes the resurrection of the entire house of Israel to PHYSICAL LIFE. They will be resurrected in the SECOND resurrection. When the dead of Israel are brought back again to physical life, God will deal with them as He deals with true Christians today. Once a person comes to a true understanding, accepts God's way of life, repents of his sins, believes in Christ's sacrifice and the gospel, and becomes baptized, then God grants him forgiveness and offers him the gift of the Holy Spirit—the same process of conversion taking place with those whom God is calling today. We see in Ezekiel 37:14 that the Holy Spirit is offered to the resurrected Israelites—obviously after they have repented of their sins and have become baptized. The people of the house of Israel will know God and begin to live a life pleasing to God. If they overcome and endure, they will receive immortality (compare Romans 11:32; Romans 11:26).

"It is not only the people of Israel who will be resurrected at that time. We read in Matthew 12:41–42 that the men of Nineveh and the queen of the South 'will RISE UP in the JUDGMENT' *together with people* who were alive at the time of Jesus Christ. Compare, too, Matthew 10:14–15 and Matthew 11:21–24, referring to other unconverted people who had died in the past...."

At the end of the Great White Throne Judgment period, there will be a "judicial" finding. Those who qualified for the Kingdom of God will be changed into immortal God beings, entering the very Family of God. Those who irrevocably decided against God's Way of Life will be condemned and die. They will subsequently be resurrected again in the Third Resurrection, which will be discussed below.

Some may wonder whether this statement that the incorrigible wicked will die after the Second Resurrection and be brought back to life in the Third Resurrection contradicts the biblical teaching of a "second death," since some would die *more than twice*. However, there are many examples in Scripture when people died several times and were resurrected after that. The "second death" does not mean

that there can only be one physical death before. Rather, it refers to a spiritual death—the final fate of the wicked.

Lazarus died and was resurrected and then died again. Others were resurrected to physical life when Christ died (Matthew 27:51–53). Still, they later died, so they also died twice (not just once). They did not die the “second death,” but they died twice.

Let us just assume for the sake of argument that a person who had died and was resurrected to physical life by Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry later committed the unpardonable sin and died. That person would be resurrected in the Third Resurrection. Before dying the “second death,” that person had died *twice* before.

The same concept would apply to those in the Second Resurrection who commit the unpardonable sin. They will die, to be resurrected in the Third Resurrection. The only alternative would be that they will not die at the end of the Great White Throne Judgment period, but survive to be destroyed in the Third Resurrection, but this would seem to contradict Scripture which says that the sinner *will die* at the end of the Great White Throne Judgment period which will apparently last for 100 years (Isaiah 65:20; compare discussion below).

CONDITIONS ON EARTH DURING JUDGMENT PERIOD

What will be the physical conditions here on earth during the Great White Throne Judgment period?

As a general truism, when we look at the physical conditions during the Millennium and compare them with the conditions during the Great White Throne Judgment period, we find that the conditions are very similar.

ALMOST THE MILLENNIUM...

For instance, we read the famous statement in Isaiah 11:6–9 that during the Millennium, wild beasts will be tame and that the wolf and lamb shall feed together. The same conditions are described in Isaiah 65:25, referring to the Great White Throne Judgment period (compare the context in verses 17 and 20), but a few more details are given then; i.e., that “dust shall be the serpent’s food.”

Of course, at the beginning of the Millennium, destroyed cities will have to be rebuilt, deserts will become fertile lands, and the destruction

from prior wars, air pollution and radioactive fallout will have to be repaired or removed. This won't be necessary or the case at the time of the Second Resurrection when this earth will have enjoyed 1,000 years of peace and prosperity. These prosperous and peaceful conditions will continue throughout the Judgment period. (We don't know whether God will allow the invading Gog and Magog hordes at the end of the Millennium to cause any damage, but if they do, it will be minimal in comparison with the conditions at the beginning of the Millennium).

CHRIST RESTORES ALL THINGS

We know that Christ will come to restore all things on this earth (Acts 3:19–21), and we have already discussed that this includes, of course, the establishment of the government of God here on earth. The restoration must therefore also apply, by necessity, to the time period of the Great White Throne judgment. Christ's restoration includes the fact that mankind will be brought to repentance at that time, and that the Holy Spirit will be offered to them.

CHRIST RULES ON THE THRONE OF DAVID IN JERUSALEM

Christ will rule on the throne of David in Jerusalem during the Millennium. His rule will continue during the Great White Throne Judgment period. He will continue to RULE on the throne of David in Jerusalem (Luke 1:32–33)—His government and peace will be everlasting; His throne will stand forever, and His rule will be without end (compare Isaiah 9:6–7; Daniel 7:27; 2:44).

Isaiah 42:1–4 tells us that Christ will not fail until He has established justice in the earth. This not only refers to the Millennium, but it also applies to the time of the Great White Throne Judgment period.

We also read that Zion will be forever God's dwelling place (Psalm 132:13–14).

THE VISION OF THE DRY BONES

We referred earlier to Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones, as set forth in Ezekiel 37. It describes the *resurrection of the entire house of Israel*. We are specifically informed that the dead Israelites will be resurrected to PHYSICAL life. They will come to know God (verse 6).

God will open their graves and *bring them to the land of Israel* (verse 12). This implies that they will be resurrected where they died and/or were buried, but that God will then bring them to the places He wants them to be.

We are told that God will give them His Spirit (verse 14). The Israelites will no longer be two nations—Israel and Judah—they will no longer be divided (verse 22). They will not defile themselves anymore with idols, but God will cleanse them (verse 23).

DAVID THEIR PRINCE FOREVER

David will be their prince *forever* (verse 25). As David will rule during the Millennium over the house of Israel and Judah, so he will continue to do so during the Great White Throne Judgment period.

PHYSICAL BLESSINGS

God will make the (new) covenant of peace and prosperity with the houses of Israel and Judah (verse 26). As we explain in our free booklet, *“And Lawlessness Will Abound,”* the “new covenant” not only deals with spiritual blessings, but with physical blessings as well. Of course, Gentiles can become part of the new Covenant as well, by becoming spiritual Israelites.

When Christ rules on this earth—during the Millennium *and* the Great White Throne Judgment period—the tremendous effects of peace and prosperity will be obvious!

PEACE AND SECURITY

Isaiah 32:16–18 explains:

“Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. The work of righteousness will be peace, And the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever. My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings and in quiet resting places...”

This will apply not only to the nations of Israel and Judah, but to all nations.

NO MORE TEARS

Notice Isaiah 25:7–9: “And He will destroy on this mountain The

surface of the covering cast over ALL people, And the veil that is spread over ALL nations. He will swallow up death forever, And the Lord God will wipe away tears from ALL faces; the rebuke of His people He will take away from ALL the earth; for the LORD has spoken.”

As we can see, this is the ultimate goal. This message is partially repeated in Revelation 21:4, when God the Father dwells on the new earth. In order to achieve that goal in fulfillment of God’s Will that all men should be saved (even though some will refuse to be saved), Christ’s rule during the Great White Throne Judgment period must allow for that process—including the removal of the spiritual veil which blinds the people to the truth.

ALL WILL COME TO CHRIST

Isaiah 45:22–24 adds: “Look to Me, and be saved, ALL you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That to Me EVERY knee should bow, EVERY tongue shall take an oath [in loyalty to God]. He shall say, ‘Surely in the LORD I have righteousness and strength. To Him men shall come, And all shall be ashamed Who are incensed against Him.”

BEFORE THE THRONE OF DAVID

We have already seen how the nations of Israel and Judah, as well as the Gentiles, will “come” to God in the Millennium. Something similar will occur during the Great White Throne Judgment period. After they are resurrected from the dead, apparently at the place where they were buried or died, they will all be brought before Christ in Jerusalem, to appear before His throne and judgment seat. It is very likely that angels and immortal saints will assist in this process of bringing the resurrected persons to Christ’s throne in Jerusalem.

Remember that we read in Revelation 20:11–12 that John sees in vision a great white throne and Him that sat on it, and the dead are standing before God to give account and hear God’s pronouncement of judgment—the death penalty for everyone, since all have sinned. But then Christ will explain that **because of His death and sacrifice, their sins can be forgiven, and the Holy Spirit will be offered to them.**

Isaiah 55:1–3 gives us some insight as to what Christ will tell those

before His throne who have been brought back to life in the Second Resurrection:

“Ho! Everyone who thirsts Come to the waters; And you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen diligently to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear and come to Me, Hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you...”

(Compare also John 7:37–38; Revelation 22:17).

IT WILL TAKE TIME

God will then “dismiss” them to settle in those places on earth designed for them. The Gentiles, as well as the Israelites, will have an allotted time of perhaps 100 years to qualify for the Kingdom of God.

Even though God will remove the spiritual veil from people’s minds, they still need to be taught the right way, and they have to be encouraged to stay on that right path, as is explained in Isaiah 30:20–21, referring to teachers showing the way. God’s immortal saints will be those teachers, and the God Family will hasten righteousness in mercy on the earth (Isaiah 16:5; Psalm 96:13; 67:3–4).

Chapter 12

The Third Resurrection to Eternal Death

Sadly, there are those who have had their opportunity but have committed the “unpardonable sin.” They knew and understood perfectly well that they had to submit to Christ, but they refused to do so. They became bitter, hateful, resentful and malicious. They made the unchangeable decision NEVER to repent. If a person has reached that stage that he cannot repent, because he has, in fact, made the final decision NOT to WANT to repent, then God will not force repentance on such a person. God grants repentance, but a person must *want* to receive it. A person who maliciously rejects Christ would only continue to live in misery and pain—and that is why God will save such a person from eternal misery, by DESTROYING him in a lake of fire.

Revelation 20:13–15 describes the THIRD resurrection, which will occur sometime AFTER the judgment period of the Second Resurrection:

“The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”

God refers to the coming THIRD resurrection in Daniel 12:2; Obadiah 16; Malachi 4:3; Matthew 3:10; Hebrews 6:4–8; Hebrews 10:26–27; and 2 Peter 3:7.

We do not know how long the period of the third resurrection will last. But we do know that all in the third resurrection will appear before Christ to receive from Him their judgment of condemnation.

The vast majority of all of humanity will be judged during the Millennium and the Second Resurrection. Even at that time, it may well be that some will ultimately reject God’s offer of salvation and eternal life—just as some called before the First Resurrection will have turned away from God.

You might also want to read Christ's parable of Lazarus and the rich man, in Luke 16:19–31. While Lazarus was resurrected to immortal life in the FIRST resurrection, the rich man is being resurrected more than 1,000 years later in the THIRD resurrection. He sees the flames and acknowledges his fate, knowing that he will be cast into the lake of fire to be burnt up.

In spite of what many preach and believe today, the Bible clearly reveals that there will be some who will have committed the unpardonable sin. They will be destroyed by fire: "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8).

WHY SHOULD THERE BE A THIRD RESURRECTION?

Some have wondered why there should be a third resurrection, if their fate was already sealed at the time of their death. Why wouldn't God just throw those incorrigible sinners who are still alive at the end of the Great White Throne Judgment period, into the lake of fire, and leave the others of times past in their graves—rather than resurrecting them again to physical life to destroy them forever?

Apart from the fact, that the Bible clearly teaches a Third Resurrection, God gives us further hints as to why there must be one.

GOD IS JUST

God is a God of JUSTICE. In raising those who have committed the unpardonable sin to physical life, their attitude will become manifest to all alive at that time. When they witness their conduct, they will never be able to question God's compassionate and uncompromising justice; as well as His merciful wisdom to free those hateful human beings from their emotional misery and pain.

THE HUMAN SPIRIT

In addition, we need to realize that each human being has been given a spirit—the spirit in man—which is not an immortal soul, nor is it to be confused with the Holy Spirit. When a person dies, the spirit of man will return to God, but not as a conscious entity.

It is especially important, for the purpose of answering the question

as to why there must be a third resurrection, to realize the role and function of the human spirit.

We discuss the biblical concept of the “spirit in man” extensively in our free booklet, *“The Theory of Evolution—a Fairy Tale for Adults.”* We explain that many Scriptures teach the existence of a human spirit (compare Isaiah 42:5; 1 Chronicles 5:25–26; 2 Chronicles 21:16–17; 2 Chronicles 36:22; Ezra 1:1; Haggai 1:14; Zechariah 12:1; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Psalm 77:6; and James 2:26).

Paul says in Romans 8:14–16, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God [the Holy Spirit], these are the sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear [a reference here to Satan, the god and spirit of this world], but you received the Spirit of adoption [or better, sonship] by whom we cry out, Abba, Father. The Spirit [God’s Holy Spirit] [Itself] bears witness *with our spirit* that we are children of God.”

Paul speaks very clearly about two spirits—the spirit of man and the Holy Spirit. Notice in 1 Corinthians 2:11 and 14, “For what man knows the things of man except the *spirit of the man which is in him*. Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God... But the natural man [a person who does have the spirit of man, but who does not have the Holy Spirit of God] does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

Each person has a human spirit which God gives apparently at the time of conception, and which goes back to God in heaven when the person dies (Ecclesiastes 12:7). This spirit is not the person, nor is it immortal or eternal, nor does it have a conscious existence when the person dies.

When a man dies and his spirit returns to God, that spirit does not continue to live consciously, apart from the body. Rather, God “stores” it, so to speak, in heaven, until He unites it at the time of the resurrection of man with a new spiritual or physical body. The spirit in man records all the human characteristics of the person, as well as his or her outward appearance.

NO HUMAN SPIRIT PRIOR TO CONCEPTION

The *individual* human spirit does not exist, as such, prior to the

conception of the baby. Isaiah 42:5 says that God, after having created the heavens and the earth, gives breath to the people on it, and “spirit to those who walk on it.” But there is no breath in a particular person prior to his existence, and by extension, there would not be any spirit either. That is, neither the breath nor the spirit of man exist prior to the “creation” of that particular person. We also read in Zechariah 12:1 that God FORMS the spirit of man within him. Again, this seems to imply that God actually creates in man the human spirit when man comes into existence.

The connection between God’s breath and the spirit in man is also expressed in Job 32:8. The *New Jerusalem Bible* translates Job 32:8, “There is, you see, a spirit residing in humanity, the breath of God conferring intelligence.”

THE HUMAN SPIRIT AND THE RESURRECTION

At the time of the resurrection, the spirit of the dead person is combined with a new body of the dead person. This means, all the experiences and memories and ideas of the former life are back in the resurrected individual, and the resurrected person will also look the same way he or she did in their former life.

This does not mean that a disabled person will be resurrected in a disabled state. A person who had been blind or deaf will be resurrected in a healed state. In addition, we don’t believe that an aborted fetus will be resurrected as a fetus. We might assume that a person will perhaps be resurrected as an adult, as Adam and Eve were created as adult persons, but the point is that others will be able to recognize them. Jesus Christ—even as a Spirit being—manifested Himself as the recognizable Person He had been prior to His death. Lazarus was resurrected with the same appearance that he had before.

When a person dies, his body returns to dust, and his spirit returns to God. The spirit of man in him has recorded the appearance of the person, the personality, the personal attributes, and God gives the spirit of that person back into the newly created physical or spiritual body.

It is THAT spirit in man which God uses when He resurrects the person from the dead. (Note for a revealing example of the function of the spirit in man in the context of a resurrection, Luke 8:53–55.) In the case of converted Christians who have ALSO received God’s HOLY

SPIRIT in addition to the human spirit, both the Holy Spirit and the human spirit will return to God at the time of death (Luke 23:46). The true Christian will be resurrected to eternal life with a *spiritual body* (Romans 8:11), while unconverted humans will be resurrected at a later time to PHYSICAL life in the Second and the Third Resurrections, with a *physical body*.

THE FATE OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT IN THE THIRD RESURRECTION

What, then, is going to happen to the human spirit of those who are going to be thrown in Gehenna fire to be burned up?

Since there is no further resurrection for those who die the eternal death, and since the very being of those in the Third Resurrection is totally extinguished (with no memory of their prior existence remaining), we might ask why the human spirit should continue to exist even on an unconscious basis.

We read in Revelation 4:11 that God has created all things—visible and invisible—and that they exist and were created by His Will. Therefore, God could most certainly end the existence of whatever He has created, if He so chooses.

We read in 2 Peter 3:11 that every physical thing will be destroyed in an all-encompassing fire. It will include those humans who have willfully refused to live God's way of life. They will be thrown into the lake of fire, apparently situated outside Jerusalem, but that lake of fire will ultimately engulf the entire physical earth and even the physical universe.

PAUL'S PRAYER TO PRESERVE THE HUMAN SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANS

Paul prayed that God would blamelessly preserve spirit and soul and body of a converted Christian (1 Thessalonians 5:23). In other words, Paul wished that God would preserve blameless the Christian's human spirit, his temporary physical life and his physical flesh. All of these "components" together describe the entire being. In addition, 1 Corinthians 5:5 says about a Christian who sinned gravely to "...deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

But what if that spirit cannot be “saved”? The fact that Paul prayed to God to “preserve blameless” the body, soul AND spirit of a person shows that it is possible that body, soul AND spirit may not be preserved “blameless”—or not at all. And if they are not preserved, then they cease to exist.

HUMAN SPIRIT IN HEAVEN

Realize that the human spirit of the incorrigible sinners will still be in heaven at the time just prior to the Third Resurrection. Therefore, THERE MUST BE a Third Resurrection; otherwise, their spirit would remain in heaven, while those incorrigible sinners would stay buried in their graves.

However, Christ said in John 5:28–29 that ALL who are in their graves will come forward when they hear the voice of the Son of Man, and we read in Daniel 12:2 that some who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake to shame and everlasting contempt. We also read in 1 Corinthians 15:22 that all who died in Adam will be made alive in (or by) Jesus Christ.

HUMAN SPIRIT MUST BE PLACED BACK IN A BODY

There must be a final Third Resurrection to everlasting condemnation when the spirit in man is placed back in the (newly created) physical body of the person here on earth; otherwise, the spirit in man would remain in heaven and with it the recording of the personalities and thoughts and memories. But somehow, everything which was recorded by the spirit in man must be erased, so that it is as if the incorrigible sinners had never existed (Obadiah 16).

STRONG HINT AT THE FINAL FATE OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT OF INCORRIGIBLE SINNERS

A strong hint at the final fate of the spirit in man of those who are going to be destroyed in the Third Resurrection can be found in Isaiah 57:16: “For I will not contend forever, Nor will I always be angry; for the spirit would fail before Me, and the souls which I have made.”

The commentary of *Jamieson, Fausset and Brown* explains correctly that the “spirit” in the passage refers to the spirit in man—not the Holy Spirit of God. This should be evident as the Holy Spirit would never “fail.”

Isaiah 57:16 implies, then, that the spirit in man could fail. But what is meant with the word, “fail”? Could it mean, “cease to exist”?

The Hebrew word is “ataph” and has a variety of meanings. One meaning is “cease to exist, get destroyed, become annihilated.”

Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible comments regarding Isaiah 57:16:

“The simple meaning seems to be, that if God should continue in anger against people they would be consumed. The human soul could not endure a long-continued controversy with God. Its powers would fail; its strength decay; it must sink to destruction.”

As the concept of “dying” seems to be conveyed in this passage in Isaiah 57:16, it indicates that not only the soul, but also the spirit in man CAN be extinguished and cease to exist. This would have to be the obvious “fate” of the human spirit of those in the Third Resurrection. The wicked will be burned up in the lake of fire—spirit, soul and body—and it will be, as if they had never been.

Chapter 13

Beyond the Physical World

As already mentioned several times, the Bible teaches that it is the potential and destiny of man to enter the Kingdom and Family of God; that is, to become an immortal and eternal God being.

What will the Family of God DO, once all human beings who have qualified for the Kingdom of God are changed to immortal Spirit GOD beings in the very Family of God? What will happen AFTER the Third Resurrection and the destruction of the incorrigibly wicked?

SAINTS WILL BE WHAT CHRIST IS

Those who qualify for God's Kingdom will be what Christ is today—Christ is God. The resurrected immortal saints will be like Him, as He is. They will share the very divine nature of both the Father and Christ (2 Peter 1:4). The only difference is that they will not have the same authority as Christ, just as Christ does not have the same authority as the Father. God is—and always will be—a hierarchical Family—with God the Father on top, under Him Jesus Christ, and under Christ those who are to be born into the very Family of God.

However, even though Christ is under the Father, He still has—and always had, as a God being—unlimited power to create life. God the Father created everything—the visible as well as the invisible—through and by Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1–2; Colossians 1:15–16)!

SAINTS WILL INHERIT EVERYTHING

In Hebrews 1, verse 2, it says of Jesus Christ that God the Father "...has appointed [Him] heir of all things." It is further revealed in Hebrews 2:7 that although man was created "a little lower" and "for a little while" lower than the angels, he will ultimately have "...all things in subjection under his feet" (verse 8). Psalm 8:5 even says that God made man for a little while lower than *God* ("*Elohim*" in the Hebrew,

compare the footnote in the *New King James Bible*).

The eighth chapter of the book of Romans presents us with even more astounding proof of the tremendous future God has in store for us: “The Spirit [itself] bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and *joint heirs with Christ*, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together” (verses 16–17).

Romans 8:32 also clarifies this point: “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely *give us all things?*”

“All things” means exactly that—it includes rule over the entire universe AND the unending future of God’s Kingdom. Man is to become a “joint heir” with Christ in “all things.” We will rule with and under Christ for all eternity. It is therefore obvious that we will be able to do what Christ is capable of doing.

We will be ruling over angels (1 Corinthians 6: 3). We will possess much higher powers than they do.

SAINTS WILL CREATE LIFE

As God beings, we will of course have the ability to create, as God the Father and Jesus Christ create. This is expressly confirmed in Scripture.

1 Corinthians 15:45 tells us that Christ is “a life-giving spirit.” That is, He is a Spirit being who can give and create LIFE.

Please note Isaiah 58:10–12: “You shall be like a spring of water whose waters do not fail” (or: “never run dry,” *New Jerusalem Bible*). Primarily, this talks about our role in the Millennium, directing the rebuilding of old places that had become waste. BUT, there is also an overriding meaning, hinting at our ultimate potential—to be a continual spring of living fresh water regarding others, giving them health and REAL life.

Notice Christ’s words in John 7:37–38, where we read that out of our hearts will flow rivers of living water. That is, God’s Spirit will flow out of us like rivers of living waters to create LIFE.

In addition, Christ said in John 4:14, referring to the Holy Spirit, that the “water that I give him will become in him a FOUNTAIN of water springing up into everlasting life.” We will be fountains of living water, leading to life.

We will be God beings with the same powers and abilities which God the Father and Jesus Christ have. This would include the ability to create. However, we will always be under the authority of God the Father and Jesus Christ, and we will never do anything, including any creative act, without or even against God's Will. The Bible has not revealed what exactly we might create under God's authority and direction.

NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH

We read in 2 Peter 3:7, 10–13 that, ultimately, the heavens will pass away and the elements will melt with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up, and all these things—the heavens and the earth—will be dissolved, being on fire. This shows that both the entire physical universe as well as the earth will melt away and burn up. We then read that afterwards, God will create new heavens and “a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”

NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH NO LONGER PHYSICAL

The heavenly Jerusalem will come down from heaven after the physical earth and the physical heavens are burned up, and after God creates new heavens and a new earth. Isaiah 51:6 adds that “the heavens will vanish away like smoke.” Isaiah 34:4 tells us that “All the host of heaven shall be DISSOLVED,” and that “...the heavens shall be ROLLED UP like a scroll.” God will create new heavens and a new earth, which will remain (Isaiah 65:17; 66:22).

Will our new solar system, if we can call it that, consisting of spirit, have a sun and a moon? Apparently not, as we read in passages such as Isaiah 60:19–20 and Revelation 21:23.

We find a description of God's new creation in Psalm 102:25–26: “Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You will endure; Yes, they will all grow old like a garment; Like a cloak You will change them, And they will be *changed*.”

In what way will God *change* them? 2 Corinthians 4:18 tells us: “...For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

Romans 8: 21 says that the creation will be delivered from corruption “into” (“eis” in Greek) the glorious liberty of the children of God. *Moffat* renders verse 21 in this way: “The hope being that creation as well as man would one day be freed from its thralldom [bondage] to decay and gain the glorious freedom of God’s children.” The *Revised Standard Version* writes: “...the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and OBTAIN the glorious liberty of the children of God.” The *Luther Bible* states, “The creation, too, will be freed from bondage of temporary existence INTO the glorious freedom of the children of God.”

The Greek word for corruption or decay that is used in verse 21 is “phthora.” It is the same word used in 1 Corinthians 15:42, where we read: “The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.” It is also used in Galatians 6:8: “For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption.”

This physical creation, patterned after God’s spiritual creation, waits to be delivered from corruption to obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. The glorious freedom that the universe will receive includes freedom from death. In that new universe, DEATH will be unknown, and so also decay and corruption.

We will be changed into Spirit. Spirit endures. Spirit cannot die or decay. Spirit remains. Spirit is INCORRUPTIBLE. The universe will obtain that same freedom from decay, corruption and death. In order to obtain such freedom from death and corruption, this universe will have to be changed into SPIRIT, as we also will be changed into Spirit beings.

It is true that Ecclesiastes 1:4 says that the earth will remain forever. However, this does not necessarily mean that this earth will remain forever in a physical state. We know that, ultimately, everything physical will decay and cease to exist. After all, we will remain forever, but we will not remain in this physical body. Rather, we will remain forever as Spirit beings.

The new heavens and the new earth will no longer be physical—consisting of matter. They will be *spiritual—consisting of spirit*—just as God’s third heaven where He dwells has always been a spirit realm. In fact, God, who is Spirit, first created the angels and other things within the spirit world, and after that, the physical world, which was *patterned after the things in the spirit world*.

SAINTS WILL RULE FOR ALL ETERNITY

Now notice Revelation 22:4–5, which speaks about a time long after the creation of a new earth and new heavens:

“They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads [the name of God will be their name as well]...the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.”

After the Great White Throne Judgment period and the Third Resurrection, this universe, which is presently in decay, will be replaced by a new *spiritual* creation. And it will be, apparently, *our privilege to assist God and Jesus Christ in the creation of the spiritual universe; thereby freeing the present physical universe from decay and corruption.*

We can say confidently that, following the Third Resurrection, HUMAN life will NOT be created on the new earth or the other new planets. This would begin another cycle of physical frailties, pain, sin, forgiveness of sin, death, etc. This can't be true as we read that there will be no more death, nor pain and suffering. In addition, the new earth and the new heavens will consist of spirit, not matter. Therefore, for that reason alone, human physical life won't be created.

What exactly God has in store for us after the new heavens and the new earth have been created, we don't know. But we do know that God says that we will rule forever and ever, and that His peace and government over the new earth and the entire new universe will have no end. Undoubtedly, the new earth will be God's headquarters over the entire universe, and it appears that we will be assisting God in whatever way that He directs.

God reveals Himself as Creator, and every indication from the Bible is that we, as His Spirit-born children, will participate in the limitless possibilities of creating—for, as Jesus Christ so emphatically stated, “...with God, ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE” (Mark 10:27).

Final Comments

In this booklet, we have learned what will happen within the next few years, as well as in the somewhat distant and *very* distant future. The immediate outlook is grim, with unprecedented suffering, terrible wars, famines and diseases just ahead of us, events that will lead mankind to the brink of self-annihilation and total destruction. Even then, God offers His protection to His people who diligently seek Him, and He will send His Son back to this earth to shorten these days and prevent the extinction of mankind and all life on this earth.

What we need to focus on is Christ's return, to bring an end to man's incompetent rule and to set up God's very Kingdom on the earth. You can have a part in God's master plan of restoring God's rule over man and of making salvation possible for everyone. Ultimately, it is man's potential to live for all eternity, as a God being, and to rule for ever and ever over everything, under God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Surely and truly, "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18); and "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are [already] seen, but at the things which are not [yet] seen" (2 Corinthians 4:17-18).

The following booklets are available, upon request:

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