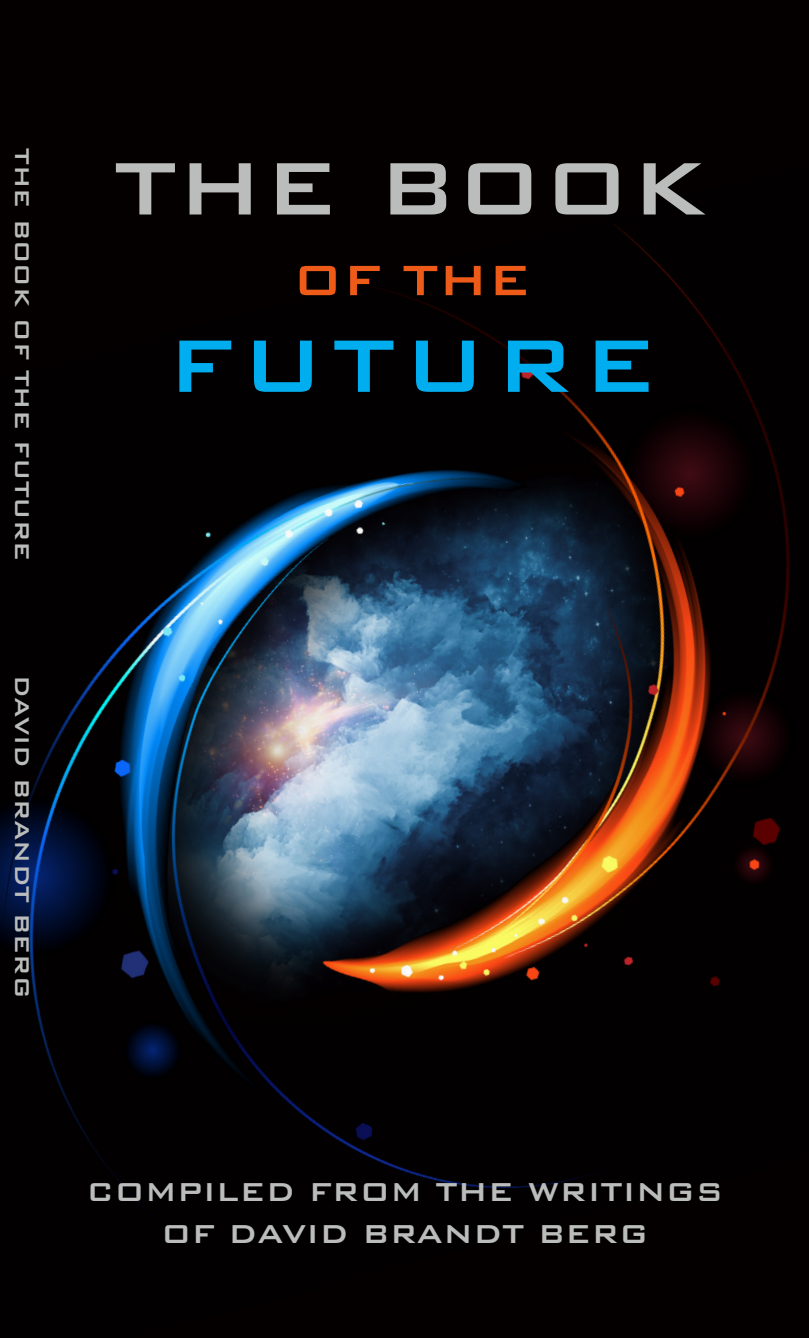


THE BOOK OF THE FUTURE



COMPILED FROM THE WRITINGS
OF DAVID BRANDT BERG

THE BOOK OF THE FUTURE

DAVID BRANDT BERG

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

Compiled from the writings of David Brandt Berg

Copyright © March 1983 by The Family International

All scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A More Sure Word of Prophecy (2 Peter 1:19)	1
From Here to Eternity	17
“Signs of the Times”	29
The Rise and Reign of the Antichrist	45
The Great Tribulation	71
The Second Coming of Jesus Christ	89
The Marriage Supper of the Lamb	109
The Wrath of God and the Battle of Armageddon ..	121
The Millennium	145
The Battle of Gog And Magog	173
The Great White Throne Judgement	191
The New Heaven and The New Earth	213



CHAPTER ONE

A More Sure Word of Prophecy (2 Peter 1:19)

SO MANY PEOPLE TODAY ARE WORRIED ABOUT THE FUTURE, WONDERING WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN. Most of today's youth seem to almost instinctively realize that they are living on borrowed time. After all, we are the first generation that has had to live with the knowledge that we could completely destroy ourselves. People want to know what to do about it, or if there is any way to avoid it or prepare for it, to survive it.

Psychologists tell us that uncertainty and the fear of the unknown is the worst fear of all—not knowing what's going to happen. It's sad that so few people realize that they can know the future, that they can know what's going to happen—accurately

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

and in detail. Even the exact number of years, months, and days of parts of it.

How could this be? By what means can mortal man possibly transcend the bounds of time and peer into the future? By tuning in to God and His wonderful Word, the Bible. For He alone is the great “*I AM*,” who dwells in the eternal *now* where there is no past nor future and “time shall be no more” (Revelation 10:6). It all looks the same to God, and He can easily reveal to His prophets and seers the mysteries of the future. “For surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7).

“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them. For I am the Lord: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass; for I say the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord God” (Isaiah 57:15; 42:9; Ezekiel 12:25).

“Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for My mouth it hath commanded them” (Isaiah 34:16). The mate of every prophecy is its fulfillment. God’s Word finds its mate in fulfilled Bible prophecy, and the ones which have already occurred and been fulfilled, foretold hundreds of years in advance, have been fulfilled. Every prophecy the Bible has uttered has been fulfilled

A MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY (2 PETER 1:19)

except the ones that are yet to come, and they'll be fulfilled just as surely as the ones that have been fulfilled in the past.

It's a marvelous, thrilling study to deal with fulfilled prophecies, and it encourages your faith to know that those regarding the future will be fulfilled just as accurately and just as perfectly and just as surely as every prophecy of the past. But we are particularly interested in those which are yet to be fulfilled.

You'll find that God's Word is specific and clear. Its prophecies tell you exactly who and where and even when. So if you've been wondering, "Where did we come from? Where are we going? What's happening?" this wonderful book, the Bible, tells you all about it, exactly what's going to happen. You don't have to worry about it; you don't have to fear. You don't have to guess at it. It's all here just as plain as can be.

"For that that is determined shall be done" (Daniel 11:36). What God has determined and prophesied, He's going to do. Whatever God has said He's going to do, He is going to do. Not one shall lack her mate. Not one prophecy shall be without fulfillment; every single one shall be fulfilled.

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:19–21).

“And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away” (John 14:29; Matthew 24:35).

“Pearls of great price” (Matthew 13:45–46)

God has warned us time and again almost since the beginning of man, and certainly throughout the Bible, that there’s coming an end to things as far as man’s rule on this earth is concerned, and that his governments are going to eventually end so that God can set up His heavenly kingdom of peace on earth. God has given man thousands of years to try to solve his own problems and run the world and bring peace and happiness, and he has brought nothing but war and misery. God has given man his chance and he has done nothing but make a mess of the world. And now, finally, man is able to destroy it. If God did not step in and intervene in this last hour of history, man could completely destroy it and totally annihilate himself.

If God didn’t step in, mankind could commit suicide. We could either blow ourselves up with the bomb or we could gradually kill ourselves with



famine or overpopulation or air pollution or water pollution. Let's face it, man is destroying himself. He's killing himself with his pollution and with his destructive nature, and if God doesn't intervene and stop it, man would eventually wipe himself off the map! This is why Jesus prophesied of the last days: "Except those days be shortened, there should no flesh be saved" (Matthew 24:22).

The Bible predicts that in the last days of man-made regimes on earth, a totally godless, anti-Christ world government will arise, led by a Devil-possessed dictator, Satan incarnate, who will bring a temporary false peace on earth and a counterfeit utopia. Its price will be enforced worship of him as the imitation Messiah. All of his subjects will be branded with a credit number in order to buy or sell or obtain food or employment, and all those

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

who refuse to cooperate will be hunted, persecuted, and slaughtered by his commandment. This will be a time of Great Tribulation.

This anti-Christ government of anti-Christ forces under the leadership of the Antichrist himself, this superhuman world dictator of man's last one-world godless government, will then set up its headquarters in Jerusalem, his capital, and unite all peoples of the world into a one-world worship of this demon-demagogue and his magical image which can speak.

These startling events will immediately precede the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, which is the major endtime event, the grand climax, as the Lord Himself returns and wipes out the Antichrist and his followers and sets up the last and most lasting and only perfect government the world has ever known, and "the meek shall inherit the earth" (Psalm 37:11).

Most Christians seem to have rightly gathered from reading their Bibles and hearing various preachers that in the last days, times are going to wax worse and worse, and not get better. A lot of them believe that the end is going to be a time of very bad trouble and tribulation. And, of course, all real Bible-believing Christians believe that Jesus is coming again. They have also gathered the fundamental idea that there's going to be a heavenly time on earth at some time or other. But a lot of

A MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY (2 PETER 1:19)

them have it pretty mixed up and they don't know how, where, or when these events will take place.

They've got the knowledge of these events and these priceless truths like a handful of pearls, but they don't realize exactly how they ought to be strung, in what order and in what sequence, to make them a beautiful string of pearls in proper order to, you might say, wear around their neck of knowledge. They don't realize the chronological sequence, which is necessary to understand what's going to happen, how it's going to happen, when it's going to happen, etc.

True, the Bible admonishes us not to fret for tomorrow, which means we're not to worry about tomorrow, but the Lord sure has had a lot to *say* about tomorrow, so He certainly must want us to be informed about tomorrow! That's the whole point of prophecy: to let you know what's going to happen so you won't worry about it. You'll know what's going to happen.

To be forewarned is to be forearmed. To understand what's going to occur is to be prepared to face it and take it as it comes and hopefully survive it.—At least certainly to understand what you're going through and to know what's happening. You may not understand it all in advance; you may not know everything that's going to happen. But we can know enough from God's Word that we can know the major events and their

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

characteristics, the major characters in these events, and in some cases when they're going to happen, the exact time periods predicted in the Bible, so that when the time comes you'll know exactly when certain events are going to take place, because God has already said so in His Word, plain as day.

It's wonderful to be able to read a newspaper that tells you what's going to happen—not just what's already happened. Anybody can tell you what's already happened, but the Bible tells you what's *going* to happen. Newspapers are not really newspapers; they're history papers. They tell you what's already happened—past news. But God has given us a lot of later news about today, the time in which we're living right now, and what's going to happen next. So the Bible is not just a history book, it's a news book. It not only tells you about yesterday, it also tells you about tomorrow.

To know or not to know “the times and the seasons”

All the way through the prophecies of Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, John, and Jesus, there are specific detailed descriptions of the last days on earth before Christ's Second Coming. Has the Lord given us these signs for a reason? Does He want us to know about the soon coming of His kingdom? Does He want us to be prepared for it? Does He want us to have that knowledge and

A MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY (2 PETER 1:19)

be able to teach others so? If He doesn't, He's sure wasting an awful lot of time throughout both the Old and New Testament telling us all the signs of His coming.

In fact, in one of the most descriptive endtime prophecy books of the Bible, the Lord told Daniel to close up the book and seal up the prophecy until the end: "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. For the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. And none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand" (Daniel 12:4, 9–10).

For almost 2,500 years the book of Daniel has been virtually a sealed book, and it's only recently that men have begun to open the book, break the seals, and understand the prophecies and what Daniel was saying. Although they had the Bible for thousands of years, they still didn't understand endtime Bible prophecy. But now we're supposed to open the book, break the seals, and read it and understand it, because we live in the time of the end.

God's Word says, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy" (Revelation 1:3). It takes an effort; it's work to try to understand Bible prophecy and to "study to show thyself approved unto God, rightly dividing

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). But you’ll find that “the entrance of Thy words giveth light” and wisdom and understanding (Psalm 119:130). When we delve into God’s Word, we “bring forth treasures, both new and old” (Matthew 13:52). You’ll discover how wonderfully the Lord can weave His Word together like a beautiful tapestry, filling in the whole picture to give you His vision of His plans. “For where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18).

Of course, some Bible professors and students are going to say, “Jesus told His disciples that ‘no man knoweth the day or the hour when the Son of Man cometh, not even the angels in heaven.’ And ‘it’s not for you to know the times or the seasons’” (Matthew 24:36; Acts 1:7). When all the dramatic, climactic, final events of world history begin to unfold, let me tell you, you’re going to need to know. You are going to want to know and you are going to know, because God promised it in His Word.

If the Lord did not intend for us to know the times and the seasons, then why did He give us Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21, John 14, Acts 1, 1 Thessalonians 4 and 5, 2 Thessalonians 2, 1 Timothy 4, 2 Timothy 3, 2 Peter 1 and 3, and the whole book of Revelation, as well as multitudes of prophecies in the Old Testament, including many in the historical books, as well as the poetical books, and 17 books of the prophets with prophecies and

A MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY (2 PETER 1:19)

specific predictions of the future? If God didn't want His children to know anything specific about the future, then He wasted half the Bible talking about it, and we ought to throw that half away.

But He *does* want us to know, and throughout the Bible He continues to give us multitudes of literal, specific predictions of the future and what its times and seasons will be like. In fact, the Lord makes it extremely explicit many times in many places regarding the exact number of years and months, and even days, during the crucial last seven years of the endtime.

In Matthew chapter 24 and Luke chapter 21, Jesus Himself gives one of the most descriptive and specific of all résumés of future endtime events of any prophet in the Bible. After giving a long list of predictions and coming signs of the times, He tells us, “When you see these things or these signs come to pass, look up, for your redemption draweth nigh.” “The generation that sees these things come to pass is not going to pass away till all these things are fulfilled” (Luke 21:28; Matthew 24:34). So obviously He wants us to “see” and “look” at the signs of His coming being fulfilled before He returns so that we can “discern the signs of the times” (Matthew 16:3).

“For as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days that were before the Flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage”—

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

going on, business as usual—“until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not until the Flood came and swept them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be” (Matthew 24:37–39). Who knew not? The unbelievers. Who knew? Noah! He knew what was going to happen; he was expecting it.

“For unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to others it is not given, because they seeing, see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them” (Matthew 13:11–17).

“For ye, brethren,” the apostle Paul tells us, “are not in darkness, that that day (of Christ’s Second Coming) should overtake you as a thief.” In other words, it shouldn’t take you by surprise. “Ye are all the children of light, the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.” We’re not in the dark on this question. We know Jesus is coming, and from His Word we know how He’s going to come. The Bible tells us plainly! (1 Thessalonians 5:1–5).

“Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.” He says, “You’re

A MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY (2 PETER 1:19)

not children of the night. You're not supposed to be sleepy and asleep when it happens. You're the children of the day, children of light. You're supposed to be wide awake and have the light on these things" (1 Thessalonians 5:6).

You're supposed to know what's happening and when it's going to happen. God's children are not supposed to be in the dark about all these Bible prophecies. If you know His Word, you won't be surprised when you hear about the rise of a new powerful world leader and one-world government, the new credit-only computerized economic system and the dramatic ending of man's governments on earth with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

To be foretold is to be forewarned. We who know His Word and His prophecies and promises for the future will never be surprised with a "mighty widening of the eyes" like those who have not discerned the signs of the times. We will be prepared.

We don't have to be in doubt and confusion and in darkness, wondering what's going on like the rest of the world, "men's hearts failing them for fear, for looking after those things which are coming on the earth" (Luke 21:26). We can know exactly what's going to happen, exactly the way things are going to go. We may not like it and it may look pretty bad, but we know the happy ending, and all is well that ends well.

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

Thank God we have the preparation that prepares us for anything that's going to happen, and that's salvation, knowing Jesus and knowing that we're saved. Then no matter what happens, even sudden death is sudden glory! No matter what anyone does to you, even if they kill you, "after they've killed the body, they have no more that they can do" (Luke 12:4-5), because God will take you into His spirit world with Him until we return to rule and reign here on this earth with Jesus.

Are you prepared? Have you personally received Jesus into your heart? I hope you've accepted Him. I hope you've received Him so that you can look forward to these marvelous future events not with fear and trembling, but with hope and faith and assurance that God's going to see you through, He's going to save you and rescue you out of it all and take you to be with Him, to live with Him forever.

You don't have to know the future and all the marvelous details of endtime prophecy. These events will happen whether you know them or not. But it's a good thing to know and to understand these things so that you'll be able to know what's going on and what's happening, as well as be able to teach and warn others. The main thing you need to know is summed up in one verse, John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son (Jesus), that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

A MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY (2 PETER 1:19)

Receive salvation now; then you'll be ready for the revelation of the future. Otherwise, knowing the future wouldn't make much difference to you, because your future will be all bad news. You probably won't even want to hear about what's going to happen if you're not saved. But if you are saved, then God has got some marvelous, wonderful, encouraging, thrilling revelations of the future in store for you.

Knowing Him and His Word, that's what's going to carry you through. The vision of what's coming will give you the faith to believe God and the courage to launch out and march victoriously through the plagues of this world, through Great Tribulation, and right on through to the coming of Jesus Christ and our loving reign with Him forever.

BOOK OF THE FUTURE



CHAPTER TWO

From Here to Eternity

The Book of the Future in a Nutshell

THE BIBLE AND THE WORDS OF GOD'S PROPHETS ARE ACTUALLY THE ONLY REAL NEWSPAPERS OR NEWS BOOKS. Newspapers tell you what happened yesterday, so they're not really *newspapers*; they're history papers! But the Bible tells us what is going to happen tomorrow. It is full of detailed prophecies describing specific people, places, times, situations, and events thousands of years before they came into being (Isaiah 34:16, 42:9; 2 Peter 1:19–21).

Many of these prophecies are about the final period of world history, just before Jesus returns to set up His kingdom of love and peace on earth. These latter days of man's kingdoms on earth are known in the Bible as the "time of the end," the

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

“latter days,” the “last days”—the time in which you and I are now living (Daniel 2:28, 8:23, 12:4).

When Jesus’ disciples wanted to know the future and asked Him, “What shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?” He didn’t reply with only one sign, but with dozens. In fact, the Bible gives hundreds of “signs of the times,” signs and signals that we are to look out for so that we can know how close to the very end we are (Matthew 24).

These signs include “famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in diverse places” (Matthew 24:7), “the gospel being preached in all the world for a witness to all nations” (Matthew 24:14), a drastic increase in international travel, with “many running to and fro, wandering from sea to sea, as knowledge is increased” (Daniel 12:4; Amos 8:11–12). A great “falling away” (2 Thessalonians 2:3) from the faith as “evil men and seducers grow worse and worse, deceiving many” (2 Timothy 3:13); “the love of many growing cold” (Matthew 24:12), resulting in



FROM HERE TO ETERNITY

“distress of nations upon the earth and men’s hearts failing them for fear” (Luke 21:25–26). We are seeing the fulfillment of many of these signs today more than ever before.

One of the most important and final signs of the very end that the prophets predicted is the rise of a totally godless anti-Christ world government led by a dictator who will be possessed by Satan himself. He will come on the scene with a seven-year agreement or covenant in which he will promise the world peace and religious freedom, and he will somehow settle the current crisis in the Middle East by working out a compromise between the Arabs and the Jews, enabling the Jews to rebuild their temple on Mount Moriah, Jerusalem, where their ancient temple once stood and where the Muslim Dome of the Rock mosque stands today (Daniel 8:23–25; 2 Thessalonians 2:1–4; Daniel 9:27).

During the first half of the Antichrist’s seven-year covenant, people are going to think that he is wonderful, as he will have brought peace, restored the world’s economy, solved the Middle East crisis, etc. But suddenly, halfway through his seven-year reign, he will break the covenant, invade Israel from the north, and will forbid and abolish all traditional religious worship, declaring that he is God and demanding that all the world worship him (Daniel 9:27, 8:9–12, 11:21–24, 28–31, 36; 2 Thessalonians 2:3–4, 8–9).

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

At this time he will place an idol, an image of himself, in the temple area in Jerusalem, an “abomination of desolation,” which will probably be some kind of a computerized robot, as it will speak and somehow even cause those who refuse to worship it to be killed. Jesus Himself said that when you see this idol, this abomination of desolation, standing there, then would begin the last 3½ years of man’s rule on earth, a time of “Great Tribulation” (Daniel 11:31, 12:11; Matthew 24:15–21; Revelation 13:14–15).

During this 3½-year period, people won’t use paper money anymore, because the Antichrist government is going to set up a one-world credit system, and all those who worship this Antichrist will be permanently branded with a credit number in their hands or foreheads. The Antichrist government will use this new credit system to try to force everybody to either worship the Antichrist or starve, because no one will be able to buy or sell without this number or “Mark of the Beast.” But God’s children will refuse to worship him or receive his mark, and the Lord will take care of us, even if He has to drop manna from heaven to feed us (Revelation 13:16–18; 12:6,14).

While the Antichrist and his followers are persecuting and trying to get God’s children, God is going to let loose pestilences and plagues and even strange monsters that will attack these followers of the Antichrist. These days of the

FROM HERE TO ETERNITY

Tribulation will be like the last days of the children of Israel in Egypt. God's prophets will be doing great and mighty signs, wonders and miracles to defend the gospel and God's children (Revelation 7:3, 9:1–11, 11:3–6)!

During this tribulation period, ten "kings" will join the Antichrist and together they will destroy and "devour with fire Babylon, the great whore."—A final judgment which, according to many scriptures, sounds like it is meted out by the ten leading nations of Europe, and a nuclear first strike that will destroy this modern Babylon in one hour (Revelation 17:12,16–17; 18:1–10, 17–19).

This great atomic war, along with the Antichrist's worldwide suppression and persecution of all who refuse to worship him, will make this Great Tribulation period a time of trouble such as the world has never known! That's why God, in His Word, repeatedly tells us how long this period of Great Tribulation will last—exactly 3½ years, or 42 months, or 1260 days from the time that the Antichrist sets up his image in the temple—to encourage His followers to hang on and keep going for Him (Matthew 24:21–22; Daniel 7:25; 9:27; 12:7; Revelation 11:2–3; 12:6,14; 13:5). Because at the end of that last 3½ years, just when the fiendish Antichrist thinks he has the world in his grasp, suddenly like a bolt from the blue, Jesus will return and snatch all of His children out of this world! Just after that darkest night in world history, we are

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

going to have the brightest dawn. Jesus is going to come back and rescue His own, His church, His people, everyone who loves Him and knows Him and has Him in their hearts (Matthew 24:29–31).

All of the Christians who have already died and gone on to be with Jesus will come back with Him to pick up their new resurrection bodies. And “the earth shall cast out her dead” (Isaiah 26:19). Then those who are alive and remain, having miraculously survived and kept witnessing for Jesus throughout the Antichrist’s reign of terror, will instantly be changed, transformed, and receive new, miraculous, supernatural resurrection bodies—just like Jesus’ body after He was resurrected! And up we’ll sail toward the sky, “to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:14–17; 1 Corinthians 15:51–57; Philippians 3:21).

All of the Antichrist’s people will be shocked as they see the Lord coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, lighting up the whole sky like permanent lightning! The powers of the heavens are shaken as the Lord descends with a great shout. A terrific blast sounds on the trumpet of God, and the graves of the saints burst open as the dead are raised! All of God’s children who are still alive will be transformed before their eyes, flying upward to meet Jesus. “Every eye shall see Him, and all the kindreds of the earth

FROM HERE TO ETERNITY

shall wail because of Him” (Matthew 24:27–31; Revelation 1:7).

Jesus will come back to catch His bride, His church, out of the evil clutches of the enemy and then whisk them away to the grandest, most glorious and thrilling wedding party that’s ever been held, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in heaven. Then, right after the Lord rescues and raptures His bride to be with Him, the seven vials of the wrath of God are going to be poured out upon the Antichrist and his people in terrible plagues such as the world has never known (Revelation 19:6–9; 14:14–20; 16:11–21).

God will pour out His judgments and wrath upon the Antichrist and his forces until the final wrath of all, when the wicked gather at Armageddon in Israel to try to fight the very forces of God. Then Jesus Himself, along with His resurrected, glorified, heavenly forces, will return to earth on majestic white chargers out of heaven to utterly defeat and destroy the Antichrist and his forces in the supernatural, catastrophic Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19:11–21; 17:14; 16:12–21).

Then the saints of God, along with our king Jesus Christ, will take over the world and organize it and rule it and run it the way it should have been run if man had yielded to God. We’re going to set up the kingdom of God on earth and restore the

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

earth to the beauty of the Garden of Eden again. This amazing period will last for one thousand years, and therefore it is known as the Millennium (Daniel 2:44; 7:18, 26–27; Revelation 20:4).

The Bible says, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection (the Rapture): on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years” (Revelation 20:6). Jesus also promised to His faithful ones, “He that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron” (Revelation 2:26–27).

The Devil will be bound and cast as a prisoner into the bottomless pit for this thousand-year period, and God is going to be supreme and Jesus will reign from shore to shore, and His saints will rule and reign with Him. Then and only then, under the supreme and powerful rule and reign of Christ and God’s children, will all wars finally cease and the world will at last be governed fairly and well with true justice, liberty, peace, plenty, and happiness for all (Revelation 20:1–3; Isaiah 2:2–4; Psalm 22:27–28).

The curse will be partially lifted, which will mean a lot of different and better conditions. The earth will be like it was during the days of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. “And nothing shall hurt nor destroy in all His holy kingdom.”

FROM HERE TO ETERNITY

No more automobiles belching fumes, nor smoke-belching factories. The world will go back to animal transportation and carriages and wagons and beautiful, majestic, wind-powered sailing vessels (Isaiah 11:6–9; 65:20–25).

During the Millennium, all the born-again, saved, resurrected saints will be in new supernatural bodies, with miraculous powers such as indestructibility, no pain, sickness, or death. The rest of the people, those who have been spared and blessed enough to survive into the Millennium, are going to still be in their old natural bodies. Everyone on earth will see God's glorious power and kingdom and everybody will believe then. So there won't be any unbelievers, but I'm afraid there will still be some unreceivers who won't yield and won't obey and will still be stubborn, rebellious, and defiant (Habakkuk 2:14; Isaiah 25:7; 29:18–19; 32:1; 40:5).

Therefore, as a final test and a final sifting, at the end of the Millennium Satan is going to be released from his prison in the heart of the earth for a "little season," just long enough to deceive the unconverted wicked. These rebels will again follow him to the full, in open rebellion against the Lord and His government, resulting in the catastrophic Battle of Gog and Magog in which God sends down fire out of heaven to devour them completely (Isaiah 26:9–11; Revelation 20:7–10). In fact, God will cause such a fire to come down that it

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

will completely wipe out the entire surface of the earth, and the heavens shall be rolled back like a scroll and depart with a great noise! It's all going to explode and be burned up, and the surface of the ball is going to be completely purged, cleansed, burned up and re-created into a beautiful new earth (2 Peter 3:10–13).

After this climactic Battle of Gog and Magog, the unsaved of all ages will be resurrected for the final Great White Throne Judgment. They will stand before God Himself in the final judgment in which “the books are opened,” and they will all be given their final sentences according to their works and will be assigned to their final places in the hereafter (Revelation 20:11–15).

God's great heavenly city will then descend from above to the beautiful, re-created, garden-of-Eden-like new earth. And God Himself will dwell with us right here on earth. It will be like God taking over the world by invading it from outer space, bringing down His heavenly city and restoring Himself as the King of kings forever! This great space city is 1,500 miles long, 1,500 miles wide, and 1,500 miles high, the greatest space vehicle ever created, the most wonderful spaceship ever conceived (Revelation 21).

The entire “city is pure gold, like unto clear glass” (Revelation 21:18). So you'll be able to see out of the city through those transparent walls, out onto a beautiful, fully restored and re-created new

FROM HERE TO ETERNITY

earth that will be populated by new nations and kings and peoples who shall truly have learned the righteousness, goodness, and love of God, even though they are outside the golden city and its jeweled walls (Revelation 21:1, 24–26). It will be a better world than with better people, who will have learned their lessons of the law of the love of God and will be happier than ever before, because at last they will be purged and purified of their sins of rebellion against Him and healed by the leaves of the trees of life, which we shall minister to them from where they grow by the river of life within the city (Revelation 22:1–2).

Only the most wicked of all, such as Satan, the Antichrist, his false prophet and their most ardent followers will remain in the Lake of Fire to be punished and purged of their diabolical rebelliousness as long as God sees fit, even until such a time as they, too, may have learned their lessons sufficiently for God to forgive them and restore His entire creation to its original perfection where all is well (Revelation 21:8; 22:14–15; Philippians 2:10–11; 1 Timothy 2:4; Ephesians 1:10).

Some of this may be a shock to you, but it's the truth of God's Word. You can read it in the Bible for yourself if you truly want to know the things that will come to pass and if you hunger for the righteousness of God and thirst for His living waters that bring eternal life through His love and

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ (John 5:29; Acts 17:11; Matthew 5:6). So if you want a new world and a new life under a new good government by God Himself, and would even like to help run it with peace and plenty and happiness for all, why not ask Jesus into your heart today and start telling the world of His love and showing them from the Bible what a wonderful world it's going to be! (See John 1:12; Revelation 3:20; Matthew 5:16.)

Prepare for the future today by receiving Jesus now. Simply pray, "Lord Jesus, please come into my heart and forgive me for all my sins. Help me to love and live for You, to hunger for Your truth, to learn Your Word, and to tell others about Your love, in Jesus' name, amen." God bless you.



CHAPTER THREE

“Signs of the Times”

WHEN JESUS’ DISCIPLES WENT OUT FROM JERUSALEM TO THE MOUNT OF OLIVES AND ASKED HIM, “WHAT SHALL BE THE SIGN OF THY COMING AND OF THE END OF THE WORLD?” He didn’t reply with only one sign, but with dozens (Matthew 24:3). In fact, His Word is full of specific “signs of the times”—signs of the last days, of the endtime, signs that you should look out for and expect, so that you will know when you are near the end, how near the end you are, and what is going to happen at the very end.

He has been quite generous in His revelations of the future. He has specified what the various endtime events will be and has even given us approximate timeframes leading up to the very end, which will climax in the Antichrist reign before

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

the Second Coming of the true Christ, followed by the idyllic age of the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ here on earth, the kingdom of God on earth, all of which we will cover in detail in later chapters of this book. But for now, let's examine some of the specific biblical predictions and prophecies regarding conditions and events during the last days of man's current rule on earth, as foreseen by God's prophets thousands of years ago.

“And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows” (Matthew 24:6–8). We've had these things for two millenniums since Jesus was here. He said they're only the “beginning of sorrows.”

Although the world had never been completely free from war prior to 1914, until then, war had



SIGNS OF THE TIMES

never been so widespread. From 1914 to 1918, with World War I, a world war was waged, and then again from 1939–1945, with World War II. In the latter, only 12 small nations of the earth were not actually or technically involved, and altogether 93 million people served in the armed forces of both sides. At the 21st session of the International Red Cross in 1969, it was reported that more than 90 million people had been killed in wars since the twentieth century began, over \$2 trillion had been spent on arms, and 130 conflicts on five continents had been waged.

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14). Never has the gospel been preached in all the world to all nations as much as it is being preached right now. If not directly by missionaries, travelers, and visitors, it is certainly being preached by the modern mediums of radio, television, and printed literature [and now the Internet].

The modern means of communication and transportation that make the fulfilment of the preceding prophecy evident bring to mind another prediction regarding conditions in the last days, given to the prophet Daniel in 534 B.C.: “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased” (Daniel 12:4). Here the Lord is telling His prophet,

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

who had just received some of the most detailed, specific, descriptive prophecies regarding the one-world Antichrist government in the entire Bible, “Daniel, I’m giving this vision to you, but it’s not for you. It’s not for your time and it’s not for your people. It’s for an endtime when many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased.”

People’s means of travel—horse and buggy, wagons, camels, sailboats, etc.—hadn’t changed for thousands of years until just a little over 100 years ago. Until then, man still traveled in the same fashion that Adam traveled. He walked or rode an animal or something pulled by an animal. But in this very short period of time, mankind has advanced from a state little different from Adam’s to one in which a man not only drives at enormous speeds, but flies and even goes to the moon and beyond.

People travel more today than they ever traveled before. International tourism is a huge business, with millions of people traveling outside their own countries every year throughout the world. Cars today can travel at up to 300 mph, planes at 2,000 mph, and spaceships at 100,000 mph. A jet can fly around the world in 58 hours, a spacecraft can circle the world in 80 minutes, and in less than one second a radio message can reach the ends of the earth!

2,600 years ago another prophet actually foresaw, “in the days of the Lord’s preparation”



(before He returns), our modern highways and their racing, raging automobiles: “The chariots shall be with flaming torches in the day of His preparation, and the fir trees shall be terribly shaken. The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings” (Nahum 2:3–4).

Imagine this prophet seeing a vision of future highways, our superhighways, and scores of cars speeding along with their headlights on at nighttime! Cars at night with their headlights must have looked like lightning to him. And they certainly jostle one another in the broad ways. Thousands of people are killed every year in auto accidents from this jostling.

“And knowledge shall be increased.” More has been discovered by science in the last 100 years than had been discovered or invented in the previous 6,000 years. Knowledge has been increased within this past hundred years almost beyond imagination, but much of the world still toils to

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

try to scrape together enough to eat. “Knowledge” has “increased,” but without God and without His Word, what good is it all if people have no purpose in life and no love of God and fellow man? Unwittingly, they’ve fulfilled another prophecy about the latter days: “This know also, in the last days, men shall be ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 3:1, 7).

By abandoning God, the Bible, and Christianity, and putting nothing in its place, life becomes just a meaningless, chaotic process of evolution! If there’s no God, then there’s no ruler. And if there’s no ruler, then there are no rules. And if there are no rules or laws, then nothing is either right or wrong. Chief Justice Fred Vinson of the U.S. Supreme Court summed things up perfectly when he said, “Nothing is more certain in modern society than the principle that there are no absolutes.” You cannot have any kind of order without some kind of moral basis, a code of conduct, a sense of right and wrong, of good and evil, of what’s right to do and what you shouldn’t do.

Things are not going to get better and better, as evolution purports. The Bible predicts just the opposite. “In the last days, evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Timothy 3:1, 13). In fact, Jesus Himself said that “as the days of Noah

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be” (Matthew 24:37). In the days of Noah, the world was so bad that God was sorry He had even made it—sorry He had even made man. It says in Genesis, “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence” (Genesis 6:5, 11).

“And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold” (Matthew 24:12). With today’s selfish and self-indulgent “me generation,” this prophecy by Jesus about the endtime is being fulfilled. Another passage of scripture regarding this is found in 2 Timothy 3:

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” (2 Timothy 3:1–4).

Abortion is one of the major sins of this generation. God says, “In thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents: I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these” (Jeremiah 2:34). Such people today are not only “without natural affection,” but they have no respect for the sanctity of life, the holiness of life,

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

God-given life, and are taking the lives of babies while they're still in the stomachs of their mothers.

“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring” (Luke 21:25). The peoples of the earth are likened unto the sea and the waves in the Bible (Isaiah 57:20–21). Jesus is speaking symbolically of the peoples and nations of the world—their wars and rumors of wars and riots and terrorism—the waves of their various wars and conflicts and uprisings.

Is this happening today? Every time you turn on the television, it roars. Every time you turn on the radio, you can hear the waves of a new war roaring, a new riot, a new rebellion, a new revolution, more terrorism, more strikes—the sea of the peoples of the earth, roaring in the last days.

“And men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth” (Luke 21:26). Do you know what is one of the greatest causes of death in the Western world today? Heart failure. I can remember, when I was younger, the days when people were not living in fear and terror. They might have been living in poverty and destitution and sometimes they might have been hungry, but they didn't live in fear of getting murdered on the street or of being annihilated with an atom bomb in a nuclear war. But the atomic bomb put a pin in their balloon

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

and created one of the world's greatest problems: the awesome specter of a nuclear holocaust and the world's most horrendous war.

Another prediction regarding the endtime has to do with the interest in the occult, psychic phenomena, spiritism, demonology, and witchcraft which the world is experiencing. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1 Timothy 4:1–2). There have been all kinds of weird religions attracting wide followings, particularly among the youth. In their pursuit of genuine spirituality, many young people have gone into ancient mysticism, drugs, and the occult.

Another major sign of the very end predicted in the Bible is regarding a one-world government, led by a powerful superhuman anti-Christ dictator, which is going to arise in the last days of man's rule on earth just before Christ returns to take over.



BOOK OF THE FUTURE

The world's going to have to have a tough dictator to rule a tough people! When lawlessness becomes rampant, it will be necessary to have a really tough totalitarian dictatorship to get things under control.

Regarding this soon-coming anti-Christ dictator, the apostle Paul wrote: "Now we beseech you by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, as that the day of Christ is at hand. (He said that then, 2,000 years ago.) Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day (of Christ's Second Coming) shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4).

In the book of Revelation, this Antichrist and his government are referred to as a "beast," whom all the world will wonder after and finally worship (Revelation 13). Everything that was prophesied in the Bible about all the various world empires down through history has all come true, so we know this last government of man will also come to pass. According to scriptures which we will study in detail later in this book, the Antichrist will reign for seven years: The first half will be a more or less general world peace as he consolidates his power and establishes his kingdom, and the second half

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

will be 3½ years of “great tribulation” such as the world has never known.

The Bible gives us several specific glimpses into this final one-world government’s policies and methods to help us recognize it when it arrives. The scriptures show that he will make a seven-year pact or covenant of compromise and religious freedom in Jerusalem, and give the Jewish people permission to rebuild their temple in Jerusalem. But exactly 3½ years after he has confirmed this religious covenant, he suddenly breaks the agreement and wants everybody to worship him as God or be killed. At that point he places the “abomination of desolation in the holy place,” which apparently is his image or idol erected in the rebuilt temple area in Jerusalem (Matthew 24:15).

Jesus Himself said that when you shall see this Antichrist’s image, this abomination of desolation standing in the Jewish temple area, then will begin the last 3½ years of man’s rule on earth, a time of “great tribulation.” That’s going to be the first sign that you’re nearing the very end, the last 42 months of this age, and you’ll know that you’re only 3½ years from the coming of Jesus! He says that then shall begin the Great Tribulation, the last 3½ years of man’s history, the last half of the seven-year reign of the Antichrist. Jesus said that after that tribulation, you’ll then see the sign of the coming of the Lord in the air.

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect (His church) from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matthew 24:29–31). Hallelujah! The glorious Second Coming of Jesus Christ to resurrect and rapture His own!

In the next verse of this beautiful, prophetic, “signs of the end” chapter of Matthew 24, Jesus very simply and plainly tells us more about how we can tell when these final, tremendous, earthshaking events are about to happen: “Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors” (Matthew 24:32–33). He said that just as you see the blossoms of the trees and the flowers and you know that summer is coming soon, so you’ll know that His Coming is near when you see these different events which we’ve covered here come to pass. You say, “Most of them don’t sound like

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

blossoms and flowers to me! They sound more like thorns and thistles and briars and horrors.” Not for us who love Jesus.

To us, all of these signs are flowers and blossoms and beautiful fulfillments of his prophecies and signs of His soon-coming—signs of the summer that is near, of the beautiful golden age, the springtime of the coming of Jesus and the springing up of His flowers from the earth, “the dead in Christ that shall rise first” (1 Thessalonians 4:16)—the Resurrection. Spring is like a resurrection! Throughout the winter it seems as if everything is dead, but as it grows warmer day by day, life begins to spring from the earth. That which seemed to be dead arises and there’s a resurrection of the earth in the springtime.

“And when these things begin to come to pass”—when you see these things happen, even when they begin to come to pass, what does He tell us to do? “Then look up, and lift up your heads.” Don’t be discouraged; don’t look down! Don’t do what Peter did; don’t look down at the waves and start to sink. “And lift up your heads, for your redemption”—your salvation—“draweth nigh” (Luke 21:28).

When all these terribly bad things begin to happen, start looking up, because Jesus is coming soon! “So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

all these things be fulfilled” (Matthew 24:33–34). He wasn’t talking to His disciples back then, 2,000 years ago, because they didn’t see all these things being fulfilled. The generation that sees all these things will not pass away till all these things are fulfilled.

Many people never seem to sense impending doom or things that are about to happen until it’s too late. It reminds me of what Jesus said to the Scribes and Pharisees: “Ye can discern the face of the sky, but can ye not discern the signs of the times?” (Matthew 16:3).

Most people just still go on, business as usual. Unwittingly, they themselves become a fulfilment of another prophecy about the latter days: “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His Coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation” (2 Peter 3:3–4). In other words, “There’s no danger! Business as usual.”

Just like Jesus said about the days of Noah, “They ate and drank, married and were given in marriage, and knew not until the flood came and swept them all away, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be” (Matthew 24:37–39). Most people today are just going on, business as usual. “Oh, they’ve been preaching this business about Jesus coming for centuries, and He hasn’t come yet.” He

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

is coming, and you'd better be prepared by having Him in your heart and believing in Him, or you're apt to be swept away with the rest of the scoffers and procrastinators in the judgments of God that are going to be poured out after Jesus returns.

Noah preached to those unbelieving people of that wicked world for 120 years before the flood, and they never repented! They were probably waiting to see if it was really going to rain, if it was really going to happen, then maybe they'd climb on board with him. In the meantime, they laughed, sneered, jeered and persecuted him and his sons as they worked on that ship for 120 years. Then Noah and his family finally went in, and it says that God shut the door so that nobody else could enter (Genesis 7:16). And by the time it started to rain and rain and rain and began to flood, it was too late for that wicked generation, who were left behind to drown in the flood of their own iniquity!

The only hope is Jesus. He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: No man cometh unto the Father but by Me" (John 14:6). He loves you and will forgive your sins and give you His love, His joy and His peace if you will just humble yourself and pray, asking Him into your heart. So receive Jesus today and prepare for His Coming by serving Him and telling others about His love, so that He may say to you, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matthew 25:21).

BOOK OF THE FUTURE



CHAPTER FOUR

The Rise and Reign of the Antichrist

THE WORLD IS IN NEED OF A SUPERMAN WHO CAN HEAL THEIR ECONOMIC ILLS, UNITE THEIR POLITICS, END THEIR RELIGIOUS SQUABBLES, STOP THE WARS, AND BRING PEACE AND UNION TO ALL NATIONS—A ONE-WORLD GOVERNMENT. Arnold Toynbee, the famous historian, expressed this need when he said, “By forcing on mankind more and more lethal weapons, and at the same time making the world more and more interdependent economically, technology has brought mankind to such a degree of distress that we are ripe for the deifying of any new Caesar who might succeed in giving the world unity and peace.”

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

The former secretary general of NATO, Paul-Henri Spaak, stated, “We do not need another committee. We have too many already. What we want is a man of sufficient stature to hold the allegiance of all people and to lift us out of the morass into which we are sinking. Send us such a man, be he God or devil, and we will receive him.” The Bible predicts that there will be such a man in the last days of man’s rule on earth who will temporarily save the world from total destruction just before Christ returns to rule it. To the world he is going to appear as an angel of light, the most perfect man, the greatest leader the world has ever known outside of Jesus Christ, clever enough to solve the world’s problems—economic, political, and finally religious.

From all that scripture indicates, it looks like this coming one-world leader will rise to power by peace and by flattery and by clever deceit (Daniel 11:21,24). By his supernatural craft, wisdom, and clever political maneuvering, he will temporarily solve today’s pressing military, political, and economic problems and will effect a peace pact between the conflicting superpowers, ideologies, and religions of the world.

Of course, only in desperation would they ever sign such a pact. Only under desperate last-resort circumstances would Israel and the Arabs, for example, agree to share the city of Jerusalem, or would opposite systems such as capitalism and

THE RISE & REIGN OF THE ANTICHRIST

communism agree to share the world in peace—universal détente. This capable and powerful one-world government will at first be much better than the chaotic conditions of the world: There will be a world of peace, a world of controlled economy—peacetime economy, not war economy—a world of fair distribution. Under man's most ideal leader and his one-world government, there will finally be a proper apportionment of the world's resources and an end to their extravagant waste.

Man's final world government is going to be the most perfect government man could ever contrive, the most idealistic, fair, the most equal, the most sharing. It will be like trying to have Christianity without Christ. But of course they will see that it needs a superman to make it all possible, and that's exactly what this leader will pretend and claim to be—the messiah or savior of the world. In fact, he's even going to ultimately claim to be God, when all the time he's a phony and a fake, the Devil in disguise, "Satan himself, transformed into an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14–15).—The Antichrist.

For a while it will seem to be an ideal rule, but the price to pay will finally be not only compliance with the world government and the control of freedom and personal religion and so on, but the eventual aim of the Devil himself, who controls it, will be: "Fall down and worship me or you cannot enjoy this utopia that I have created. Behold, I give

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

you all the kingdoms of the earth, but the price is, fall down and worship me” (Luke 4:5–7). And that’s where the rub’s going to come.

“He shall confirm the covenant with many” (Daniel 9:27)

According to Bible prophecy, the final clincher wherewith the Antichrist comes on the international scene and begins his seven-year reign is the seven-year pact or covenant described in the book of Daniel. This covenant is spoken of many times in the scriptures and will be like a promise of religious freedom. That’s why it’s called the “holy covenant” (Daniel 11:30), because it’s a religious pact, a religious treaty which has to do with restoring worship, particularly Jewish worship, as it enables the Jewish people to rebuild their temple in Jerusalem and to restore sacrificial worship on its altar, a practice which was virtually the heart of their religious observance.

There is only one place on earth where they would consider such resumption of sacrificial



THE RISE & REIGN OF THE ANTICHRIST

worship—Mount Moriah, Jerusalem, where their ancient temple altar was located before the Roman legions marched into Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and destroyed it. The foundation of the ancient temple's altar was the rock upon which Abraham was called by God to sacrifice Isaac on top of Mount Moriah. For this reason, the Muslims also revere this great city, ancient holy Jerusalem, and particularly Mount Moriah, as Abraham was also the father of Ishmael, through whom the Arab nations were born.

Since the 600s A.D., when Islam was sweeping the world, the “Dome of the Rock” has stood over this rock upon which the ancient Jewish temple altar once stood. And it's quite obvious that the Muslims would never agree to the Jewish people coming in to their sacred shrine and rebuilding the temple. So they're going to have to work out some kind of an agreement or compromise with each other, and the only way this could be done would be with the intervention of a third party, such as a world political government. This compromise or agreement is what is generally accepted as the covenant spoken of in the Bible prophecies of Daniel, time and time again.

It's going to take some brilliant diplomacy to figure out some way for the Jewish people to rebuild their temple and reinstitute sacrificial worship on their altar with the Dome of the Rock standing right over it, for this is the holiest of all the Muslim holy places outside of Mecca and Medina in Saudi

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

Arabia. As it now stands right over what was once the Jewish temple's sacrificial altar, exactly what they are going to do in order to get the Jewish temple rebuilt, we don't know. But whatever happens, we know that Mount Moriah, Jerusalem, is the most holy place on earth to the Jews, it's the most holy place on earth outside of Saudi Arabia to the Muslims, and it's even one of the holiest places on earth to many Christians. Therefore this seven-year agreement will have to be a very ingenious compromise, and will no doubt deal with not only Mount Moriah but also the city of Jerusalem.

If there was ever any place where a mastermind's compromise agreement was needed, it's Jerusalem. Anyone who could solve this crisis would certainly be considered a mastermind and a genius and a superman, and no doubt all the world would wonder after him. Because no one has ever yet been able to solve the problem of the antipathy and the antagonism and the warfare in the Middle East. So anyone who could somehow reconcile their differences and make them come to an agreement would really be a genius, a superman. And that's who it will be, the Antichrist.

According to the Bible, he settles the Jerusalem question. It says that he takes it over and makes it an international city. In fact, according to the Bible, this world dictator of this one-world government makes Jerusalem his political capital of his world government (Daniel 11:45). He promises to

THE RISE & REIGN OF THE ANTICHRIST

internationalize the city of Jerusalem with this seven-year covenant or pact, no doubt some kind of an international U.N. or world government-sponsored treaty that will guarantee all religions the right to religious freedom there, enabling them to restore their various temples and sanctuaries, and all will be able to worship and have free access to Jerusalem.

**“Search the Scriptures, whether these things be so”
(John 5:39; Acts 17:11)**

Now we’re going to turn to the book of the prophet Daniel and examine some of the specific scriptures that deal with this Antichrist and his covenant.

“And he”—the Antichrist—“shall confirm the covenant with many for one week” (Daniel 9:27). This word that’s translated “week” in our King James Bible is “shabua” in the original Hebrew, which means “seven.” Therefore a more accurate translation of this verse would be, “And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one seven.” By carefully studying the marvelous messianic prophecy regarding the exact time of the first coming and crucifixion of Christ in verses 24 to 26 of this chapter, we know that “one week” here, or “one seven,” equals seven years. Thus the verse can be read, “And he shall confirm the covenant with many for seven years.”

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

As we will see from many other scriptures, he makes this covenant as a world peace treaty, and everything is going fine. He's restoring the world, he's trying to make everybody happy, and he's managed to bring world peace, until he's finally got everything firmly in his grip. When he establishes his worldwide government, he's going to say, "Peace and safety. Everything's going to be peaceful and safe now. No more wars. Everything's going to be secure, everybody's going to have plenty, and my kingdom's going to be a kingdom of peace and safety" (1 Thessalonians 5:3).

For there "shall stand up a vile person, who shall come in peaceably and obtain the kingdom by flatteries" (Daniel 11:21). People are going to think, "Look how wonderful he is! He saved the world. He saved us from the threat of atomic war and he saved the economy, he's defused the Mideast crisis, internationalized Jerusalem, restored the Jewish temple, etc." He will seem to be the greatest man that ever lived with the greatest power and wisdom—able to solve problems, stop wars, and put everybody to work rebuilding peace. But suddenly the balloon is going to burst with the Antichrist forbidding and abolishing traditional religious worship, declaring himself God, and requiring mandatory world worship of himself, with suppression, persecution, and even death to those who won't bow to him.

THE RISE & REIGN OF THE ANTICHRIST

“In the midst of the week”—after 3½ years—“he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate” (Daniel 9:27). If “the sacrifice and the oblation” are going to cease, then they first have to start. Therefore this covenant which the Antichrist makes obviously must have something to do with the rebuilding of the Jewish temple and the restoration of their sacrificial worship.

It is in the midst of the “week,” or three and a half years into the seven-year covenant period, that the Antichrist abolishes the newly reinstated Jewish sacrificial worship, profanes the altar, and exalts himself as God. “Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practiced, and prospered” (Daniel 8:11–12).

“And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate” (Daniel 11:31). This is a very key scripture, as it tells us that at this

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

point, three and a half years after confirming the seven-year covenant—“in the midst of the week”—he not only forcibly enters the newly rebuilt temple on Mount Moriah, Jerusalem, and “takes away the daily sacrifice,” but he also “places” something called “the abomination of desolation.”

Five hundred years after Daniel gave this prophecy, Jesus, in His famous dissertation on “the signs of his coming and of the end of the world” in Matthew chapter 24, said, “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place”—obviously the Jewish temple in Jerusalem—“whoso readeth, let him understand.” This is very important; you’d better understand. “Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:15, 21).

Time and again the Bible refers to this last half of the Antichrist’s seven-year reign as the “Great Tribulation,” the last terrible tribulation period of which the Scriptures have spoken for millenniums. “A time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time” (Daniel 12:1). This is the end of man’s reign on the earth, the last three and a half years of the Antichrist’s seven-year reign. Daniel talks about it, Isaiah talks about it, Jeremiah and Ezekiel talk about it, Jesus talked about it, and Paul, Mark, and Matthew talked

THE RISE & REIGN OF THE ANTICHRIST

about it, as well as the apostle John, who wrote the book of Revelation.

Many of the prophets of God who wrote in the Bible talked about that last endtime of great sorrow and great tribulation, great trouble, turmoil, suffering, the world's worst in all its history. The Bible is very specific about it and even tells us how long this tribulation period will last: 3½ years, 42 months, or 1260 days (Daniel 7:25; 9:27; 12:7; Revelation 11:2–3; 12:6, 14; 13:5).

But what did Jesus say the cue would be, the sign that would show us when this terrible tribulation period would begin? The Lord said, “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet stand in the holy place, then shall be great tribulation.” So the placing of this abomination of desolation obviously introduces the Great Tribulation period, and when you see it standing there, you’ll know the Tribulation has begun.

The big question now is what is this abomination of desolation? Jesus said you’d see it “stand in the holy place.” Daniel 11:31 says he “places the abomination that maketh desolate,” and Daniel 12:11 says that “the abomination of desolation shall be set up.” He places it, he sets it up, and it stands there, and later on in the 13th chapter of Revelation we find out that it’s an “image of the beast,” of the Antichrist. As we study this

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

image, you'll see that it's not a dumb statue of wood or stone, but it will be the most amazing computerized machine man has ever made, which will be able to "both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed" (Revelation 13:15).

In that most sacred of all places in the whole earth to the Jewish people, the temple area of Mount Moriah, Jerusalem, the Antichrist will erect or "set up" an image of himself, the "abomination of desolation," to be worshipped by the whole world, when he abolishes all other religions and proclaims that they must now worship him as God. In fact, we know that he will not only place his image, this abomination of desolation, in the rebuilt temple for all to worship, but he will sit in the temple of God as God, showing himself that he is God. He'll pretend to be God and will try to force everybody to worship him directly.

The apostle Paul wrote, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, that the day of Christ is at hand" (2 Thessalonians 2:1-2). In other words, "Don't be worried that the day of Jesus' Second Coming and the Rapture of the Church is at hand." "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day"—of Christ's Second Coming—"shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be

THE RISE & REIGN OF THE ANTICHRIST

revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4). What’s going to happen before Jesus comes? Paul said, “That day shall not come except there come this falling away first and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.” The son of hell, the son of the Devil: the Antichrist. “Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God.”

He is not only going to set up an idol of himself, his image, there in the “holy place” in Jerusalem and command the world to worship it, but he is going to sit in the very temple of God that the Jews have rebuilt and proclaim that he is God. “Worship me.” He’s going to sit down upon his throne in the temple of God, saying that he is God. “For the mystery of iniquity doth already work” (2 Thessalonians 2:7). That’s what the Antichrist and his kingdom are, a mystery that’s going to be so diabolical that it’s going to be a mystery of iniquity. “Doth already work.” The Devil was already busy working in Paul’s day, and he’s certainly working in ours.

“Only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way” (2 Thessalonians 2:7). The original meaning of this old English word “let” was “prevent,” or hold back. In other words, God and His Holy Spirit and their restraining influence are

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

keeping the world in check. God has been holding back the floodtide of evil and the flood of iniquity. But one of these days, when “he who now letteth is taken out of the way” and the restraints of the Holy Spirit of God are lifted, like a dam being opened or removed, a flood of iniquity is going to circle the world under the reign of the Devil himself in the person of the Antichrist.

“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders” (2 Thessalonians 2:8–9). The biblical picture is that the Devil is finally going to get what he’s been after all the time, kingship of the whole world. He’s always wanted to rule the world and he’s going to get his final chance with the Antichrist, when he really will rule the world with tremendous power.

The Dragon and the Beast

God’s Word tells us in Revelation that it is in the midst of the seven years—when the Antichrist breaks the covenant and decides to set up an image of himself and commands the world to worship him—that the Antichrist will become possessed of Satan himself, and he will run the world for the next three and a half years.



“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (Revelation 12:7–9). At this time Satan is cast out of heaven with a third of the rebellious angels that follow him down into the earth for the last 3½ years of earth’s history (Revelation 12:4).

You say, “What do you mean? I didn’t know there were demons and devils and rebels in heaven.” In the book of Job, Satan is even called one of the “sons of God.” Although he is in rebellion against God, he still appears before Him in the courts of heaven, accusing the saints day and night throughout history. Job 2:1 says, “There was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord.” And in

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

Revelation after he's finally cast out, it says: "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: For the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night" (Revelation 12:10).

Therefore the heavenly voice warns: "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea. For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Revelation 12:12). And therefore that last, short period of world history, 3½ years of Great Tribulation, is the worst in world history, in which the Devil rants and raves and rampages across the face of the earth.—No longer able to soar into the heights of heaven and accuse us before God, but cast out and cast down to the earth, confined here, and soon to be chained and confined to the darkness and flames of hell in the heart of the earth.

Because he knows his time is short and he only has 3½ years, he makes the best of that 3½ years by inspiring the Antichrist and possessing him. Then the earth will soon see that he is not the messiah. And instead of bringing the heaven on earth that he promised, he brings hell on earth.

"And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman"—the true church, the bride of Christ, those who have received Jesus as their Savior. "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she

THE RISE & REIGN OF THE ANTICHRIST

might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent” (Revelation 12:13–14). Here again is the 3½-year period of tribulation of the church, with the dragon, Satan, cast out of heaven and persecuting the church, who has fled to her place for “a time (one year), times (two years) and half a time” (half a year), three and a half years, “from the face of the serpent.”

In these last 3½ years he’s no longer going to be able to go before the court of God accusing the saints in heaven. He’s going to be right here on earth, not only accusing the saints, but persecuting them and trying to kill them. “And the dragon was wroth with the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17). In the next chapter we find that the Devil wages his war and wrath against the church through the bestial Antichrist world dictator whom he possesses.

“And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea”—the sea of humanity—“having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy” (Revelation 13:1). If you read the 7th chapter of the book of Daniel, you’ll again see this great beast in its various forms, and learn that it represents various world empires that have ruled the earth. In Revelation 17 we learn that

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

“the seven heads are seven kings”—or kingdoms. “Five are fallen”—Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece had all come and gone—“one is”—the Roman Empire was in power when John wrote this—“and the other is not yet come”—the Antichrist’s final world empire. “And when he cometh, he must continue a short space” (Revelation 17:9–10). These seven heads represent the seven great world empires that come and go upon the stage of history, from the days of Egypt to this last great Antichrist Empire.

“And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour”—a very short time—“with the beast”—the Antichrist (Revelation 17:12). Because these ten kings, kingdoms, or powers had “received no kingdom as yet” during John’s day, at the time of the sixth head, the Roman Empire, it’s obvious that these “ten horns” are all on the final seventh head, the Antichrist. “These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast” (Revelation 17:13). In the book of Daniel, these same ten world powers that cooperate with and help put the Antichrist into power are described in further detail. (See Daniel 2:41–43 and Daniel 7:7–8, 20–24.)

“And the beast which I saw ... the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority” (Revelation 13:2). That great red dragon that we just saw in the previous chapter—Satan himself

THE RISE & REIGN OF THE ANTICHRIST

who has been cast out of heaven, who in great wrath persecutes and wars against the church for 3½ years of Great Tribulation—gives this last world empire’s Antichrist emperor his “power and his seat and great authority.” The old serpent himself possesses this monster, this beast, this Antichrist man.

In Daniel chapter eight, we again find that the Antichrist’s great power is not of himself. “In the latter time, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many” (Daniel 8:23–25).

Now, back to Revelation 13: “And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon”—the Devil—“which gave power unto the beast”—the Antichrist—“and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?” (Revelation 13:3–4).

What does “one of his”—the seven-headed beast—“heads was wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed” mean (Revelation 13:3)?

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

We know that this is referring to the seventh head, the Antichrist, because later in this same chapter we see that the Antichrist has a false prophet, a promoter, who “causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the beast, whose deadly wound was healed ... saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword and did live” (Revelation 13:12–14).

“And there was given unto him”—to the Antichrist—“a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty-and-two months” (Revelation 13:5). There again we have the 3½ years of Tribulation. “And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations” (Revelation 13:6–7).

In Revelation 17, again speaking of the Antichrist, it says that “they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is ... the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition” (Revelation 17:8, 11). This beast that we’ve been reading about has only seven heads, representing the seven great world empires or kingdoms. So where does this eighth one pop

THE RISE & REIGN OF THE ANTICHRIST

up from? “The beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven.” This could possibly mean that “in the midst of the week,” 3½ years after confirming the covenant, he becomes possessed of the Devil and thus becomes a new government, the Antichrist. It looks like the same man, the seventh head, only he is now the eighth.

“He was and is not and yet is”—this would explain “wounded unto death and his deadly (fatal) wound was healed ... which had the wound by a sword and did live” (Revelation 13:3, 14). It looks like the Antichrist will be assassinated, “wounded unto death,” yet he will supernaturally come back to life, a “resurrection” which could serve as his credentials to divinity. No wonder the Antichrist is so powerful and such a superman and wonder-worker!

The Image and Mark of the Beast

The Antichrist has a false prophet who becomes his greatest promoter, his propaganda master, who promotes him and his worship and is actually the one who insists that this great image be built, a great idol of the beast, and that all the world fall down and worship his image or be killed. “And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon” (Revelation 13:11). Here is the false prophet—not the Lamb of God, but the lamb of the Devil.

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

“And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast.”—The Antichrist. “And he”—this false prophet—“doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live” (Revelation 13:12–14).

“And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six” (Revelation 13:15–18). His number is six hundred and sixty-six—666.

So there you have the conclusion of Revelation 13, a very unlucky chapter. The killing of all those who refuse to worship the image of the beast is obviously the beginning of the Great Tribulation.

THE RISE & REIGN OF THE ANTICHRIST

This image, which is “set up” in the “holy place,” is the “abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet” (Matthew 24:15). The image is given “life, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as should not worship the image of the beast should be killed” (Revelation 13:15). It sounds as if it’s some kind of a cybernetic robot, computerized so that it can speak and talk



BOOK OF THE FUTURE

and move and even act like it's alive and command the worship of the world.

“And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name” (Revelation 13:16–17). The medium of exchange will be fully replaced by a credit system in which every person in the world who belongs to the system will bear a credit number, without which he can neither buy nor sell, and by which he is accredited in his governmental account with the value of whatever goods or services he produces, and to which he can charge the goods and services that he needs.

Men will no longer buy or sell with money as a means of exchange, but with a number, which will be given to them permanently, without any possibility of counterfeit, change, manipulation, or forgery, because it will be branded on each person: “a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads.” Every man will have his own number, every member of the world system will be branded with the Mark of the Beast like cattle for the slaughter, and will be forced to worship the beast and his image or be killed. There will be a one-world economy and there will be no more differences in types of currency and all this terrible confusion there is about exchange rates today. The whole

THE RISE & REIGN OF THE ANTICHRIST

world will be on one medium of exchange, this system of credit, and it will be universal.

Satan has at last been cast out of heaven, and in his fury, knowing that his time is short, he possesses this Antichrist, this beast, and makes him a superman. He will run the world and command all to worship him, and attempt to slaughter all who refuse. Apparently at the “midst of the week” crisis point, when he breaks the covenant, stops the sacrifice, sets up his image and says, “Worship me,” he becomes possessed of Satan. So when the Antichrist sets up his image and says to the world, “Worship me,” it is really the Devil, the “god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4). He always wanted the whole world to worship him, and he’s going to get it for a while—except from those who worship God and will dare to defy and resist him.

BOOK OF THE FUTURE



CHAPTER FIVE

The Great Tribulation

WHEN THE ANTICHRIST REACHES THE “MIDST OF THE WEEK” AND TRIES TO WIPE OUT ALL RELIGIONS AND ESTABLISH HIS WORLD RELIGION OF SELF-WORSHIP AND WORSHIP OF HIS IDOL, THIS IS WHEN HE REALLY STARTS GETTING INTO TROUBLE— BOTH WITH THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD AND THE RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD AND THEIR FOLLOWERS— AND HE BEGINS HAVING ALL KINDS OF WARS. He has wars with different areas and nations and peoples, no doubt with those who are the most religious. He has a lot of problems in those last days of his reign, and God Himself will give him a lot of problems too.

That final 3½ years will be the most difficult, as Jesus Himself said, “Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:21). Many will refuse to accept the Mark of the Beast, obey him, or bow down to his image, and as a result many will be killed. It says many shall “fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity and by spoil” (Daniel 11:33). There will be 3½ years of horrible persecution of Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, etc. All religions will be forbidden, banned and persecuted. (See Daniel 11:36–37.)

When he first arises as a great world leader, the whole world thinks he’s great and follows him, except of course, those who know God’s Word and will recognize who and what he really is. Millions will believe in the Antichrist and follow him. It even says, “All the world wondered after the beast” (Revelation 13:3). They may all be deceived by him and wonder and wander after him for a while, at least until the middle of his reign, but when he suddenly invades Jerusalem, sets up an idol of himself in the holy place, and sits in the temple of God saying that he is God, at that point, obviously, many millions of people will reject the mark, refuse to worship him and his image, and will rebel against his satanic kingdom, resulting in nothing but trouble from then on according to the Bible.

There will be literally millions who will reject the Mark of the Beast and refuse to fall down and worship his image, and who will, even as nations, rebel against him and fight him, which accounts for

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

some of the wars and turmoil detailed in the book of Daniel. The whole world is not going to be in perfect peace during those last 3½ years, and he's not going to have absolute control. Many people will rise up and realize that he's not the right guy and he's not good for them or the world, that he's demonic and the worst thing that ever happened to the world, and they're going to rebel and refuse to follow his orders. They're going to refuse to take the Mark of the Beast.

In Revelation 12, when Satan was finally cast out of heaven down to earth, "having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Revelation 12:12), what was the first thing he began to do? "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman"—the Bride of Christ, the church—"and the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 12:13,17). He's particularly going to be out to get anyone who loves Jesus and is a part of His Bride.

The Bible says, "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name” (Revelation 14:9–11).

The true Christians, the true believers in God, will not accept that mark. The Bible says that we who love Jesus will already have the invisible mark of God in our foreheads—faith in Jesus Christ. Those who are following the Antichrist, this horrible beast, will have the Mark of the Beast in their foreheads or in their hands as they follow and worship him. But we who love the Lord cannot accept that Mark of the Beast, and we will not. If you love Jesus, you will refuse the Mark of the Beast, because you’ll have God’s mark in your forehead already. (See Revelation 7:2–3; 9:3–4.)

Although the beast commands that no one can buy or sell without the mark and that anyone who refuses to worship his image should be killed, we will refuse. We will refuse both the mark and the worship of the image, and therefore they will try to kill us, and we will not be able to buy or sell food or clothing or shelter or the necessities of life. We will undoubtedly have to flee into the “wilderness” for survival, to prevent our being killed for not worshipping the image of the beast and to survive without being able to buy or sell. But God is going to take care of us.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Just because they tell you to stop worshipping the Lord and to worship the Antichrist, do you have to? Even if they tell you that unless you get his mark, 666, in your forehead or in your hand you can't buy or sell anymore, you can't go to the grocery store and buy groceries, and if you're a farmer you can't sell your produce, does that mean you have to? No. He only threatens to kill everybody. The Devil's been trying to kill God's people for thousands of years, but he's never succeeded. He's managed to kill a few, sometimes quite a few, but he's never managed to kill them all. So he may get a few of us—if he can catch us.

During this Tribulation period, for Christians it will be impossible to survive except by miracles of God and faith and living independent from the system, without its mark and without its approval and benefits, unable to buy or sell. Christians will have to subsist in a survival situation, underground, and do the best they can to survive and continue to witness, much like the early Christians did from the catacombs during the Roman persecutions. The time of suffering and persecution under the Roman Empire during the early days of the church may be similar to what will happen under the coming Antichrist Empire, because Rome was also very anti-Christ.

Of course, if you're really following the Lord, your very life and your light and your example and

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

your love are a constant witness in themselves and sufficient and all that God may expect of you, until they come to you and ask you why.

The church in Tribulation

Back in the last century, some Christians decided that they shouldn't have to go through the Tribulation. They developed a theory, the "pre-Tribulation Rapture" doctrine, which gained wide acceptance with many Christians. The adherents of this doctrine believe that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to resurrect and rapture His church will occur before the 3½ years of the Great Tribulation.

They believe the Lord will rapture them before the Tribulation and before they have to do any suffering for their faith, before they have to be tested for their testimony, before they have to really be tried in order to triumph. They hope to



THE GREAT TRIBULATION

be wafted off into heavenly places, out of their comfortably cushioned pews and lovely church buildings, right on up into the heavenlies.

I'm afraid this is a false doctrine—the Bible says just the opposite. Jesus Himself, when speaking of His second coming, said, “Immediately *after* the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And *then* shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all of the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matthew 24:29–31). Jesus is coming to rapture or “gather together” His “elect”—which means all of His saved, set-apart children who have received Him into their hearts—immediately after the Great Tribulation period. (Part seven of this book will cover the Second Coming of Christ and the Rapture and Resurrection in much greater detail.)

Let's look at other scriptures describing this Great Tribulation period and the “dragon's” persecution of the church through the Antichrist: “I beheld, and the same horn”—the “little horn” of Daniel 7, the Antichrist—“made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

the Ancient of Days came”—Jesus Christ in His Second Coming. “And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.”—The 3½ years of Great Tribulation (Daniel 7:21–22, 25).

“And his”—the Antichrist’s—“power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished” (Daniel 8:24; 12:7). The temporal power of God’s church on earth is going to be destroyed before Jesus comes. The Lord is going to allow the Devil, in the person of the Antichrist, to destroy the temporal power of the church and to destroy all the strength and the riches and the wealth of Christendom throughout the world.

God is going to turn the world over to the Devil for a while, and he is even going to have power over the saints and overcome them. “And there was given unto him”—the Antichrist—“a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations” (Revelation 13:5, 7).

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Therefore, contrary to Pre-Tribulation Rapture doctrine, the church, the saints, the Christians, the people of God, are certainly going to be here during the Tribulation. The Lord will protect and keep them through it, because He needs a witness, lots of witnesses, to tell the world what's happening.

“More than conquerors through Him that loved us” (Romans 8:37)

Even though the Antichrist will be allowed to overcome God's children physically, obviously destroying the organized temporal power of the church, he will not and cannot overcome them spiritually. The Lord says, “And they”—the church—“overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death” (Revelation 12:11). This time may well be the greatest outpouring of the power of the Spirit, resulting in the greatest witnessing the church has ever done.

I believe this will be a time of greater power even than the early church, greater manifestations, mightier works, mightier witnessing than has ever been done before. The gospel is going to be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations (Matthew 24:14). “Where iniquity doth abound, grace doth much more abound” (Romans 5:20). In the world's darkest hour of greatest iniquity, even then His followers are going to

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

miraculously witness and shine brighter than ever before. “For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee” (Isaiah 60:2).

“And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he”—the Antichrist—“corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits” (Daniel 11:32). The people who really know the Lord are going to be strong—in spite of the Antichrist, in spite of the image of the Beast, in spite of all their persecution. The worse things get, the more God’s Spirit is going to be poured out from on high to help His children withstand the dark evil forces that will be warring against them.

“And they that understand among the people shall instruct many” (Daniel 11:33). Our major job as Christians will be to stand up as God’s witnesses before the world to explain to them what’s happening and to lead and to encourage God’s children till the very end. There are going to be so many people seeking instruction, information, as they cried unto the apostles of old, “What shall we do to be saved?” (Acts 2:37; 16:30).

People are going to be more desperate than ever then, just as they are now in times of personal trial and emergency and catastrophe and illness and accidents. People are going to need salvation and need the good news. There’s going to be a great

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

harvest of souls won to His kingdom in that last hour of earth's history, a great harvest of souls that His followers are going to help reap.

“And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed” (Daniel 11:35). What is the Tribulation for? To test the believers, to try, purge, purify them, and make them white—to prepare a Bride fit for her Bridegroom and for His Coming. “Even to the time of the end.” It goes right up to the time of the very end, when Jesus comes and catches away His Bride.

It costs something to witness, and in that day it is definitely going to cost some their lives. The Antichrist is going to try to wipe out the believers because they'll be telling the truth and exposing him. They're going to be “instructing many,” warning them of who he really is. He pretends to be the messiah, the savior of the world, but we'll be telling the world that he is the Antichrist, the Devil in the flesh. We'll say, “Don't take the Mark of the Beast; you'll go to hell. Don't take the 666. Don't become a part of his kingdom. Don't be one of his subjects. Don't fall down and worship him.”

So God is going to test the church's faith, to see if they have real faith, if they really do believe and if they're really going to be willing to witness for Him before others. Or are they going to be ashamed of Him and try to save their lives by not

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

witnessing? He's going to purge and refine with fire, He says, to make them white (Daniel 11:33–35)—to try them, to test their faith and to see if they're really willing to die for Jesus.

But there will be lots of victories and wonderful witnessing and lots of souls won, and you won't even mind dying. After all, when you die in His service, that's your graduation, your promotion. So even if they kill you, you can be thankful to get out of that Tribulation. And even if it's painful, it'll only be for a moment. The Lord will never let it be unbearable—He'll take you first (1 Corinthians 10:13). Down through history the martyrs have died singing in the fire, praising God—joyful deaths.

Whether we live or whether we die as martyrs for Jesus, “laying down our lives for our friends” (John 15:13), we live and die for the Lord and for love and for others. And there will be Christians doing so till the very end of the world, witnessing for Jesus till He comes. For according to what His Word says, there will be some of us here right up to the bitter end, enough of us to be raptured and enough to have some witnesses still going strong.

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: And the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17). Multitudes are going to survive right until the very coming of the Lord, otherwise there wouldn’t be anybody left to rapture. So there are going to be many people still functioning for the Lord and surviving and living by faith and preaching the gospel, without the Antichrist and his damned Mark of the Beast.

God is going to protect His children supernaturally, miraculously, powerfully, in many ways, and the message will get out all the more in spite of everything they try to do. They are going to be the worst days the world has ever suffered and it’s going to be the worst time the people of faith have ever endured, of persecution and suppression and death. But some will survive. The Lord has promised supernatural protection.

God Himself will defend His people during those very last days with mighty signs and wonders, and even monsters and plagues that will afflict His enemies in their defense. In Revelation chapters 8 and 9 where we’re told about the terrible trumpets of Tribulation and the mighty judgments, we read about some horrible monsters released from “the bottomless pit,” sent by God to torment the ungodly, the wicked, the unsaved, because He gives them a strict command not to hurt those which have the seal of God in their forehead. He says, “Hurt not any green thing, neither any tree, but

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads” (Revelation 9:4).

During this Tribulation period when the Antichrist and his followers are attacking the followers of Jesus Christ, God is going to let loose pestilences and plagues to attack the people of the Devil, the kingdom of Satan and the wicked. They'll have so much on their hands defending themselves that they won't have much time to persecute His followers. As His Word has said, “It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you” (2 Thessalonians 1:6).

Don't fear the Tribulation if you love the Lord. Don't worry about that 3½ years of Tribulation. The Lord is going to give His men and women, His prophets, prophetesses, and witnesses supernatural, miraculous powers to defend themselves and even to attack the forces of the Enemy, to enable them to survive and continue witnessing until the Lord returns. Revelation 11 says that the Antichrist forces won't be able to do anything against God's final witnesses until the very end, because His witnesses will have power to bring curses and plagues upon the wicked and to actually call down fire from God to devour their enemies. What a picture of mighty men and women of God fighting victorious battles against the demons of hell!

There will be nothing the Antichrist can do against them, nothing he can do to stop them until just 3½ days before the Lord comes. Then he will

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

finally be allowed to kill them, that the cup of the iniquity of the wicked may be filled. While they're actually rejoicing over their death, suddenly the Lord will return in power and great glory and will resurrect and rapture them—a mighty triumph, showing that God even has victory over death.

Those coming Tribulation days are going to be like the last days of Israel in Egypt. Most of the trouble and Tribulation is not going to happen to God's people; it's going to happen to the Antichrist and his kingdom and his followers and those who take the Mark of the Beast. Until finally, just as God did in those days when He finally removed His people out of the land of the Egyptians to a place of safety, He's going to remove His people completely out of this world to heaven in the Resurrection and the Rapture. Then He's going to wipe out the Antichrist and his kingdom in the final wrath and judgments of God.

It's going to be a time of great victory and marvelous testimony so that the whole world will hear, and every last person that can possibly be saved is going to be saved. So don't worry about the Tribulation. It's not going to be all lopsided, a rampaging victory for the Devil. We're going to win miraculous victories over him and all of his powers. Don't think that we're all just going to be cowering, hunted victims. Most of us are not going to be cowering, but powering in our fight and battle and defense of the gospel right up to the end—with

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

all the forces of heaven on our side, including the curses and plagues of God.

Although there's going to be the most hell the world has ever known, there's also going to be the most heavenly power and defense and help and protection. It's going to be a time of great victory over the forces of Satan and tremendous triumph over the Antichrist and his kingdom. So thank God we're on the winning side and we've got everything going for us. I'm sure that many are going to survive miraculously, protected supernaturally, to the very end, in spite of persecution and in spite of suppression. God will care for His own right to the end.

When these awesome, apocalyptic, earthshaking events unfold, will you be ready? Will you know what to do? Will you be prepared to survive, and will you know how to help others to do so, as well as continue to worship God and encourage others in the faith during days not unlike those of the catacombs church of martyrs under Roman persecution?

Only those who have the seal of God in their foreheads, His own children, who have Jesus in their hearts, will be hidden and spared by the miracles of God until the coming of Christ, when they will join Him in the air. The only way out will be up. And the only ones saved will be those who have had the supernatural, regenerative rebirth of

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

the Spirit of God's love in Jesus, being born again by accepting Him into their hearts. Have you?

Are you ready? Probably not. But you can get ready now by reading, studying, and learning His Word, and giving your time to the Lord, your whole worship, and serve the Lord and love the Lord with all your heart, all your strength, all your mind, everything you've got, starting right now—until the very end. May God bless you with His truth and salvation and loving protection and provision forever, throughout eternity.

BOOK OF THE FUTURE



CHAPTER SIX

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ

“For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry” (Hebrews 10:37).

THE RULE AND REIGN OF THE ANTICHRIST IS GOING TO LOOK LIKE THE FINAL TRIUMPH OF MAN WITHOUT GOD. It will look as if God has been defeated, and the church will look as if it's been destroyed. But what the Antichrist and his forces are not counting on is the supernatural, omnipotent power of God! God is going to get His greatest victory out of the seeming greatest of all defeats.

Just at the hour when the fiendish Antichrist thinks he has everything under control, at last he's worshipped by the whole world and he “sitteth in the temple of God, as God, showing himself that

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

he is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:4), suddenly like a bolt from the blue, Jesus comes and snatches all of His children out of this world.—All believers who refused the Mark of the Beast in either their forehead or their hand and refused to worship him, but preferred to love and live and even die for Jesus.

Just after that darkest hour in world history will come the brightest dawn. Jesus is going to come back and rescue His own, His church, His people, all those who love Him and know Him and have Him in their hearts, who believe He is the Son of God, the Messiah. He’s going to come back and He’s going to rescue His own out of this world. He’s going to say, “Stop the world! I want them to get off.” And they that are alive and remain are going to be caught up together with Him in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

We will rise in immortal victory over the forces of the Devil and the Antichrist, right before their eyes, out of their reach forever as we rise to be with Jesus. So, beloved, although the outlook for us in this world and our future here could hardly be darker, the uplook could hardly be brighter or more glorious! As the world gets worse and worse in those days and the fires of hell get hotter and hotter, His children are going to have to keep fleeing from that old Dragon and his crowd (Revelation 12), until one of these days He’s going to stop the world so we can get off!

THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST

Jesus' Second Coming is the major prophetic endtime event for Christians, as it will signify the end of this world as we now know it, as well as our place in it in these present physical bodies. Following His Coming will be our complete translation and Rapture as we're caught up together with Him in the air and taken off into heavenly places. His Coming is the pivotal point, the end of this present life and work on earth, when "time shall be no more" for us, and we will enter the great eternal now (Revelation 10:6–7).

The times and seasons of the Second Coming

According to the scriptures we covered in our previous chapter on the Antichrist, the coming of the Lord marks the end of the Great Tribulation, that last three and a half years of the Antichrist's seven-year reign, during which time all Christians and believers in God will be hounded, hunted, persecuted, and even killed by the bestial Antichrist and his anti-God forces.

But thank God, He has a set time and schedule for the return of His Son, Jesus Christ, to this earth to rescue His people. He's going to come right on the button, just like these space launches which have a pre-set countdown. Only there aren't going to be any problems to delay His countdown. Jesus is going to fulfill His Word. You can rest assured that He is not going to change plans and come contrary

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

to all the things that He taught and that the prophets and the apostles wrote. He is not going to misfire, but is going to fulfill the specific, detailed prophecies of His Word regarding endtime events which must come to pass before He returns.

The final countdown to Christ's Second Coming will start after the Antichrist has been revealed as the great world leader who "confirms the covenant with many for seven years" regarding Jerusalem and Jewish temple worship (Daniel 9:27). It'll be exactly 1,260 days until he breaks it and abolishes it and begins the "Great Tribulation" period by setting himself and his image up in the holy place to be worshipped, and commanding that everybody receive his Mark in their forehead or hand. (For more details on this covenant and the Great Tribulation period, see part 4, "The Rise and Reign of the Antichrist.")

Jesus Himself said, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, then shall be Great Tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:15,21). When that image of the antichrist is set up in the temple at Jerusalem in the midst of that seven-year covenant period, then will begin the Great Tribulation period for which His Word gives us the exact 3½-year length over and over again in so many different ways that you cannot possibly misunderstand it—three and

THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST

a half years (Daniel 7:25; 9:27; 12:7; Revelation 12:14), 42 months (Revelation 11:2; 13:5), 1,260 days (Revelation 11:3; 12:6). It is repeated so many times in so many different ways—days, months, and years—so that we can know exactly how long it's going to last.

Why do you suppose the Lord revealed this so specifically and so exactly in His Word? Because it's going to be such a terrible time that we're going to be counting the days. That's one thing that will help to keep you going, to know that it is not going to last much longer. The fact that you're able to count the days is going to be tremendously encouraging. "Look up," He says, "for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28).

"The sign of the Son of Man" (Matthew 24:30)

Jesus warned us not to expect His return any sooner than has been predicted. He also warned that there will be false Christs and false prophets who will try to deceive people into thinking either



BOOK OF THE FUTURE

that they are Christ or that Christ is coming nearby somewhere, that He is here or there. “If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matthew 24:23–24).

“Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth: behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not” (Matthew 24:26). He says, “Don’t believe any of them, because when I come, you’ll know it.” The sky will light up like permanent lightning from one end to the other, and there will be such a sign in the heavens that you couldn’t possibly mistake the fact that Jesus is coming.

“For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be” (Matthew 24:27). He says there’s going to be light shining from the east to the west in the sky like lightning. The whole sky’s going to light up and stay lit when Jesus comes, while we’re gathered up to meet Him in the air, and the whole world is going to watch it.

“For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together” (Matthew 24:28). He’s speaking in cryptic, very puzzling language, saying, “Wherever the body is, there are those going to be that feed on Christ.” A rather unsavory comparison that we, like vultures, feed upon the body of Christ.

THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST

But He said, “Except you eat of My flesh and drink of My blood, you’re not going to have any part in Me” (John 6:53–58). So here He’s speaking of our gathering together or Rapture unto Him.

And that’s the surest way you’re going to know when Jesus comes, because you’re going to be there. Wherever you are, you’re going to be drawn like a magnet, like the eagles to the carcass, like vultures to the body, as those who have to eat and feed upon Christ to live spiritually. Wherever the carcass is, there will all of us little eagles be gathered together.

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all of the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matthew 24:29–31).

What could be more cataclysmic, catastrophic, noisy, dramatic, terrific, and more obvious than the coming of the Lord as described here by Jesus Himself? The whole sky will be lit up like lightning, the saved of all ages will be literally “gathered together” in the air, the sun and the moon will be darkened and meteors will be falling,

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

and Jesus Himself will appear in the atmospheric heavens, causing the unsaved to mourn and weep as they see His coming in the clouds “with power and great glory.”

“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape” (1 Thessalonians 5:1–3).

It will be like a sudden destruction, suddenly, without warning. Their false prophets have been telling them, “Everything’s okay now; you don’t have to worry about anything. We have our world government, we have our Antichrist, we have our messiah, we have our superman to run the world now, and everything’s going to be okay. Peace and safety.” And then sudden destruction hits them. Jesus returns, rescues His Bride, and God begins pouring out His final wrath and judgments on the Antichrist’s world empire.

“But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day (of Christ’s Second Coming) should overtake you as a thief” (1 Thessalonians 5:4). Christians who know His Word and have “discerned the signs of the times” (Matthew 16:3) are not going to be surprised. You may not know the precise day or hour, but you’ll certainly know when approximately 3½ years has passed after the placing of the

THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST

abomination of desolation, and will be looking for and anxiously awaiting Jesus' return.

“Ye are all the children of light and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation” (1 Thessalonians 5:5–8).

Jesus' magnificent Second Coming won't catch His children by surprise, like a thief in the night, as it will the rest of the world. They won't be expecting it. They'll be surprised, especially when Jesus comes. They will be shocked when they see the graves open and the bodies of the dead rise in the Resurrection. And the people they've been persecuting and trying to kill and torture and imprison, trying to make them take their Mark of the Beast and worship his image, will suddenly rise up in the air.

It says that “They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:30). Our rapture, our resurrection, is part of our triumph, our God-given victory, our great exodus from this world. In Revelation it says, “Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him” (1:7). That's going to be our great, glorious day of victory when we rise right out of the hands of our persecutors and the

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

forces of the Antichrist. What greater witness could there be than the Resurrection and the Rapture? That's the final witness, when they actually see Jesus and see us rise from the dead and from the earth to meet Him in the air.

“And all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him” (Revelation 1:7). Then they'll know that they have been wrong. They'll know that Jesus has come to rescue us and to save us out of their persecution and the terrible tribulation that they have caused us.

Don't let anyone fool you with the so-called “secret rapture” doctrine. When Jesus comes, this world is going to know about it. Suddenly the sun's going to be darkened and the stars will fall from heaven. On the day side of the earth the sun will be darkened, and on the night side of the earth the moon will not give her light and the stars will be falling. No matter whether it is day or night, no matter which side of the earth you're on, there are going to be signs in the sky, signs in the heavens. God's going to blot out all the other lights so that Jesus can shine.

“And the powers of the heavens shall be shaken” (Matthew 24:29). There'll be a great earthquake. Let me tell you, people will know something's happening. They'll see the whole sky light up with permanent lightning from one end to the other, and then Jesus is going to appear in the clouds of heaven in power and great glory.

THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST

The whole world's going to know something very unusual and very apocalyptic is happening. It's going to be the Apocalypse—the revelation of Jesus Christ Himself coming in the clouds.

“Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:30). Lights. Trumpets. Voices. Thunder. Earthquakes. Noises. Dead rising from the graves. Live saints rising from the ground, floating right up through the ceilings and the buildings and the cars and right up into the clouds to be with Jesus. That's no secret rapture.

“The Resurrection of Life” (John 5:29)

When Jesus comes, a wonderful miracle takes place—the Resurrection. All of those who belong to Him, all the saved, will then have a glorious resurrection—either from the dead or from the living, instantly changed and raised from the face of the earth. Then we will all go to be with the Lord to have the great Marriage Supper of the Lamb, while the wrath of God is being poured out upon those who remain on the earth.

His return and our consequent resurrection is spoken of many times throughout both the Old and New Testaments. Many times we're told in various ways of this great, apocalyptic event. Although the



word “rapture” is not to be found in the Scriptures, it is a handy little word because it sums up the coming of the Lord in the clouds, the sounding of the trumpet, the dead being raised, the living saved being translated, and all of us being gathered together to be with the Lord.

The apostle Paul gives a very revelatory insight into this marvelous event in 1 Thessalonians, chapter 4. “I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope” (verse 13). He says, “I don’t want you to be so ignorant that you don’t know what’s going to happen when Jesus comes. I don’t want you to sorrow over death, not realizing there’s going to be a resurrection.”

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him” (1 Thessalonians 4:14).

THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST

“Those who are asleep in Jesus” is an expression meaning “the dead in Christ,” as explained in verse 16 of this same chapter—those who have died in the Lord, born-again Christians who have already gone on to be with Jesus.

All our dear loved ones who have departed from this life are already with the Lord. Their bodies, you might say, are asleep and have gone back to dust if they’ve been there long enough. But their spirits are not sleeping in the grave. They’re with Jesus. For to be “absent from the body is to be present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8). They’ve “departed to be with Christ, which is far better” (Philippians 1:23).

Jesus comes back with the spirits of all these departed saints so that they can pick up their new resurrected bodies. It has something to do with that old buried body. God wants to prove that He can raise the dead, so He’s going to raise them from the dead, literally, but in a new body—a new resurrected body like the one He had when He rose. Their new, glorified, supernatural, resurrection bodies are going to rise and are going to get together with their spirits at the moment of Christ’s coming.

So the dead in Christ are going to come back with the Lord, and He says that “We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord”—those of us who are still living when Jesus comes—“shall not

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

prevent them which are asleep” (1 Thessalonians 4:15). The literal meaning here is that we will not precede, or go before, them which are asleep. The Lord’s not going to let us beat them to the punch or jump the gun in this race to be with Jesus. He’s going to let them be resurrected and rise first. Those who have died in the Lord and have gone on to be with Him, go first.

“For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first.” We who are still alive are probably going to watch the resurrection of the dead. “Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17).

With one sudden, supernatural, miraculous, mighty stroke of God, He waves His wand of power, and presto. We who are alive will be changed, translated, and raised incorruptible, to meet the Lord in the air. People talk about the thrill of skydiving! Your body will be changed right on the spot, from a body that’s merely alive to a body that’s going to live forever.

“Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep”—we’re not all going to die in the Lord; some of us are still going to be alive when the Lord comes—“but we shall all be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:51). He says it’s a mystery, since it’s pretty hard to understand and explain.

THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST

Because how can you explain that an old, corrupt, rotten body that's been in the grave for hundreds or even thousands of years is going to come to life and be perfectly whole and even better than it was before?

“We shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump”—as quick as you can bat your eye, as quick as you can wink or blink your eye. “For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:52).

“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:53). Somehow through a miracle, God is going to do for our bodies what He did for Jesus. Of course, Jesus wasn't dead for nearly as long as many people have been. “He shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself” (Philippians 3:21).

Do you want to know what it's going to be like, or what you're going to be like, after the resurrection? You're going to be like Jesus was after His resurrection. He walked with His followers and talked with them. He even ate with them and drank with them. He cooked for them once (Luke 24:43; John 21:9–14). In your new resurrection body you'll be able to eat, sleep, drink, and do whatever you can do now. But you'll also be able

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

to do some things you've never been able to do in your natural body.

Jesus was not only able to do these natural things, but when they were in a locked room with all the doors barred, all of a sudden He appeared (John 20:26). You'll be able to walk through walls, doors, fly up through ceilings and appear and disappear just like Jesus did. You'll be able to travel not just with the slow speed of sound or light, but with the speed of thought from one place to another!

When Jesus suddenly appeared to His disciples in that locked room, it says, "They were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit" (Luke 24:37). They were almost scared to death, as they thought they were seeing a ghost. But Jesus said to them, "Touch Me, feel Me, see that it is even I Myself, not a spirit; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have" (Luke 24:39). He didn't say flesh and blood, "for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," because "the life of the flesh is in the blood" (1 Corinthians 15:50; Leviticus 17:11).

His resurrection body was made of flesh and bones, but of course it was quite a bit different from the bodies we now have. When He told doubting Thomas, "Put your fingers into the nailprints in My hand and thrust your hand into the wound in My side, and be not faithless but believing," it showed that it must have been like the same body He died with if the wounds were still there (John 20:27).

THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST

So when Jesus comes and that great trumpet sounds, you're going to trade in your present, old, worn-out, fleshly, earthly model for an entirely new heavenly model, like the body He had after His resurrection. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2). When Jesus comes, we shall see Him as He is, face to face, and be like Him.

The body of the future, the supernatural, miraculous, resurrected, transformed, fleshly bodies of the future are going to be like the angels of God. "Neither can they die anymore: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Luke 20:36). But although you've received your new resurrection body, remember, it's still going to be you. You're even going to look a lot the same, only better, much better. But it's going to be you, the same body; otherwise it wouldn't be a resurrection. And if someone's natural, fleshly body has completely returned to the dust, or if they were cremated and their ashes were sprinkled over a vast area, if God has to take every single proton, electron, and neutron and make up the atoms again and bring them back together from the dirt or from the ashes or from the smoke or from whatever and wherever it is, He will bring it back together.

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

“For if the spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you. For God, who hath raised up the Lord, will also raise up us by His own power. And when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 6:14; 15:54–55, 57).

“Blessed is he that hath part in the first resurrection” (Revelation 20:6)

Back in Matthew chapter 24 we read that when Jesus comes, His angels will “gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matthew 24:31). This word “elect” here simply means the saved, His “ecclesia,” which means His set-apart ones, His church, His Christians, His children. When He starts collecting His children, He’s certainly going to collect them all and not leave any behind. He’s going to gather all the saved together.

Nobody’s going to be left behind who loves Jesus. Nobody’s going to be left behind who has received Jesus as his Savior. No one is going to be left behind who is saved. Not a single, genuine,

THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST

Bible-believing, Christ-trusting, Jesus-loving Christian is going to be left behind, not one. For “we shall all be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:51). And we will all be raised. He’ll send His angels out to gather us from everywhere, from all around the whole earth, and He won’t leave one behind. He won’t forget one, not one!

In Revelation, John saw Christ’s gathering of His children as a great harvest. “And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown.” He’s not coming as a babe in the manger this time, but as the King of kings, to rule and reign forever. “And in His hand a sharp sickle. And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped” (Revelation 14:14, 16).

This resurrection is spoken of as the first resurrection, of all those who belong to Him. He says, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years” (Revelation 20:6). So this “first” resurrection will be a resurrection of only the saved, of those who love Jesus.

If there’s a first resurrection, this seems to indicate that there must also be a second resurrection, and if you read Revelation chapter 20 about the Great White Throne Judgment of God,

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

you'll find out that, of course, there is. But the next resurrection, the resurrection of the unsaved, the second resurrection, is not going to occur until after the thousand-year rule and reign of Christ on earth known as the Millennium.

“Watch therefore: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh” (Matthew 24:42, 44). Will you be ready when Jesus comes? Are you one of His own? Have you received Him personally into your own heart? If so, then you can look forward to that great day of His Coming with hope and faith and eager anticipation.

Give Him your heart and your life, and love and serve Him “with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” today (Matthew 22:37).

*When Jesus comes, the earth will shake and hearts will
quake,
Be ready.
When Jesus comes, His face we'll see eternally, be ready.
Has your soul been filled with the fire of His Holy
Ghost?
Are you saved and ready to meet the Lord of Hosts?
When Jesus comes, don't hesitate, don't be too late,
Be ready.—Author Unknown*



CHAPTER SEVEN

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

WHEN JESUS COMES BACK TO RESCUE HIS CHILDREN, HIS CHURCH, OUT OF THE TERRIBLE GREAT TRIBULATION, IT WILL BE OUR GLORIOUS EXODUS FROM THIS WORLD. He will come and “gather together” His saints, His children, “from one end of heaven to the other,” and “so shall we ever be with the Lord” (Matthew 24:31; 1 Thessalonians 4:17).

He will come back to catch His bride out of the evil clutches of the Enemy and to take her into His bosom—a union which is so thrilling and exciting and will be such ecstasy that it is called the Rapture. Jesus comes for His Church, His bride, as her Bridegroom, and He saves her. Jesus catches up

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

His bride from this world into the air, uniting us all as one with Him, and then whisks us away to the grandest, most glorious wedding party that's ever been held—the great “Marriage Supper of the Lamb.”

His children will be taken out of this world to the great wedding feast, the grand homecoming party, the celebration of the victory. The Bible calls it the “marriage of the Lamb,” because it will be the wedding of His bride—all believers, the entire true church of God, the believers in Christ, all of them counted as one great bride, though it be composed of millions—marrying Jesus at this great celebration in heaven, this great wedding feast.

“And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Allelujah: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And He saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Revelation 19:6–9).

You'll know you're really blessed to be with the Lord in this great marriage supper when you find out what's going on back on earth at this time. After the Lord rescues and raptures His own out of the Tribulation, the seven vials of the wrath of God

THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB

are going to be poured out upon the Antichrist and his people in terrible plagues such as the world has never known. While we're having a party in heaven, they're going to be facing God's wrath on earth.

Like an invitation from above after "the earth casts out her dead" (Isaiah 26:19), Jesus calls to His church: "Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation (the wrath of God) be overpast. For the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity" (Isaiah 26:20–21). The Bridegroom comes for His bride and takes her safely away to the marriage celebration with Him.

The Judgment Seat of Christ

At this time we'll not only go up and meet the Lord, but we'll also face the Judgment Seat of Christ, where all the Christians who have ever lived will be judged and rewarded for their successes and



BOOK OF THE FUTURE

their obedience, or chastised for their failures. They will then enter into the particular places that God has seen fit for them to occupy in His kingdom on earth over the surviving unsaved people who will remain here for a thousand-year period known as the Millennium. (For details on the Millennium, see chapter 10 of this book.)

Jesus said, “Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Revelation 22:12). Every saved Christian will be rewarded at the throne of Christ according to his works. Now don’t get this judgment and rewarding of the Christians, the born-again, the saved, mixed up with the great final judgment of the unsaved, which is an entirely different occasion at an entirely different time. The judgment of the unsaved takes place a thousand years later, after the Millennium, when the dead are all raised to meet God at the Great White Throne Judgment described in chapter 20 of Revelation, which we will cover shortly.

We who are resurrected and raised and raptured to be with the Lord at the end of the Tribulation in the first resurrection will get our rewards after the Rapture. “For we shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. Every one of us shall give account of himself to God. We must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done,

THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB

whether it be good or bad” (Romans 14:10,12; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

But remember, rewards have nothing to do with your salvation. The rewards are something you work for and you earn by your faithfulness and your diligence and your hard work and your witness. Some Christians confuse the Bible verses on rewards and crowns and apply them to salvation. But you can't work for your salvation; it is a free gift of God. (See Ephesians 2:8–9; Titus 3:5; Matthew 16:27; Revelation 22:12.)

We don't earn salvation. We can't work for salvation—it's a gift. But we can work for rewards and we can earn special praise and commendation from the Lord, His “Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord” (Matthew 25:21). He says that some He'll make rulers over one city, some over a few cities, and some over many cities. “For he that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much” (Luke 19:17; 16:10). Although your works in this life aren't going to help to get you into heaven, they'll have a great deal to do with your reward and the way you shine.

Speaking of the resurrection of the saved at the end of the Tribulation, His Word says, “Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” (Daniel 12:2–3).

Everybody who believes in and receives Jesus receives salvation, receives eternal life, and is going to heaven. But the starry crown, like the old song they used to sing, “Will there be any stars in my crown?”—that’s something you work for. Jesus said, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Revelation 2:10). At the end of his ministry, shortly before he went to be with the Lord, the apostle Paul said, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:7–8).

The crown and future rewards are not your salvation. You already have eternal life through His Son, which is the gift of God, and you cannot lose it, for He will keep you. (See John 6:37; 10:28–29; 17:3.) This crown is your reward, given only to winners, only to those who run and win the race—to fighters for the faith who are faithful to the Lord.

But what about Christians who lived selfishly for themselves all their lives? Even though they were saved and knew Jesus, they didn’t tell others about Him, they didn’t witness, they didn’t give Christian literature to those who needed it, and they didn’t obey His command to preach the gospel to every

THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB

creature (Mark 16:15). Jesus said, “Those who are ashamed of Me and My words in this wicked and adulterous generation, I will be ashamed of them before the heavenly Father and the holy angels” (Mark 8:38). The Lord is going to be ashamed of them. But those who are not ashamed of Him, but confess Him before others, He will honor and confess them before all heaven. “Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father and before the angels of God in heaven” (Matthew 10:32; Luke 12:8).

God’s Word warns that “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11). Jesus is the only foundation upon which we as Christians can build anything of lasting, eternal worth or value. Although receiving Him and His salvation is an absolutely free gift of God’s grace, what we do with our lives afterward is up to us. “Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is” (1 Corinthians 3:12–13).

“If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward” (1 Corinthians 3:14). If, having received Jesus, you give your heart and life to Him, and tell others about Him, when you finally stand before Him at this great Judgment Seat of Christ, your works will

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

endure the test, even as gold and silver endure and come through the fire, and they will remain and you will receive a glorious reward. “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:7).

But “If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire” (1 Corinthians 3:15). If you’ve received Jesus, but like the seed sown among the thorns, you “go forth and are choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection” (Luke 8:14), having done little for Jesus in thanksgiving—your works shall be burned as wood, hay, and stubble, and there will be no glory. You’ll still be saved, but you’ll suffer such a sad loss.

God must be so sad after all He’s done for us and all He’s given us, even His own Son and eternal salvation, when people are not thankful enough to serve Him. They may acknowledge Him with a little thanks now and then, maybe they pray a little when they get in trouble or need something, but they’re not grateful enough and don’t love Him enough to serve Him.

Many people, thank God, are going to have their works remain, because they’re built of gold and silver—true, pure, tried and tested. But others are going to have few or no works left at all. God is going to greatly reward some, but others will have

THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB

little or no reward. They'll just be thankful that they even got in, that they're even saved. But imagine how ashamed they'll be.

The people who serve Him, like those in that hall of fame in the 11th chapter of Hebrews, all those great men and women of faith, God as good as says that He's proud of them. He's not ashamed to be called their God, because they're pilgrims and strangers here and they seek a heavenly city, whose builder and maker is God. They're not satisfied with this world; they want something better. "They desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city" (Hebrews 11:16).

"Only one life. . ."

Success in this world is a great defeat if it takes you out of God's will. So many are like the rich young ruler who came running to Jesus—yet he went away sorrowful. They're such sad cases.



BOOK OF THE FUTURE

Jesus told them to “forsake all, give to the poor, and come follow Me” (Matthew 19:21), but they have gone back sorrowful because of the riches of this life, considering them of more value than the riches of Christ. They choose to “lay up for themselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal”—instead of laying up for themselves eternal “treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:19–21).

Moses forsook this world. He looked beyond this world because he saw Jesus and had an eye on eternity and its great rewards. He counted the riches of Christ greater than the riches of all Egypt (Hebrews 11:26). The greatest and most powerful and richest nation on the face of the earth in that day couldn't compare to Christ.

He counted the riches of Christ greater than the riches of this world, “For he had respect unto the recompense of the reward”—far greater than all the riches of this whole world combined and all its selfish pleasures and selfish interests. So he chose “to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of this life for a season” (Hebrews 11:25).

Whatever this life and this world have to offer, it's only for a little while. But salvation, souls, children, and service for the Lord are forever; they

THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB

are eternal. “For this world passes away, and the fashion thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal” (1 John 2:17; 2 Corinthians 4:18). So “love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15).

The one who is willing to seemingly lose is going to be the gainer. “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose.”¹ Jesus Himself said, “He that saveth his life shall lose it, but he that loseth his life for My sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it” (Mark 8:35).

That’s what I call a bargain, to give up the pleasures of sin of this life for a beautiful eternal life in heaven—with all of our friends and family and folks we’ve won to the Lord forever. What could be better than that? I’d call that a bargain. I call that a cheap price to pay for these eternal rewards and life with the Lord in heavenly places forever.

“Only one life, ’twill soon be past. Only what’s done for Christ will last.”² What are you doing? For whom? Will it last forever for Jesus and others? Did you spend today’s precious time for Him and others? It’s better to die for something than to live—and die—for nothing. “Start living today. There’s only one way.”—For Jesus.

1. Jim Elliott, Christian missionary and martyr, 1949.

2. From the poem “Only One Life” by C. T. Studd.

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

Even though it costs something in self-sacrifice and personal effort in giving, even persecution and suffering, Jesus Himself promised that if you would suffer with Him, you would also reign with Him (2 Timothy 2:12). Are you going to reign now a little while and pay the price later? Or are you going to suffer a little now and reign forever? “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18).

Are you willing to “deny yourself and take up your cross daily”? (Luke 9:23). “Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation” that might lead you astray from the straight and narrow way which leads to a higher crown and greater reward (Matthew 26:41; 7:14). “Forget those things which are behind, and reach forth unto those things which are before. Press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13–14). May God help you to be faithful to the end of your days. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Revelation 2:10). In Jesus’ name, amen.

*As He gathers each one in
From this old world of sin,
He’ll welcome home each faithful one
With all His joy for job well done.—Matthew 25:21*



CHAPTER EIGHT

The Wrath of God and the Battle of Armageddon

AFTER THE RESURRECTION TAKES PLACE AND ALL THE SAVED ARE SUPERNATURALLY RAISED TO MEET JESUS IN THE CLOUDS, THEN THE WRATH OF GOD WILL BE Poured OUT UPON THE ANTICHRIST FORCES LEFT BEHIND. The church will have been supernaturally rescued out of the Great Tribulation and will be in heaven with Jesus, having a wonderful party, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, while there's hell on earth as God pours out His judgments upon the wicked who were left behind.

When our testimony here is finished, the Lord will harvest all the good grain that He possibly can and will gather it and take it into His garner upstairs. Farmers always keep their harvested grain upstairs in the barn, to keep it away from the pigs and the rats and the varmints and dampness. The

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

Lord will tell His angels, His reapers, “Gather the wheat into My barn” (Matthew 13:30). And then, according to Revelation chapter 14, after His grain is safely gathered into His heavenly garner, He’s going to cast the grapes of wrath, all of the Antichrist forces, into the winepress of His indignation (Revelation 14:14–20).

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb will be going on up in heaven while the wrath of God is going on down on earth. When His children are finally all in and He’s taken them all to be with Him and gotten them out of this old world, away from all the wicked persecuting and causing His children all kinds of tribulation, then God’s going to pour out His judgments, the seven vials of the wrath of God.

God’s going to deal with the Antichrist and his empire in very much the same way that He dealt with Pharaoh and the Egyptian Empire during the time of Moses. He wiped out Egypt’s riches, leadership, armies, chariots, arms, nearly everything they had, and Egypt was left powerless. Their forces were drowned in the Red Sea, as God’s children miraculously passed from tribulation into the Promised Land!

After catching His own out of this world, God’s going to pour out His judgments and wrath upon the Antichrist forces.—Until the final wrath of all, when Jesus Himself, along with His resurrected, glorified, heavenly forces, returns on

THE WRATH OF GOD & BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

majestic white chargers out of heaven, an invasion from outer space, to win the Battle of Armageddon, wiping out the forces of the Antichrist as He takes over the world.

As we now read about this period of the final judgments of God, remember, it does not occur until after the Rapture, after Jesus has come and gathered together His saints, His church, the born-again believers, and taken us all to the great Marriage Supper of the Lamb in heavenly places. Then, having removed His own from this anti-Christ, gospel-rejecting world, He metes out His final plagues and judgments upon unrepentant, rebellious men who have refused the truth of God and chosen to believe the lies of the Devil.

The vials of wrath

In Revelation chapter 16, we are given a vivid picture of the hell that's going to be unleashed



BOOK OF THE FUTURE

on this earth after Jesus Christ has deserted it and removed His church, when God releases His judgments upon the world kingdom of the Antichrist. In Revelation 15, the introductory chapter to this event, we see that these final judgments will be delivered by “seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God” (Revelation 15:1). Now, for the actual plagues:

“And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image” (Revelation 16:1–2). This first plague is poured out upon the earth, and the men who had followed the beast, the followers of the Antichrist who accepted his mark and worshipped his image, develop horrible sores. Maybe the different types of skin cancer that so many people are getting nowadays are a forerunner of the sores that will fall upon the followers of the beast who are left behind to partake of the judgments of God.

“And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea” (Revelation 16:3). Some of these plagues had already been brought about by the judgments of

THE WRATH OF GOD & BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

God on the kingdom of the Antichrist during the Tribulation, under the seven trumpets of Revelation, chapters 8 and 9, but they were only partial at that time: A third was destroyed, a third of the waters became blood, a third of the trees were burned up, and so on. But this time, under these final seven vials of wrath, the destruction seems to be total. It says the sea became blood, apparently all of it, and everything that lived in the sea died.

“And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because Thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgements” (Revelation 16:4–7).

The third angel will pour out his vial upon the rivers and fountains and they’ll become blood. There’ll be no way to get a drink of water; there’ll be nothing to drink but blood. And the angel says they’re worthy of it because they shed the blood of God’s prophets and His people, so they deserve to drink blood. How the blood of the martyrs is avenged! Those that cried from under the altar in heaven in Revelation chapter 6, “How long, O Lord, until You avenge our blood upon our enemies?” (Revelation 6:9–10).

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

“And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give Him glory” (Revelation 16:8–9). God is going to cause the intense heat of the sun to be multiplied, it says in another place, sevenfold (Isaiah 30:26). People will be scorched with its fire, yet still refuse to repent and turn to the Lord.

“And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain. And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds” (Revelation 16:10–11). Here is the picture of the wicked, left on the earth, deserted by God and His children, left to their sufferings and their torments, their plagues, licking their sores, drinking blood, scorched with fire, and now finally in darkness—groping around in such thick darkness that they can’t even find their way.

The plagues will be so bad that men shall gnaw their tongues for pain and shall seek death but not find it, and yet repent not of their sins. Think of that! In spite of the judgments of God, they will still not repent of their sins, nor cry out to God for mercy or ask for forgiveness.

Isaiah foresaw this time of wrath and prophesied: “Behold, the day of the Lord cometh,

THE WRATH OF GOD & BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine” (Isaiah 13:9–10). It’s going to be so smoky and dark, they won’t even be able to see the sun or the moon or the stars.

“And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger. And it shall be as the chased roe, and as a sheep that no man taketh up: they shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own land” (Isaiah 13:11, 13–14). There won’t be any place to go for some of them; there won’t be any refuge. There will be no place to flee, because the whole earth will become a disaster zone under the judgments of God.

The sixth and seventh vials

“And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty” (Revelation 16:12–14).

The sixth angel dries up the great River Euphrates to prepare the way for the kings of the East and the armies of the East. In fact, the kings and armies of the entire earth will be summoned together for one last great battle—still in violent rebellion against God and His angels and His hosts, and still trying to conquer the earth. Still reviling and cursing God and creating even more destruction in a final horrible war called “the battle of that great day of God Almighty!”—Summoned together by the evil spirits of Satan and the Antichrist and his false prophet. Next verse:

“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk



THE WRATH OF GOD & BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon” (Revelation 16:15–16). You’ve probably heard of the Battle of Armageddon at some time. With almost every great new world war that has come, people have wondered if Armageddon had finally arrived. But those were only previews of this final worst of all wars at the end of the age of man.

“Armageddon” literally means the “height of Megiddo,” which is a big round mountain in the middle of the valley of Megiddo in central Israel between Haifa and Jerusalem. On maps it is called either the Valley of Jezreel, or the Plain of Esdraelon, and in the middle of it you’ll find a place called the Ar-megiddo, or the height of Megiddo. And it is around this mount that the “battle of that great day of God Almighty” will rage.

The Battle of Armageddon actually takes place under the seventh vial of the wrath of God. However, the forces and armies of the Antichrist are assembled together from all around the world under the sixth vial, and then the battle is evidently fought and great hailstones fall from heaven and a very great earthquake occurs under the seventh vial. So it’s after they have gathered together under the sixth vial and converge into this valley of Megiddo surrounding the height of Megiddo—Armageddon—that the seventh angel will pour out his vial into the air.

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

Then Jesus inserts a warning here to anyone who wants to escape these horrors: “Watch out, I come as a thief. You’d better be ready for the Rapture, the Resurrection, when I come before all this, if you want to escape all this hell!” And He says you’re to watch and keep your garments. What garments are these? That suit, coat, and tie you’re wearing? That lovely dress you’re wearing? Of course not! He’s talking about the “robe of righteousness and the garments of salvation” (Isaiah 61:10), not natural clothing. He says, “lest ye be found naked.” That means lest you be found without His salvation, without His robes of righteousness, without being saved. (See Zechariah 3:4; Matthew 22:10–13; Revelation 3:5, 18; 19:8.)

“And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent (about 100 pounds!): and men blasphemed God

THE WRATH OF GOD & BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great” (Revelation 16:17–21).

Upon the pouring out of this seventh vial, a voice from the throne says, “It is done,” meaning, “This is the end.” The last scene of this drama of all the damage that man has wrought on earth. This is his last scene, this last horrific battle—war—creating the most possible destruction. Man’s inhumanity to man.

One great final earthquake is going to destroy the cities. Isaiah also envisioned this great final utter destruction of the city system at the time of the Battle of Armageddon when he spoke of “the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall” (Isaiah 30:25).

John’s apocalyptic visions of the sixth and seventh vials here in Revelation are paralleled by Ezekiel’s description of the Battle of Armageddon in Ezekiel 38 and 39. He says that there’s going to be a great shaking when God finally decides to judge the Antichrist after he has taken over Israel. We know from Daniel 11 and Revelation 11 and 13 that the Antichrist will be there for 3½ years, Jerusalem being his headquarters from where he’ll run the world. But after he’s caused so much trouble, persecuting the people of God, Christians, Jews, and Muslims the world over, God finally has to put a stop to him.

When the judgments fall on the Antichrist and his worldwide kingdom, his anti-God, anti-Christ,

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

anti-religious kingdom of which he's tried to make himself God, God's going to send great earthquakes to Israel, because it will be his capital.

“For in My jealousy and in the fire of My wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; so that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at My presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground” (Ezekiel 38:19–20). This sounds like part of the wrath of God—a mighty earthquake!

“And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone” (Ezekiel 38:22). What did we read about in Revelation that was a part of the seventh vial of the wrath of God? Mighty hailstones weighing 100 pounds each! “Thus will I magnify Myself, and sanctify Myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord” (Ezekiel 38:23).

If you want to know how bad this war's going to be, the final war of Armageddon, this direct confrontation between the forces of God and His angels and the forces of the Devil and his people, you'll find it in Ezekiel 39. But for now, let's go

THE WRATH OF GOD & BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

back to Revelation for a bird's-eye view of the forces, logistics, and tactics used in this battle.

Immediately following the description of the glorious marriage supper for the saved, the 19th chapter of Revelation gives a magnificent picture of the glorious victory of Christ and His saints and His kingdom over the kingdom of darkness at the conclusion of the wrath of God period. John writes:

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God” (Revelation 19:11–13). This is definitely Jesus, as plain as day. “The Word that was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14).

Here is Jesus Christ, crowned with many crowns, no longer coming as a savior, no longer coming as a babe in a manger, no longer coming with mercy. Now He's coming with righteousness and with judgment. He is coming as a great warrior and a judge to make war, as King of kings and Lord of lords!

“And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Revelation 19:14–16).

Here we have the very end of the wrath of God and its complete fulfilment: this great invasion from outer space by the Lord and His hosts, to conquer the world and set up His kingdom. We’re going to ride with Jesus as His “ghost riders in the sky”! We’re going to come riding out of the sky on our heavenly horses with the Lord, an invasion from outer space—aliens now to this world.

“And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations” (Revelation 19:15). He’s going to smite them with His Word. “The worlds were framed by the Word of God” (Hebrews 11:3). If He can make the world and the whole universe just by speaking the Word, how much more can He smite the nations by His Word!

“And He shall rule them with a rod of iron.” When Jesus died on the cross, He was God in the hands of men. But this time it’s not going to be God in the hands of sinful, wicked men; it’s going to be men in the hands of God, who’s going to mete out the judgment they deserve.

“And He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He

THE WRATH OF GOD & BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Revelation 19:15–16). This picture of the grand finale of the judgments of God, with Christ coming and casting the wicked into the great winepress of God’s wrath, is even clearer back in chapter 14 of Revelation, where we read about the two great harvests.

But following these verses on the Rapture comes an altogether different harvest, which has to do with those who miss the first one. “And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe” (Revelation 14:17–18).

“And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs” (200 miles) (Revelation 14:19–20). The death at Armageddon is going to be so horrible that blood is going to run for 200-and-some miles, in some places even as deep as the horses’ bridles!

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

The prophet Joel also foresaw this gathering of the unregenerate at Armageddon to be cast into the winepress of God's great wrath when he prophesied: "The Lord shall utter His voice before His army. For His camp is very great: for He is strong that executeth His Word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it? Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about" (Joel 2:11; 3:9-11).

"Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision; for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision" (Joel 3:13-14). The bloodletting in this "day of the Lord" at Armageddon will be so extensive, that as we return to Revelation 19 we see that God will then invite His garbage men, the vultures and buzzards of the world, to come and have a great feast upon the kings and captains and armies of the Antichrist.

"And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God" (Revelation 19:17). He invites the carrion-

THE WRATH OF GOD & BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

eating fowls of the air to feast upon the bodies of the people who rebelled against God and tried to fight God to the very end.—Even after all His judgments, and after He did so many mighty miracles and caught His people away out of their graves and off the surface of the earth into the sky to be with Him in heaven. They hate Him all the more and fight Him all the more! So this angel cries out to all these foul fowls, “Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great” (Revelation 19:17–18).

Ezekiel’s description of this horrific Battle of Armageddon remarkably parallels John’s, where God says, “Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to My sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth ... Thus ye shall be filled at My table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord God” (Ezekiel 39:17–20).

Now back to where we left off in Revelation: “And I saw the beast (the Antichrist), and the kings

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse (Jesus) and against His army” (Revelation 19:19). Here are the wicked, gathered together at Armageddon, under the devil-man, the Antichrist, to try to fight the very forces of God How ridiculous! How presumptuous! “These shall make war with the Lamb (Jesus) and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful” (Revelation 17:14).

These God-defiant, rebellious followers of the Antichrist try to make war with Jesus Himself and His forces, His resurrected children, His Christians. And that’s where they go too far, because He is the Lord of all lords and the King of all kings, and therefore they are utterly defeated!

Out of heaven will come the great hosts of heaven with Jesus Christ in the lead on a white horse to destroy the Antichrist and his kingdom in this great supernatural battle, and take over the earth to set up the kingdom of heaven on earth, the kingdom of God, and restore the earth to the beauty of the Garden of Eden again.

“Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgement upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him” (Jude

THE WRATH OF GOD & BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

14–15). The word translated as “convince” here in our Bibles is “exelegcho” in the original Greek, which literally means to “convict fully” or to “punish.”

“And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Revelation 19:20). At last the fiendish Antichrist gets his just deserts! He and his chief propaganda minister, the false prophet, are taken from this Battle of Armageddon and are tossed directly into hell, into the lake of fire.

“And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh” (Revelation 19:21). What happens to all of these vicious mark-of-the-beast people, the Antichrist’s bestial people, his followers who have persecuted and tortured God’s children and pursued and imprisoned and killed Christians? “He that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints” (Revelation 13:10).

“It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe” (2 Thessalonians 1:6–10).

Jesus will come charging out of the blue on a mighty white charger in an invasion from outer space, and He’ll just utter His Word like thunder, sharp as a sword, and it will slaughter His enemies—those that have resisted and rebelled against Him, and have troubled and tortured and tribulated His children. The Bible says, “I will render vengeance to Mine enemies, and will reward them that hate Me. I will make Mine arrows drunk with blood, and My sword shall devour flesh. Rejoice, O ye nations, with His people: for He will avenge the blood of His servants, and will render vengeance to His adversaries, and will be merciful unto His people” (Deuteronomy 32:41–43). The Antichrist forces are slaughtered by the sword which comes out of the mouth of Christ, which obviously symbolizes the Word of God. For “He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked” (Isaiah 11:4).

“Our God is a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:29), so the sword of His Word proceeding out of His mouth is evidently going to be like fire

THE WRATH OF GOD & BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

to devour His enemies. “For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many” (Isaiah 66:15–16).

“And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground” (Jeremiah 25:33). Such is going to be the horrible holocaust of the wars and judgments of God upon the earth and its wicked!

When the Battle of Armageddon is over and the blood has run so deep, there will be so many bodies left that the Scripture tells us it will take “men of continual employment”—a full-time job—seven months just to bury the dead in Israel alone (Ezekiel 39:14). The stench will be so bad that it says it will “stop the noses of the passengers” (vs. 11), and it says that as they search, finding the last bodies, they’ll put up little signs or markers showing the grave diggers where a body still remains (vs. 15).

Although the death toll resulting from this battle will be unparalleled by any wars or disasters before it, it will not be total. There will still be some who will survive it. Even of the armies of the Antichrist, the Lord says He will spare one-sixth of them (Ezekiel 39:2). God will have mercy on some and they will survive.

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

The Lord will not annihilate everybody during the wrath of God, nor at Armageddon when the forces of the Antichrist and his followers are wiped out. You'll see in the next chapter of this book, which is a detailed study on the Millennium—the one-thousand-year golden age of Christ's kingdom on earth—that there are going to be lots of survivors. Probably the most worthy and deserving, and maybe even a few of the most unworthy, just to show that they'll never change! But this is another study, which we'll cover in detail in the following chapter.

At this mighty Battle of Armageddon, Satan and his forces are not only conquered, but Jesus and His followers take over the world, to rule and reign and run it the way it should have been run to begin with, and would have been if man had not disobeyed God and gone his own way. God's going to take over the government of this world and He's going to turn it right side up and run it the way it ought to be run. So the Battle of Armageddon is going to be the biggest revolution that has ever happened.

The righteousness of God

Some people say, "God is a God of love. He'd never do anything like what you've described here." If He's not a God of justice, He couldn't be a God of mercy and love. If He's not a God of right and wrong, and there's no difference between good and

THE WRATH OF GOD & BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

evil, then He's not God at all. And if He is a God of justice, then there has to come a time for Him to mete out His justice and His judgments.

If you fight God too hard, God will fight you! He is usually merciful and gives you time to repent. But if you still don't repent, if you fight and resist and rebel even more, then eventually His judgments will fall.

The Antichrist and his forces will not only refuse to voluntarily yield themselves to the Prince of Peace, but in the last thrill of their violent defiance of Christ and His kingdom, they're going to send armies and try to literally wage war against Him—the Battle of Armageddon. They'll fight against Him to the last ditch!

So when Christ finally takes over, it's going to have to be with force and with power, “with great power and glory.” God says He's going to destroy them which destroy the earth” (Revelation 11:18), those who refuse to surrender to God and His love and His Son Christ Jesus, the one and only Prince of Peace.

He is the God of love. In fact, “God is love” (1 John 4:8). And He “is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). If you don't know Him and you want to enjoy heavenly happiness forever and miss this coming hell on earth and hell hereafter, then receive Jesus and His gift of eternal life by asking Him into your heart.

BOOK OF THE FUTURE



CHAPTER NINE

The Millennium

THE WORLD TODAY IS SUCH A MESS, AND THERE ARE SUCH MESSERS RUNNING IT. In fact, in all the thousands of years that man has been trying, he has never been able to save himself. Man's plans have never succeeded and they never will. Any system, whether it's capitalist, socialist, communist, democracy, or dictatorship, whatever it is, is going to be a flat failure without God. Likewise, although man's final one-world government which will arise under the Antichrist will purportedly be the greatest, most powerful government ever, it will turn out to be the worst government the world has ever known.

Man's most ideal government is going to fall flat on its face. But then God is going to step in and straighten things out. Only the direct and forceful intervention of God Himself through the Second

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

Coming of Jesus Christ to set up His own kingdom of righteous rule on earth will ever bring a reign of true perfection, with peace and justice for all.

Immediately after Jesus' return and the rapture and resurrection of the church, His born-again children will join the Lord in that wonderful Wedding Supper of the Lamb in heaven, while God will mete out His wrath on earth, where they will finally gather together under their Antichrist leader to attempt to war against Jesus Christ Himself and His forces in the Battle of Armageddon.

In this final great battle, the forces of God gain a glorious victory over the forces of Satan and defeat him and his Antichrist and False Prophet. Then Jesus Christ will take over this world and organize and rule and run it the way it should have been run if man had yielded to God.

The Bible says that this amazing period will last for one thousand years, and therefore it is known to Bible prophecy students as the Millennium, which is Latin for a thousand years. The Bible is full of descriptions of this beautiful millennial period, and in fact, it says even more about the Second Coming of Christ and His rule and reign on the earth as its king than it does about the First Coming.

This is the purpose of it all. This is the marvelous happy ending of it all. Therefore God's Word gives a literal, exact description of what it's going to be like under the marvelous rule and visible reign of Christ on earth.

Armageddon survivors

We learned in our last chapter that when Jesus returns to earth for the Battle of Armageddon, there's going to be great destruction and death, according to God's Word. Nevertheless, some are going to live through it; there will be survivors. His Word says, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection (the Rapture): on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6). Jesus also promised to His faithful ones, "He that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron" (Revelation 2:26–27).

So who are these people that His Word says will form whole nations during the Millennium, over whom the born-again saints of God are going to rule with a rod of iron? It's obvious that many of the unsaved are going to survive the wrath of God and the Battle of Armageddon and live on into the Millennium. Granted, either they must be pretty tough, or they must live a pretty charmed life, or the Lord must be extra merciful to them to allow them to live through all that.

Perhaps at Armageddon the very worst ones will be killed—the reprobates, those who worshipped the Devil and the Antichrist. Perhaps

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

they'll all be destroyed during that horrible warfare. Then the rest of the people, those who deserve it and are worthy, will receive another chance. The Lord will set up His kingdom here on earth for a thousand years to try to salvage what He can and who He can and give them another chance, or perhaps their first chance, to see the kingdom of God and hear His voice and His laws and His rules and His words and repent—to believe and receive and accept Him as their king.

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10)

In Revelation chapter 19, we read John’s magnificent description of Jesus Christ’s coming with the hosts of heaven to defeat and destroy the Antichrist and his forces at the Battle of Armageddon. Following the chronological order of events, in Revelation 20 we’re given an amazing glimpse into the Millennium period:



THE MILLENNIUM

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season” (Revelation 20:1–3).

The Devil will be bound and cast as a prisoner into the bottomless pit for a thousand years, with nobody left to run his business. For a thousand years he will no longer bother us and no longer lead his legions and his demons across the face of the earth to plague the world and its citizens. It is during this thousand years, while the Devil is in prison in the bottomless pit, that the saints—including all the new arrivals who resisted the Antichrist and rejected the Mark of the Beast, choosing rather to give their lives than to deny Christ—will live and reign with Christ.

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. They shall be priests of God and

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. But the rest of the dead (the unsaved) lived not again until the thousand years were finished” (Revelation 20:4–6).

During the Millennium, Jesus is going to reign and rule in person using His followers as His instruments. So our work—and I hope you won’t be too disappointed—will not be over with the Resurrection and the Rapture. We’re still going to be busy, ruling and reigning with Jesus.

Many people get dreamy ideas about all of this, that after Jesus returns we’re all going to be way off somewhere in some place called heaven. Heaven is not going to be way off somewhere; it’s going to be right here on earth, a heaven on earth during the Millennium. We’re going to rule and reign with Christ right here on earth over the unsaved nations and the unsaved people who are left, who were not destroyed by the judgments God heaped upon the Antichrist kingdom.

Every day, millions of Christians all over the world pray, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” But I’m sure most of them don’t really appreciate the tremendousness of that statement in the Lord’s Prayer and how literally it is going to come true and be fulfilled. It’s actually going to be like heaven, heaven on earth, with God’s will being done and His kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.

THE MILLENNIUM

The prophet Daniel described the takeover of this world's governments by Christ's millennial kingdom in his famous vision in Daniel chapter 2. He saw a great image, which represented history's various great world empires, being destroyed by "a stone which smote the image upon his feet," smashing it to pieces which are blown away like the chaff. "The stone that smote the image became a great mountain (kingdom), and filled the whole earth" (Daniel 2:34–35).

"And in the days of these kings"—the ten toes of the image, the ten final government leaders who fully cooperate with and yield to the Antichrist (see Revelation 17:12–14)—"shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Daniel 2:44).

One of these days, the King is going to come back to claim His kingdom. The kingdom of the most High shall come and shall destroy all the anti-Christ kingdoms of the world. God will then sweep away all of this world's kingdoms, but not all of the people. Many of them will still be here, but God's people will be ruling over them. "And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever” (Daniel 7:14,18).

Whether man likes it or not, God is going to be supreme and Jesus will reign from shore to shore, and we will rule and reign with Him with a rod of iron (Revelations 2:26-27). “And judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him” (Daniel 7:22,27).

We’re going to have a country to call our own one of these days, thank the Lord. In fact, it’ll all be our country then; our country will be a worldwide, earthwide, kingdom of God on earth. No longer will reign the cruel, selfish, dog-eat-dog philosophy which gives the world to the strongest and the mightiest, in which might is right. It will be given to those who have the right to govern because of what today’s reprobate man considers weaknesses: love and meekness and forgiveness and faith in God and His Word.

These weakest and meekest will become the most powerful influences on earth, who will rule the world with both love and a “rod of iron” of

THE MILLENNIUM

loving force to compel the nations to submit to the laws of God and to recognize His authority and to obey His rules of life, love, health, and happiness for a reign of “peace on earth toward men of good will” (Luke 2:14). Then and only then, under the supreme and powerful rule and reign of Christ and God’s children, will all wars finally cease and the world at last will be governed fairly and well with true justice, liberty, peace, plenty, and happiness for all.

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain (kingdom) of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:2–3).

Jesus Christ is going to set up His throne in Jerusalem and make it His millennial capital. And from there He will rule and reign over the earth. “And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Isaiah 2:4). Complete disarmament at last! That will be the world’s first

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

genuine disarmament, beating their weapons into instruments of peace.

At last there will be peace on earth that will never end under the reign of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Prince of Peace Himself. Today's men of war will be stopped at last as God "destroys them that destroy the earth" (Revelation 11:18)—those who brought war and conflict to the earth. Only then shall the men of peace and the God of peace and the Prince of Peace rule and reign and bring final "peace on earth" (Luke 2:14).

Then "all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's: and He is the governor among the nations. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire" (Psalm 22:27–28; 46:9). He's going to stop all this war business; He's going to break the arrows and the swords and the shields and the bows. All those chariots and planes and tanks and missiles and bombs are going to be burned up, thank God.

Jesus told His disciples, "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21), and this is true for all of us who know and love the Lord—we already have heaven on earth in our hearts. The problem is, there is still hell all around us. But in that day He's going to wipe away all this hell on earth, and He's going to set up His kingdom of peace and

THE MILLENNIUM

righteousness and fairness and justice and goodness and mercy and love. That's going to literally be heaven on earth. His kingdom won't only be within us, it will be all around us.

“The Lord most high is a great King over all the earth (in the Millennium). He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet. For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding. God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of His holiness” (Psalm 47:2–3,7–8).

“The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. He shall judge the poor of the people, He shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor” (Psalm 72:3–4). The world is going to see a righteous judge at last, a righteous ruler, who will have a righteous government. No more corruption, vice, crime, payola, bribery, or crooked judges and crooked politicians, but a righteous government and justice for all.

“He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth” (Psalm 72:6,8). The kingdom of Christ on earth is going to completely cover the whole world. “The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet; they break forth into singing” (Isaiah 14:5,7).

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

There will be no more big powers and oppressed poor—only the kingdom of Jesus Christ, heaven on earth, fairness and justice for all, and eternal happiness forever. “Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him. And blessed be His glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with His glory; Amen, and Amen” (Psalm 72:11,19).

Life on earth during the Millennium

The reign of Jesus Christ during the Millennium will be a reign of Jesus Christ and His children over what is left of this world and its unsaved populations. The born-again, saved, resurrected saints will be in supernatural bodies, but the rest of the world, those who have been spared and blessed enough to survive into the Millennium, are going to still be in their natural bodies. Therefore life is sort of going to go on as usual in a lot of ways for them.

The Millennium will be almost like an extension of this age now, because the world and its people will still be living in time. To us who are resurrected and raptured at the coming of Christ, “time shall be no more” (Revelation 10:6). We will not be bound by time any longer. But those who still remain on the earth, having survived the wrath of God upon the wicked, will still be bound by time and space here on earth just as we were before we left with Jesus.

THE MILLENNIUM

The normal, natural people are going to be the same then as they are now—human beings still in their mortal bodies whom God has blessed by allowing them to live through the horrors that preceded this era. They're going to feel blessed, too, when they realize that they managed to be millennial survivors. But they will live almost exactly like they are living now. They'll still have to raise food and make clothes. They'll still have to live in a normal, natural world; in fact, the same world they're living in now.

The natural men are going to be just what they are now, only they will be under God's government. Jesus and His kingdom will be the government, and His followers will be His governors, His officers, His rulers. We shall be "kings and priests unto God," He says (Revelation 1:6), and we will rule the earth. We'll have supernatural bodies and wisdom and skill and power and protection, and we'll change a lot of things for the better.

In order for the Lord to establish heaven on earth, we'll first have to clean up the hell on earth that the Antichrist and people left behind, and the aftermath of war left behind by God's own judgments and the Battle of Armageddon. There will certainly be some cleaning up to do. In Israel alone, it's going to take seven months just to bury all the dead, and seven years to clear away all the wreckage of the instruments of war. Seven years to clean up the rubble, debris, and wreckage

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

left behind by the terrible Battle of Armageddon (Ezekiel 39:9,14).

That will be our initial job during the first seven years of the Millennium. It'll be a wonder that the Lord and His followers will ever be able to straighten things out. But we will, according to His Word. "And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. And ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves" (Isaiah 61:4–6).

Back to the Garden

The earth will blossom like a rose, and all of God's creation will be in harmony and at peace. No more of man's inhumanity to man, but all will be peace and beauty, like the Garden of Eden restored—heaven on earth once again as



THE MILLENNIUM

it was in the beginning, but even better, because we'll have Jesus.

“For in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the Garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited” (Isaiah 35:6–7; Ezekiel 36:34–35).

Paul tells us that the whole earth is groaning today. “The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain, waiting to be delivered” (Romans 8:22–23). The whole creation, in a sense, is under the curse of sin and the Devil and his demons and sin and sickness. All of God’s creation is groaning, and man’s certainly doing some groaning too. The day is coming when the field and the trees are going to rejoice. “Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice” (Psalm 96:12). Hallelujah!

At last the Lord is going to redeem the earth and cause the beautiful Garden of Eden to blossom again as we rule and reign with Christ for a thousand years. The natural unsaved people who survived the Tribulation and wrath-of-God periods will be so amazingly blessed to be able to live during this millennial period at all, as the earth will be relieved of the curse.

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ den” (Isaiah 11:6–8).

You never hear about a wolf lying down with a lamb nowadays, unless the lamb is inside the wolf. Or a leopard lying down with a kid, a little baby goat. Neither have you heard about a little child leading them all. The day is coming again when there will be peace between man and the animals. Even a little child will be able to play with them.

The animals will go back to being herbivorous again and won’t eat each other, much less us. Isn’t that beautiful? Apparently man won’t eat flesh then either; we’ll all be herbivorous again. Both man and beast will return to vegetarianism during the Millennium, because apparently they won’t need the extra strength of animal flesh to survive. The curse will have been at least partially removed and man will no longer be suffering the ill effects of whatever it was that shortened life after the Flood.

From creation until the Flood, man was vegetarian, because God said specifically at the time of creation that He had given them every

THE MILLENNIUM

green thing, the herbs and plants and so on, to eat—just vegetables—no meat or flesh of any kind (Genesis 1:29–30). But after the Flood, that pre-Flood cloud covering that enveloped the earth disappeared and those deadly cosmic rays began to come through. Instead of people living eight or nine hundred or a thousand years, their lifespans were greatly reduced, as they are today. And man's body apparently needed extra help to survive the toll of sin, so God mercifully gave him meat to eat (Genesis 9:2–3).

Of course, the skeptics always make fun of these scriptures about “the cow and the bear shall feed, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox” (Isaiah 11:7). They say, “They couldn't possibly do that. They're carnivorous beasts; that's impossible.” Nothing's impossible with the Lord (Luke 1:37). I have such confidence in this book, the Word of God and the words of Jesus and every book and every chapter and every verse in it—I have proven so many of them to be true and have found none of them to ever fail or to be false—that I believe it means exactly what it says. If they're not going to eat each other or eat us anymore, they're going to have to graze like the ox and the calf.

“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain (kingdom): for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9). Since there's nothing that will hurt or destroy, there will be no venomous insects

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

or beasts or serpents or scorpions. Even the once deadly asps and vipers will almost be like toys for the children to play with—no bite, no sting, no poison, no venom.

This, of course, will be a great blessing to the natural flesh-and-blood people of the earth who are still going to till the land and build houses and marry and be given in marriage. No doubt they will proclaim, “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase” (Psalm 85:10–12).

What a wonderful place to live! The curse will be removed, all viciousness gone, and all killing and hurting stopped. There will also probably be much less disease, much less sickness, because in Isaiah it says that if someone dies when he’s 100 years old, he’ll be considered merely a child. “There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old” (Isaiah 65:20).

Life is obviously going to be lengthened to great longevity, as it was before the Flood, when men lived to be nearly a thousand years of age. Everybody will live like Methuselah—for a thousand years (Genesis 5:27).

Why the Millennium?

The Millennium could be an additional period of grace for those who didn't have a chance to really hear the gospel or know the Lord during this life, perhaps even because of our own failure and the failure of the church to reach the whole world with the gospel, or at least to reach everybody we should have. Particularly lots of children and young people who never had a chance and never knew any better, maybe lots of people in non-Christian countries—to give them a chance to hear and see and know the Lord.

But during the Millennium, everyone will be reached. “For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Habakkuk 2:14). How do the waters cover the seas? Completely. So the world will be completely covered with the knowledge of the Lord and the righteous kingdom of Jesus Christ. Hallelujah!

It sounds like this thousand years of the millennial rule and reign of Jesus Christ on earth will be another testing time for those who remain, the unsaved who survived the wrath of God, whom God has blessed with another chance, or perhaps their first chance. They may have never really heard the gospel before; they may have never experienced the love of Jesus before or known God's will or His ways before. It will be a time of learning His laws and His ways and His love.

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

It's obvious from the Bible's description of the Millennium that the survivors from the age of man will be given another chance through the personal rule and reign of Christ and His children and the universal knowledge of the Lord and His love. In fact, I think that's what the whole Millennium is all about, to give these people such a chance; otherwise there would be no point to it.

In the face of the visible rule and reign of Christ on earth, His personal appearance to man, His Second Coming in mighty power and glory, His wiping out of the Antichrist and his kingdom and the imprisonment of Satan, and His obvious visible rule and reign, I think some are going to believe and receive who perhaps never heard before. And maybe there will be some who might have heard but didn't understand or couldn't believe until they saw something.

To see the coming of the Lord and His taking over the reins of this earth to rule and reign—that's pretty strong persuasion and enough to convince almost anybody to believe and receive. So I think the Millennium will be the time when God gives what I would call not a second chance, but a first chance to a lot of people who didn't have a chance before.

“For in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness. The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor

THE MILLENNIUM

among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it” (Isaiah 29:18–19; 32:1; 40:5).

Everyone on earth will see His glorious power and kingdom, and everybody will believe then. He even says, “And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord” (Jeremiah 31:34).

There won’t be any unbelievers then, but I’m afraid there will be some unreceivers who will still be rebellious and iniquitous at heart and defiant. It’s obvious from the scriptures that there will be many who will receive and obey and will be blessed of the Lord—and others who will still rebel.

It looks to me like the Millennium is going to be another testing time or trying time, a proving ground. We, the saints, who heard the gospel and voluntarily received the Lord, will be running things under the direct supervision of the Lord. And all of the people who survived the Tribulation, the wrath of God and the Battle of Armageddon, we’re going to govern and judge and organize and teach them.

They’ll all “know the Lord” and will actually see that He and His kingdom are real, but they

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

may not know Him as well or as personally as we do, because we already knew Him in this life and learned to know Him well and communicate with Him and love Him and serve Him throughout this life. I think it will be part of our job to reeducate them in the ways of the Lord. They're going to be just as human as you and I are right now. They won't be any more supernatural in their intelligence or in their mental capacities or the ways they have to learn than we are in this present age.

The scriptures definitely confirm that the Millennium is going to be a period of learning for them: "Many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Micah 4:2).

"He shall rule the nations with a rod of iron" (Revelation 19:15)

In spite of all that visible evidence of the power of God and the people of God and the government of God and the Son of God, Jesus Christ Himself personally ruling the earth in the flesh from His capital at Jerusalem, there will still be people who won't like it. The carnally-minded and evil-minded people will still rebel against the Lord.

THE MILLENNIUM

Even though the Devil and all his demons will be bound in the bottomless pit during this thousand-year period of what is going to be like heaven on earth, there will be plenty of people left who still reject the King of kings and His kingdom, who still rebel against His reign and power—sometimes whole nations which will rebel and refuse to obey the commandments of Christ and the dictates of His kingdom and His officers.

That's why he'll have to rule with a rod of iron. "God is love" (1 John 4:8), and today He's showing His love to the world—His patience, His mercy, His longsuffering, His forgiveness. He's showing love to the world to try to get them to love Him. But the day is coming when, if all else fails and they reject His love, He will rule them with a rod of iron and of force. Not because His love failed, for love never fails. Jesus never fails, God never fails, and God is love, so love can't fail (1 Corinthians 13:8).

But the happy side is that many in that day, having seen, will believe and will bow and will yield and will obey and will receive with gladness the kingdom of God on earth. They will become its happy citizens and members and cooperate and help us to rebuild and to reconstruct and to clean up, rehabilitate, and give the world its last chance for salvation.

It's obvious from the scriptures that during that time some people and nations will submit and yield to the kingdom of God on earth, and

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

therefore will be blessed. But others will rebel, and therefore will be punished. “And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem”—survivors from the Battle of Armageddon—“shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles” (Zechariah 14:16).

“And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain” (Zechariah 14:17). So there will definitely still be free will and choice during the Millennium. They won’t have to submit and obey; they can rebel if they want to, but they’ll be punished. Although the curse will be largely lifted and it’s going to be a lot nicer world then—virtually heaven on earth in a way—there will still be some people there who don’t belong in heaven. So again, it looks like the Millennium will be a testing time to give the survivors of Armageddon a chance to choose between the kingdom of God and the sin already in the world since Adam and Eve. They’re going to have a thousand years of another chance and mercy and goodness and peace on earth and the very presence of Jesus Christ Himself—perfect government, plenty for all, peace on earth. A thousand years to prove the love and mercy and power of God.

Millennial salvations?

If there is a choice offered at that time, to me it indicates that some people will choose what's right when they are presented with a full knowledge of the Lord, the personal appearance of the Lord and the proof of His existence and authority. After all, how much more evidence could anyone ask than what there will be during the Millennium, when man will be able to see the visible, personal embodiment of God in Jesus Christ as King of kings and ruler of the earth?

Then, instead of believing being seeing—God's motto for His children today who "walk by faith and not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7)—seeing will be believing. They will be given the opportunity to believe by actually being able to see the kingdom of God and Christ on earth and His saints in power and ruling the world, so it should be much easier for them to believe and receive under those conditions. However, they will not be as honored or blessed as those who are now believing and receiving and obeying by faith, without seeing.

Jesus said to Thomas, "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed." I believe the Millennium is going to be designed, in a sense, for those whom God's going to give a chance to see and to believe. But He then said, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29). We are the more blessed category, who believe by faith in this life, even though we haven't seen.

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

God, in a sense, is going to do for the world in the Millennium what He did for Thomas. People today say, “Show me.” He’s going to show them, and those who were honest about it and really meant it—“Lord, if You’ll only show me, I’ll believe”—will believe.

No doubt, many at this time will at last see and understand and believe and receive the love of God and the beauty of His kingdom, the restored Garden of Eden on earth in the paradise of the Millennium.

So this period seems to be necessary, by God’s own creation and design, to give everybody a chance before the final judgment of God at the end of the Millennium, which we’ll cover in detail in the next chapter. God’s going to give them all a chance under the most ideal conditions to believe and to accept and to receive and to obey. And if they do believe when they see, then why shouldn’t the Lord bless them somehow? Maybe not with our kind of salvation, but at least with some kind of salvation, reclamation, reconciliation, and reward in the next life, in the final fulfillment of it all, the new heaven and new earth, the age the saved will all enter after the thousand-year millennial period is over and the great final White Throne Judgment has taken place.

Here and now for there and then

Some people have the notion that in the future world they're going to know everything, speak any language, and be able to do anything. I believe that God is going to take the talents that He's already given you and that you have already developed and used and profited by. He's going to take the knowledge you have already learned, He's going to take the experiences you have already been through, He's going to take the languages you already know and use them.

Your knowledge is not just going to be handed to you on a silver platter after you die or after the resurrection. We're not going to suddenly receive some gift of total omniscience so that we know everything like God—not even the angels have that. I believe we are going to carry our experiences with us from this life over into the next life. I believe that God is going to use the experience, the talents, the languages that you now know, as well as the supernatural wisdom and powers that He will give you.

But in many ways you're still going to be very much like you are right now. Everything the Lord has ever taught you during this life and the things that you are learning now are going to come in very handy then. Just as God sent Jesus to become a man to understand us, He's going to raise up many generations of Christians who understand this world and its people to run them and govern them the way they ought to be governed.

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

Everything you're learning and doing now and decisions you're making and experiences you're having now are a part of your schooling and training here and now to be used there and then. So for God's sake, let's learn our lessons today and learn to be faithful, obedient, dedicated servants now, so He can trust and bless us with a place of usefulness to Him and others tomorrow. Amen?

What a wonderful one-thousand-year victory we have to look forward to during the Millennium! It's a beautiful prospect.

*For the darkness shall turn to dawning,
And the dawning to noonday bright,
And Christ's great kingdom shall come on earth,
The kingdom of love and light.—H. E. Nichol*

Are you ready for it? Are you a member of Christ's kingdom that shall never pass away? Are you one of God's children through Jesus Christ His Son, the great revolutionary who shall overthrow all earthly powers and set up His kingdom on earth to establish a lasting world of peace and plenty for all? If not, receive Him now as your personal Savior. He'll give you peace of mind and satisfaction of heart and love and happiness here and now—and heaven hereafter.



CHAPTER TEN

The Battle of Gog And Magog

DURING THE MILLENNIUM, ACCORDING TO REVELATION 20, SATAN WILL BE BOUND AND OUT OF THE WAY FOR THIS ENTIRE THOUSAND-YEAR PERIOD: “AND I SAW AN ANGEL COME DOWN FROM HEAVEN, HAVING THE KEY OF THE BOTTOMLESS PIT AND A GREAT CHAIN IN HIS HAND. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season” (Revelation 20:1–3).

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

There will have been no problems with demons or devils for a thousand years. They're all going to be in prison with the Devil, thank the Lord. It's going to be a much nicer world then, with no more Devil and the curse largely lifted, a beautiful, wonderful, heaven on earth. Except for one little problem: There are going to be some people there who don't really belong in such a heavenly place.

Although we won't have to battle with the Devil and his spiritual forces during this millennial period, we'll still have to grapple with the rebellious nature of some of the people we're going to be ruling over—the unregenerate, willful hearts of men who will still have free choice to do good or evil. They won't be influenced by satanic spiritual influences any longer, but they will still have their own wicked hearts if they are unsaved.

There will still be free will and there will still be people who disobey, even whole nations that will rebel. As a result, the curses of God are going to fall on them and they're going to have drought and famine and all kinds of judgments. The nations which refuse to obey and are rebellious will be punished. (See Zechariah 14:16–19.)

Throughout the Millennium, Jesus and the resurrected saints will be the rulers of the earth, and Jesus will reign with “a rod of iron” (Revelation 19:15), and whether they like it or not, “righteousness shall cover the earth as the waters cover the seas” (Isaiah 11:9). Those who obey and

THE BATTLE OF GOG & MAGOG

submit willingly to the kingdom of God will be blessed for it. So it appears it's going to be another trial period, another chance to repent. God will be giving the unsaved a second chance, and thank God, He is going to salvage some that are a little more worthy than the others.

God is also going to try to show the world what they should have done and how they should have done it, how they should have behaved, and what His kingdom would have been like if they had obeyed Him. The Lord will mercifully and patiently try this for a thousand years, but even after all that, some people will still stubbornly refuse to learn.

The “little season”—Satan’s second coming

At the very beginning of the Millennium, immediately after Jesus Christ and His heavenly forces conquer the Antichrist and his forces at the Battle of Armageddon, Satan will be bound in the bottomless pit “till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.” It is this final “little season” that we are now going to deal with.

“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Revelation 20:7–10).

At the end of the Millennium, Satan is going to be released from his prison in the heart of the earth where he’s been held for a thousand years. He’ll be given his freedom briefly—just long enough to deceive the nations again, the unconverted and unsaved who survived into the Millennium.

“He shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle.” The Bible has mentioned Gog and Magog before, in relation to the Antichrist and his invasion of Israel and the great Battle of Armageddon, as described in Ezekiel 38 and 39. But these are two different battles that you don’t want to get mixed up, because although they both involve “Gog and Magog,” they are a thousand years apart.

The Battle of Armageddon is led by “Gog”—a name given to the Antichrist in Ezekiel 38—from “the land of Magog”—and occurs at the end of the wrath of God period. This is when Jesus and His followers conquer his forces and take over the earth at the very beginning of the Millennium. But the

THE BATTLE OF GOG & MAGOG

Battle of Gog and Magog takes place at the very end of the Millennium, after the thousand years is over and Satan is released from his prison for “a little season.”

The fact that Gog and Magog feature in both the Battle of Armageddon at the beginning of the Millennium and the Battle of Gog and Magog at the end of the Millennium shows that it is going to be an attempted revival of the same empire and the same forces over which the Antichrist and the false prophet ruled. Only this time, the Devil won't be working through the Antichrist, but the Devil himself will personally try to revive his anti-Christ satanic kingdom, the kingdom of Gog and Magog that he had before the Millennium.

In spite of the visible, all-powerful kingdom of Christ on earth for a thousand years, a lot of people are obviously still not going to receive Jesus as their Savior and will be deceived and misled to follow the Devil when he comes back at the end of the Millennium.

This Battle of Gog and Magog is sort of like the Devil's second coming. He comes back to lead his people again, and they certainly will be his people if they haven't received Jesus by this time. Imagine, even after a thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ in person, they will still rebel against the King of kings and His heavenly kingdom on earth! It shows you how clever the Devil is and how gullible people can be.—To think that they could

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

actually overthrow the kingdom of Christ after a thousand years of His supernatural, visible, personal reign on earth.

Imagine, most of the saints will have literally come back from the dead. There will be millions, perhaps billions, who will have returned from the dead to rule and reign with Christ on the earth over the people who are left after the horrors of the final holocaust. They will see and feel and know the supernatural powers that we have as rulers of the kingdom of God. They will see it demonstrated, they will know it's true, they will know God exists, and they will know that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah. They will know it's all true, and yet they will not receive it.

Time doesn't heal in this case. It doesn't change the nature of the truly wicked. It doesn't change the nature of those who have refused to receive and accept and become a part of the kingdom of God. So in this heaven on earth of Christ's kingdom on earth, they're going to be uncomfortable misfits, oddballs, constantly resenting it and grumbling, complaining, and finally rejoicing to see the Devil himself let loose so they can follow him, in open rebellion against the Lord and His government.

There are some people who apparently are incorrigible, total reprobates who will never change and can never be won over, no matter how much mercy they receive. No matter how much God's personal power is shown to them, they still reject

THE BATTLE OF GOG & MAGOG

Him and try to get rid of Him and His kingdom and His people. Even today, there are people who believe in God and Christ and the Bible, but nevertheless reject Him and harden their hearts and refuse to receive Him because they're in open rebellion against Him. But in that day they will even see God's kingdom on earth in visible power and glory. And yet, though they see it, know it, and in the lighter sense of the word "believe" it—they can't help but believe it when they see it before their very eyes—they will not truly believe it in the sense of receiving it, drinking it in, accepting it, and submitting to it.

God will have mercifully shown them in every way, by His personal rule, how the world ought to be run and what they ought to be like. They will see the Lord and His angelic officers and followers and know His righteousness and the beauty of His creation, a restored creation with the curse lifted and even with very little death, for a thousand years. Surely you would think they all would receive Him then. But not all do, sad to say.

When God finally tests them and lets the Devil loose again, just to see who has really changed and reformed and gotten converted and saved and who loves the Lord and is following Jesus, to sift them and to winnow them, the Devil's going to find a lot of rebels who didn't like the bondage of the kingdom of God and God's strict rules of behavior and love. And they will rebel. They will go along

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

with the Devil and try to actually destroy God's camp of the saints.

Once again, God will have sifted the tares from the wheat and separated the sheep from the goats. By giving them a chance to rebel, those who reject Christ and His kingdom will come out into the open at the end of the Millennium and follow Satan into the Battle of Gog and Magog and openly show their rebellion, the rebellion they had in their hearts all the time.—Their refusal to become citizens of the kingdom of God and their refusal to be in subjection to the rule and reign of Christ and His saints on earth.

“When Thy judgements are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” Thank God some will learn and will receive it. But, “Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord” (Isaiah 26:9–10).

It'll be the last great test for mankind on earth. Just as Adam and Eve were deceived in the Garden of Eden, and just as the world will soon be deceived by the Antichrist, these millennial rebels will be deceived by the Devil when he's released and will follow him into battle against the kingdom of God.

Throughout the Millennium, the Lord will be saving all who will receive Him. When all who can be salvaged during that thousand years have been salvaged, God's going to let the Devil loose for a

THE BATTLE OF GOG & MAGOG

little while to go out and deceive the ones who are left, to sift them again.

The unconverted wicked will then rebel against God and His goodness and will endeavor to throw off the chains and the bondage of His kingdom, the restrictions of the rule and reign of Christ and His people on earth. We're given a picture of this in the second Psalm: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying, 'Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.' He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure" (Psalm 2:1-5).

The camp of the saints and the beloved city

After the Devil has gone throughout the earth and gathered his innumerable company of kingdom-of-God-rejecting followers, it says, "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them" (Revelation 20:9). The only city called "the beloved city" in Scripture is earthly Jerusalem, which Jesus is going to take over and from where He's going to reign as king of the earth during the Millennium.

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

The heavenly super-city “New Jerusalem” will not come down to earth until after the Millennium, in the new heaven and the new earth (which period we will cover in chapter 12). This cannot be referring to the heavenly city but must be earthly Jerusalem, the beloved city which is mentioned many times by the prophets as being the headquarters of the coming millennial kingdom of the Messiah.

What about this “camp of the saints” that the Devil’s forces surround? Is that referring to the resurrected saints of God who have been ruling the earth with Jesus for the past thousand years? If we are already “equal unto the angels” (Luke 20:36), as Jesus said we’d be, then we could just disappear or fly away. We wouldn’t have to be camped down on the ground and threatened by the forces of evil and natural human beings under the leadership of the Devil. They couldn’t touch us.

We will have immortal resurrection bodies. We will be able to fly, disappear, and they won’t even be able to touch us. So who will Satan and his forces be fighting against? Who else could it be than those who are also human beings just like them, still in human bodies, still in mortal flesh, with whom they can fight?

Remember, it appears from the Bible’s description of the Millennium that there are going to be many who will receive Christ’s kingdom on earth and will obey and will be blessed by the Lord,

THE BATTLE OF GOG & MAGOG

in spite of those who rebel. It sounds to me as if those who come into faith and belief and loyalty to God will be the ones who make up this camp of the saints at the Battle of Gog and Magog—the nations and the forces who are loyal to the Lord, who will resist Satan and his renegade, reprobate rebel forces.

So it looks like this “camp of the saints” that Satan’s rebels try to surround and defeat at this time is going to be made up of the natural physical human beings who are saved during the Millennium, those who have obeyed and followed God and Christ and refused to join the rebellion. I can’t prove it, but that’s what it sounds like. This is a whole new breed of Christians, a whole new race of Christian mortals having to again withstand the anti-Christ forces.

It even calls these forces Gog and Magog again, as it’s almost the exact same situation, and they are again led by the Devil and his demons. These are the rebels of the Millennium, fighting against the saved of the Millennium. What else could it be? I just can’t picture the resurrected saints, who will be as powerful and as great as the angels of God, huddled up, surrounded by the Devil and his mere human forces of human rebels.

But this would affect the Christian mortals. During the Millennium, the sheep will be divided from the goats and this will be the final reaping, the final separating of the tares from the wheat. And at the end, the Devil and his forces and all the wicked

rebels will try to wipe out those who have gotten saved and followed Christ and been reconciled to the Lord.

The devouring fire

It says then that “fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them” (Revelation 20:9). This camp of the new saints, the millennial saints, the saved of the Millennium, is surrounded by the forces of the anti-Christ, anti-God Devil—Satan in person on earth again. This time he is not even disguising himself as the Antichrist, but leading his human forces personally.

This time God is so fed up with them that He sends down fire out of heaven to devour them completely. He annihilates the anti-God, anti-Christ wicked remaining upon the face of the earth. In fact, He causes such a horrible fire to come down from heaven that it completely wipes out the entire earth. Not the ball itself, but the entire surface of the earth will be burned and purified from all the horrors of man, and God will start all over again with a new creation, as we’ll read in a following chapter—a new earth.

He promised never to destroy the world again with a flood of water, but this time, at the very end, He’s going to destroy it with a flood of fire. He’s going to purify it and destroy the pollution, the germs, the contamination, the wicked, the curse,

THE BATTLE OF GOG & MAGOG

and all evil, and remake the surface of the earth into another Garden of Eden. He'll purge the whole surface of the ball. That's the only way He's ever going to get rid of all the nuclear wastes and toxins and pollution, not to mention all the junk flying around in the air. No wonder He's got to destroy both the atmospheric heavens and the earth.

The heavens shall be rolled back like a scroll, He says, and depart with a great noise (Revelation 6:14; 2 Peter 3:10). It's all going to explode and be burned up, and the whole surface of the ball is going to be re-created. God will then rebuild a new world on the ashes of the old, and His great heavenly city will be able to safely come down through the new heaven to rest upon the new earth. (See Revelation 21.)

For "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:10–13).

We know that this terrific, cataclysmic, catastrophic judgment of God that will wipe out

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

the wicked millennial rebels in one final great explosion is only going to burn up and destroy the surface of the earth and the atmospheric heavens, because God's Word says that the earth is established forever (Psalm 78:69). He also says that His eternal heavenly city will come down to this earth, where God will dwell with men forever.

If God's going to send down fire from heaven to devour the forces of the Devil, can you imagine that this fire also devours the camp of His saints? Do you think He's going to allow His own children to die in fire and flame, even if they're saved and would go to heaven afterward?

I believe that all these people who have been won to the Lord and His kingdom on earth during the Millennium, who are following Him and living righteously and in cooperation and submission to Him and His saints will be spared in some manner at the end of the Battle of Gog and Magog when this fire comes down from God to destroy their enemies and even the whole surface of the earth. In some way they will be spared. The fire is to destroy their enemies, not them.

Some claim there's going to be a second rapture of these new saints. How God does it, we don't know, because it's not explained. Obviously the fire is not to devour them, but their enemies and the surface of the earth, so that the whole ball can be purified from all its pollution and

THE BATTLE OF GOG & MAGOG

contamination and wreckage and the mess that still remains at the Battle of Gog and Magog.

After all, if He'll rescue the saved at the end of the Tribulation with a rapture, sparing them from the wrath of God, why shouldn't He also rescue His millennial saints with a rapture, and spare them from the devouring fires that wipe out the forces of the Devil at the Battle of Gog and Magog? There must be some way He's going to save them and take them out.

Satan gets his

While the saints of the Lord are safely tucked away in the heavenly city somewhere out in space, the surface of the earth and the atmospheric heavens will be destroyed in the great fire which burns up the forces of Gog and Magog who had attacked the millennial saints at the end of the Millennium. Satan's forces will be destroyed by that fire and Satan himself will be cast into hell. Like the Antichrist and the false prophet, the Devil won't need or deserve any judgment—his judgment has gone on before, and he will be cast straight into the Lake of Fire (1 Timothy 5:24).

“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are” (Revelation 20:10). In other words, where they already are at this time. They had been cast into the Lake of Fire after the Battle

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

of Armageddon a thousand years previously. They'd already been in hell for a thousand years, and the Devil is now cast in to join them. At last he receives his punishment.

Satan's mortal followers are at this time only slain and killed by the fire, whereas the Devil himself is cast into the Lake of Fire, "and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Revelation 20:10). As we'll bring out in detail in our next lesson on the judgment and hell, this term "for ever and ever" literally means "for an age and an age," which undoubtedly is a very, very long time, but like every age, does have an eventual end.

The lessons learned

This final war of all, the Battle of Gog and Magog, is going to prove once and for all that though mercy is even shown to the wicked, yet they will not receive it, they'll not believe, they'll not repent. They will still rebel.

There will still be those who are so incorrigible, so rebellious and unregenerate that they're going to merit hell. After all that, they are going to get what they deserve, and everybody is going to know that they deserve it. They had every chance to repent and change and receive and believe and obey, and yet they rebelled against Christ's visible kingdom.

Think of it: after a thousand years of the reign of Jesus Christ, having learned what real

THE BATTLE OF GOG & MAGOG

righteousness is and what the kingdom of God is like, they will still go back under the Devil! After having that much light, that much time, that much love and that much mercy, they are going to deserve the world's final flood, a flood of fire, which will totally destroy the surface of the earth and them in the process.

All of this is also going to prove that enforced righteousness doesn't work, that you cannot legislate righteousness—even with the iron rule of love. The stern discipline of the personal presence of the Lord and us and His utterly fair, just, merciful government in a beautiful restored Garden-of-Eden world still can't make people be good. The minute the Devil is let out of his prison, away they go after him and rebel against God.

This great millennial drama on earth will manifest the heinous sin of the confirmed rebels, the utter reprobates. Like the scribes and the Pharisees and the chief priests and the religious leaders of Jesus' day, even though they saw Jesus and watched Him perform miracles and heard His Words and saw the results—even saw Him raise the dead—they still rejected Him and wouldn't receive Him as their Messiah.

Jesus said, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets"—the written Word of God—"neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:31). Millions are going to come back from the dead, perhaps billions, and yet they're

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

not going to be persuaded. God's going to rule over them personally in the form of Jesus Christ for a thousand years, and yet they will not receive Him. "Let favor be shewed to the wicked," Isaiah says, "and yet they will not learn righteousness" (Isaiah 26:10). They will not repent.

It's going to prove that if they wouldn't receive Him willingly now, neither will they do it willingly then, even in His personal presence. Even with Jesus Christ's personal, present, visible reign, and with us as His officers, like angels, supernatural, miraculous, and all this visible power of God.

Now He's invisible and His power's invisible, and most people have to believe purely by faith, without seeing. "For without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6). Although, in most cases where they truly, genuinely, honestly believe, though having not seen, they will see some evidence, some proof, some change, if nothing else than in their own lives as God rewards their faith. They will feel it; they will see it.

So how about you? Are you believing, receiving, obeying, and submitting to Jesus Christ and His loving kingdom by faith today? If so, you have a wonderful future to look forward to. God bless you with faith and yieldedness to Him here and now, so you can rule and reign with Him there and then.



CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Great White Throne Judgement

WE KNOW FROM OUR PREVIOUS STUDIES THAT ALL OF THE SAVED, BORN-AGAIN CHILDREN OF GOD OF ALL AGES WILL BE RAPTURED AND RESURRECTED BEFORE THE MILLENNIUM, AT THE END OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION PERIOD WHEN JESUS COMES AND GATHERS TOGETHER HIS CHURCH, HIS BRIDE, TO BE WITH HIM FOREVER. We also know that they will then “live and reign with Christ for a thousand years” on the earth (Revelation 20:4). But what about the billions of unsaved people of all ages, what has become of them?

“The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished” (Revelation 20:5). After the Millennium and its catastrophic finish

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

with the Battle of Gog and Magog and the final holocaust that will burn up all the unregenerate and all the pollution and all the evil throughout both the earth and the atmospheric heavens, then all the unsaved of all ages, including the rebels destroyed at Gog and Magog, will be resurrected for the final Great White Throne Judgment.

At the end of the Millennium after the Battle of Gog and Magog, the great second resurrection takes place, the “resurrection of judgment,” as Jesus called it (John 5:29). At this time all of the unsaved dead are finally raised to stand before God Himself in the great final judgment in which they are given their final sentences and are assigned to their final places in the hereafter.

Don't confuse this final Great White Throne Judgment at the end of the Millennium with the “judgment seat of Christ” (Romans 14:10), which occurred a thousand years earlier at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in heaven. The judgment seat of Christ is an entirely different judgment altogether in which we, the saved, the born-again, are judged by Christ Himself, because we know Him, where He will reward us according to our works and from where we go on to reign with Him over the world for a thousand years.

But this final Great White Throne Judgment is not for the saved. This judgment is for the dead, small and great, including all those who lived through the Millennium and yet followed the Devil

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGEMENT

and were destroyed at the end of it—all the dead of all ages who were not saved and therefore did not take part in the first resurrection at Christ's Second Coming (Revelation 20:6). All the people who ever lived, whether good or bad, if unsaved, will have to stand before this Great White Throne Judgment of God.

At the Throne

“And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:11–15).

Here is the awesome picture of God Himself at the last great judgment of all the dead who were not saved. Some say that this is the judgment of “the wicked,” but it does not say “the wicked” here. It simply says “the dead.” So let's just call them the

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

unsaved, because there will be various classes of unsaved, as you'll see. There will be the ignorant and the somewhat innocent, and the good who tried to do the right thing. The Bible says so. (See Romans 2:12–15.) Then there will also be various degrees of the guilty and the very wicked on down the line.

It says that he saw “the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened”—several books, a lot of books, maybe millions of books. “And another book was opened, which is the book of life”—a very important book. “And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Revelation 20:12). This could be their own memories, or records that God somehow keeps of their words and works.

They say that everything you've ever seen, heard, thought, or done is recorded in your subconscious mind. In fact, science says that you never really forget anything. So certainly God is able to activate everyone's memories and run through their entire life, in a fraction of a second if necessary, and judge everything they've ever done. He could do it for the whole world simultaneously if He wanted to. So this “opening of the books” might be the Lord reeling off or reading off everything everyone's ever done, in order to judge them fairly and accordingly.

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGEMENT

“And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” What does this mean, “according to their works”? Many theologians have taught that God is just going to toss them all into hell and that’s that. But if everybody’s going to go to hell anyway, what is this judgment for? If everybody who’s going to be spared from the flames of hell and the Lake of Fire has already gone to heaven and is already saved, what’s the purpose of this Great White Throne Judgment of God for the unsaved who were never resurrected to begin with and of all those who were destroyed in the fire when the earth and atmosphere were burned up? What is this Great White Throne Judgment for in the 20th chapter of Revelation? Why doesn’t God just toss them all straight into hell?

It’s obvious that God is going to judge everybody justly and righteously and mercifully, according to their works. There’s so much in the Word of God showing that there will be degrees of punishment just as there are degrees of reward. God is just and thorough, and “every man will be rewarded according to his works.” (See Psalm 62:12; Jeremiah 17:10; Matthew 16:27; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 2:23; 20:13; 22:12.) We’ll even have to “give an account of every idle word, “for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matthew 12:36–37).

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

Jesus Himself said that those who know the Lord's will, yet still disobey and do things deserving punishment, shall receive severe punishment. But those who did not know His will and yet did things worthy of punishment shall receive light punishment. "And that servant, which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke 12:47-48).

So their being "judged according to their works" simply means that they will be rewarded or punished accordingly, and obviously there's going to be a difference. "For the work of a man shall He render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways. Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgement" (Job 34:11-12). God is just, fair, and righteous, and everybody is going to get exactly what they deserve and need.

"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works" (Revelation 20:13). Here we see the second resurrection, that of all the unsaved dead, some of whom have been confined to the bottom of the sea and other places.

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGEMENT

But during this second resurrection, all of these “rest of the dead” come up from everywhere: out of the sea, out of the graves, from past eons of time—all the unsaved dead that ever lived. All those who didn’t get saved during this age of grace, plus all those who didn’t get saved during the Millennium are going to be raised in this Second Resurrection to stand before the Great White Throne Judgment and to be judged out of the books.

Another very interesting point is regarding “death and hell delivering up the dead which were in them.” Does this mean that some will be resurrected out of hellfire, only to be judged and cast back into the flames from which they just came? The original Greek word translated here as hell is “Hades,” which does not mean a fiery, flaming, torturous hell at all. Hades, according to the Greek lexicon, literally means “the unseen state”; in other words, the spirit world, the invisible realm of ghosts and spirits. So the unsaved who have died and departed from this life are merely in an unseen state. They’re not all in hellfire, neither are they stuck in a hole in the ground, the “grave,” which is another translation of Hades in our English Bibles.

The translators should have used the literal translation to make it clearer. “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death” (Revelation 20:14). It does not say here that

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

all these people were cast into the Lake of Fire, only death and hell. In other words, death or the power of death, and Hades, the unseen state, are cast into the Lake of Fire. These former places or states of confinement or punishment or imprisonment are now cast into the Lake of Fire, including the end of the unseen spiritual state which exists today.

Judgment cannot come until there is an end to today's spirit world, an end to the unseen state, because now the spirits are still operating in that realm. The "book of life," which was opened at this Great White Throne Judgment, is a very important book. After death and hell are cast into the Lake of Fire, it says, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15).

It does not say that they were all cast into the Lake of Fire. It says, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." In other words, there's going to be another dividing at the last Great White Throne Judgment between the sheep and the goats, between those who deserve to go to hell and those who don't.

If the book of life contained only the names of those who were saved in this life, why bring it out at this Great White Throne Judgment of the unsaved? Just to prove they're not in there? If none of these people are going to be spared from hell, why would the Lord need to open this book at all? If everyone written in the Book of Life is already saved and in

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGEMENT

heaven, and none of these folks at this judgment are written in there and it's just a blank book, then why bother?

Only the unsaved are present at this Great White Throne Judgment, but nevertheless a difference is made between these unsaved as to whether they are in the Book of Life or not, and only those not found in the Book of Life are cast into the Lake of Fire.—But not all of them. So who's not found in the book? Obviously the most wicked and those who absolutely rejected Christ and rebelled against Him, like all of those mark-of-the-beast people in the Tribulation and all of those rebels who at the end of the Millennium turned against the camp of the saints when the Devil tried to pull his big revolt. After a thousand years of the personal, visible, loving reign of Jesus Christ and His saints on the earth and the manifestation of God on every hand, they still rebelled against God, so I'd say if anybody ever deserved to go to hell, they will deserve it.

From all I can gather from the scriptures, it seems that the Lake of Fire is pretty bad punishment for the very worst. To be cast into the Lake of Fire you've got to be a pretty wicked sinner who has really been defiant of God and of every opportunity God has given you to repent, and really done a lot of damage and hurt a lot of people—like Hitler and some of those sorts of characters—those who have turned many astray.

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

All of the worst are going to be cast into the Lake of Fire. All of the saints of God are going to inhabit the Holy City. And those who were not bad enough to go to hell and yet not good enough through accepting Christ's goodness to go to heaven will be in-between somewhere, wherever God chooses to place them.

Among the unsaved there are those who are not good enough for heaven—in other words, through the blood of Christ—nor bad enough for hell. But they were found written in the Book of Life and thereby spared from the Lake of Fire. Not saved for heaven and not condemned to hell, but found written in this Book of Life and spared. Apparently they will be given some form of life instead of the death penalty, some fate other than hell.

Is God a monster?

When a sincere young man once told me, "I can't believe in a God that's going to send all these people to hell forever, people that never even had a chance to hear about Jesus, little babies and ignorant natives and the millions of people of different religions who are fairly righteous and are trying to do the best they know how, living up to whatever light they've got," I replied, "I agree with you. I don't believe in such a God either."

For I am personally convinced, from my own study of the Scriptures and the nature of

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGEMENT

God, that God has mercifully made some other provision besides heaven and hell for such people. For instance, should people who never heard the gospel, heathen who never even heard the name of Jesus, all be thrown into an everlasting torment and fiery hell forever when they never even had a chance? Can you possibly imagine little babies going to a place like that? If it were true, I couldn't believe in God, for He'd be a monster—to punish ignorant people who did the best they could, even though they never heard about Jesus and thus never received Him.

Certainly not everybody deserves the same kind of punishment and the same amount of punishment and the same severity of judgment as do the very worst and the most wicked. Many folks simply didn't know the truth, never heard the gospel, never even heard about Jesus, didn't know about His love, and therefore died ignorant of their Master's will.

And it's an amazing, wonderful thing that the world over, even in the darkest jungles and the most remote places, even the most primitive civilizations seem to know the difference between right and wrong, good and evil, and know that certain things are sinful and that it's wrong to do them. God's basic moral standards against stealing and killing and things like that are pretty universal. Even the most primitive cultures have known that these things were wrong and have had laws against them.

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

“This is the light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9). Every man ever born, every man that ever lived, has at some time or other been sent God’s light in some form to enlighten his darkened heart with His love, to show him His love. The Holy Spirit is faithful to speak to the heart of all and to tell them when they’re doing wrong. Everyone knows the difference between good and evil, even if they may not know all their Master’s will.

They may not even know their Master. They may not have ever known the gospel or the truth or the good news of salvation, but they know the difference between right and wrong. And if they then, in spite of that, do things worthy of stripes, it says they’ll be beaten, but with few stripes—their punishment will be light, corrective, no doubt of the chastisement nature, and they’ll undoubtedly then repent and be forgiven and be given a new life.

So there will be a great variety of punishment and reward for the unsaved, and also for the ignorant and innocent who just didn’t know any better. God can’t exactly “save” them if they didn’t have Jesus or receive Him, but He’s going to be easy on the ones who were good and tried to be good, who even without the law did those things which are required by His Law of Love.—Who even without the knowledge of Him and His love, felt His love in their hearts.

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGEMENT

“For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles (the ignorant), which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves. Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another” (Romans 2:13–15).

For those who have to be punished hereafter, the punishment will be designed and tailored according to their deeds and their accountability. For what purpose? Just to be vindictive? God is not that type of vengeful God, to vindictively only want to make people suffer for their sins. But it is for a purpose—to bring them to the light, to demonstrate His goodness and kindness and love and to show them the difference and what damage they did by their disobedience and their lack of love. Why? To bring about godly sorrow and repentance and a change.

Whether dead or alive, they will all get the light. Sooner or later they will all have a chance to be saved or at least to be reconciled. Doesn't that fit your picture of an all-loving all-merciful God who will be merciful not only to the living, but also to the dead?—As evidenced by Jesus' trip to the place of imprisonment in the heart of the earth to preach the gospel to the departed spirits there, that they might believe and be saved and liberated.

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

“For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison. For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit” (Matthew 12:40; 1 Peter 3:18–19; 4:6).

Look at the mercy of Christ. He went down into the bowels of hell, so to speak, the “underworld,” and preached to the spirits in prison. Jesus went down there and was one of them and preached to them and gave them the gospel of deliverance, “that they might live according to God in the spirit.”

In an Old Testament scripture which confirms this, God, apparently speaking to His Son, Jesus, says, “By the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water” (Zechariah 9:11). “For He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light. Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGEMENT

from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living” (Job 33:27–30).

God’s going to give everybody a chance—dead or alive, now or then—to see the light, to hear the gospel, to even see and believe and receive Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Is hell forever?

Don’t get me wrong, I’m not saying that there is no hell or that no one is going to go there. The Scriptures make it quite clear that the most wicked “shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8). I do believe in hell. I just don’t believe that hell is for everybody, nor is it forever. It’s for the worst, the most rebellious and defiant and disobedient and wicked and the Devil and his angels. They’re all going to go to the Lake of Fire, but not everybody.

Those whose works were extremely evil, who were so wicked that their names were “blotted out of the book of the living, and not written with the righteous” (Psalm 69:28), will deserve hellfire and extreme punishment. I don’t know how long they’ll have to stay there; maybe some will have to stay there forever. Or maybe He’ll have mercy on them one of these millenniums, if they ever repent.

But even for some of those, I think hell is going to be a purgatory. I think some of those

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

will be purged from their rebelliousness and their unbelief and their hardness and rejection, and just like a child being punished or chastised, they'll be given a chance there under punishment to repent and have some kind of restoration and restitution—if not actual salvation, at least some kind of eventual reconciliation.

What's the use of punishing people if it's totally impossible to ever teach them anything and they'll never change, never regenerate, never learn? It looks to me as if hell would be a totally useless waste of time if it's used for nothing but just to give people eternal suffering—which I don't think hardly anybody deserves. You will find in the next and final chapter that there will be some people living outside of the heavenly city on the beautiful new earth who sound exactly like the people who were earlier cast into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 21:8; 22:14–15).

What about some of the verses like Revelation 14:11 that say that the very wicked, mark-of-the-beast people will be tormented, and “the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night”? This sounds like an eternal, perpetual, never-ending punishment. Is it?

You've got to know the meaning of this word “forever,” because the original word used in the Greek is “aeon,” literally meaning “for an age”—which no doubt is for a long time, but does not

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGEMENT

necessarily mean eternal. And “forever and ever” in the Greek means “for an age and an age.” This Greek word “aeon” is also used in other New Testament references to “everlasting” and “eternal” punishment, which again implies that it will be “age-lasting” or “for an age.”

Where it says “forever” or “everlasting” or “forever and ever,” it doesn’t always mean what forever or everlasting means to us. In a couple of places in our New Testament the English translators did actually translate this Greek word “aeon” as “age,” such as in Ephesians 2:7 and Colossians 1:26, which speak of “the ages to come.”

But thank God, so-called eternal punishment, eternal hell, everlasting punishment, hellfire forever and ever, is not going to be forever and is not going to be everlasting and is certainly not going to be eternal. Even in this life, according to man’s law, virtually all punishment has some kind of end. There comes a time when the offender has paid for his crimes with his imprisonment or with fines or even with his life. This satisfies the laws of man, why not the laws of God? Perhaps some people will pay for their own sins, since they wouldn’t believe in Christ and wouldn’t believe in His death. So they will have to suffer the prescribed punishment pronounced upon sin, which is death. (See Romans 6:23; Revelation 21:8.)

Whatever the sins and however guilty the party may be, they will receive a just, fair punishment.

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

And whether they receive “few stripes” or “many stripes” (Luke 12:47–48), they will all come to an end. A few is a number and many is a number, and whether few or many, they will come to an end when people have received enough to have accomplished God’s purpose to cause them to repent, to see the light and be sorry and turn away and change.

God is just, God is loving, God is pure, God is holy, God is perfect, and everything will work out perfectly in the long run. There will be perfect judgment and punishment for the wicked, and perfect reward for the righteous and the believers and the ones who obeyed the Lord. Although the guilty will be punished for their sins, when their punishment is over and they’ve learned their lessons, they’ll be released. Released by the grace of God and the forgiveness of God just like everybody else.

“A way of escape” (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Thank God that we, all of us who have received Jesus, have happiness and joy and eternal rewards to look forward to in the next life, because we have received God’s substitutionary sacrifice for our sins, Jesus Christ and His blood shed on the cross, and we are relieved from the punishment and the penalty for sin and from the sentences that will be passed on others at this great final judgment.



We are completely forgiven and relieved from the punishment for sin, for “the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

Of course, we all deserve hell, punishment, and the whole works, but we get to escape it because we believe in Christ and have received His forgiveness and His punishment on the cross in our place. But the others who have not done that in this life, when they wake up in the next world and find out that they were very wrong and that the gospel was true, then they are going to believe. But for some it will be too late.

Those who have willfully, knowingly rejected Jesus Christ’s salvation and His substitution, His taking their punishment for them, are going to have to suffer for their own sins. They themselves will have to suffer the judgment and serve out the sentence until they have suffered enough to pay for it. They rejected the way of escape that God provided for them, so they will have to be punished. They will have to suffer for it, and as we’ve seen, some are going to be so bad that they’ll have to suffer the very fires of hell, the Lake of Fire.

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

His Word says that “God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). To show His love to all men, He sent Jesus to live, die, and suffer for us. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:16–17).

Jesus said, “I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:47–48). He loves you and didn’t come to judge and condemn you, but to save you forever. But if you hear His Word and refuse to receive it, if you know that He “stands at the door of your heart and knocks” (Revelation 3:20) and you turn Him away and reject Him, then you condemn yourself.

“This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19). His Word asks, “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” (Hebrews 2:3). For if you reject Jesus and reject His blood and refuse to believe and refuse to receive, you will have to suffer for your own sins. “For the wages of sin is death; but

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGEMENT

the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ” (Romans 6:23).

Why pay the heavy price of age-lasting punishment for all of your sins when Jesus has already suffered for you? All He asks is that you humbly accept His pardon, ask His forgiveness, and receive Him into your heart. He’s the only way to redemption. Do you have Jesus? If not, take Him now. God bless you with salvation.

BOOK OF THE FUTURE



CHAPTER TWELVE

The New Heaven and The New Earth

THE SUBJECT OF OUR FINAL CHAPTER, THE HEAVENLY CITY AND OUR ETERNAL FUTURE HAPPINESS THERE, IS SUCH A TREMENDOUS, SUBJECT AND SUCH A WONDERFUL, ALMOST UNIMAGINABLE “HAPPY ENDING” THAT THE FINAL CHAPTERS OF THE BIBLE ARE ALSO DEVOTED ENTIRELY TO IT. Revelation chapters 21 and 22’s description of heaven is this grand finale of the Bible, the thunderous climax of the symphony of God, and reveals a place of resplendent beauty beyond the imagination of man.

The most stupendous things that you never even dreamed of are already in existence in that way-out home of the children of God—that

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

heavenly city whose builder and maker is God. Even John's description in Revelation couldn't possibly do it justice. It is such a beautiful place that you can hardly even imagine it.

The more I think about heaven, the more thrilled I am and the more excited I get about what the Lord has prepared for us there. "As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:9–10).

They say that anticipation is 50 percent of enjoyment, so why not enjoy half of heaven now? We're halfway to heaven here in spirit, and we can get half of the enjoyment ahead of time just by thinking about it, praising the Lord for it, thanking the Lord for it, reading about it, and anticipating it. We can have 50 percent of our enjoyment right now just by looking forward to it. After all, that's where we're going to spend eternity, so it's a pretty important place, don't you think? It's our eternal home, the place that Jesus has gone to prepare for us forever, so we certainly ought to be interested in it.

In fact, all God's children of faith since the beginning of time have been looking for "a city which hath foundations"—eternal foundations—"whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews

THE NEW HEAVEN & THE NEW EARTH

11:10). They were not satisfied with being citizens of this world, with its earthly, flesh-and-blood kingdoms of natural men and evil spirits. But rather they looked for a country made by God, a heavenly country, a heavenly city, built by the Lord.

For these all “confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city” (Hebrews 11:13–16).

God as good as says He’s proud of His pilgrims who know that this world is not their home and are just passing through, trying to get a job done for Jesus on the way. “For He hath prepared for them a city.” He’s got a city for you and me where we’re not going to need any passports or visas or even money. It’s your town, your hometown in heaven, and they’re all going to be your people.

So if you’re still looking for the perfect city and the perfect government in the perfect country with perfect people, just wait a little longer—it’s coming. Jesus promised, “In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:2–3).

That’s the only country where we really belong—the kingdom of God, the heavenly city. We seek a better country, the kingdom of heaven. That’s our nationality, our citizenship, our country—a country that has never persecuted the poor or oppressed the weak or destroyed the minorities of the world; a country that has never lost a battle and never fought a war for the wrong reasons.

We are citizens of the only righteous nation in the universe, the kingdom of Jesus Christ. We, in effect, renounced our citizenship in this world when we received the King of kings and the Prince of Peace, Lord of lords, God of heaven, Son of Righteousness and His kingdom into our hearts.

Heaven is a great place to look forward to, and I hope you will get thrilled and excited about it, as it will help you to bear some of the burdens and trials that you’re going through now when you realize the wonderful things that God has in store for you. “For the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18).

When you think about heaven, it helps you to bear some of the things you have to go through now. This is one reason that Moses could do it, because he had “respect unto the recompence of the reward, as seeing Him who is invisible” (Hebrews

THE NEW HEAVEN & THE NEW EARTH

11:26–27). He looked past all the troubles he had in Egypt and all the problems, and he saw the Lord and His reward in the future. He could put up with the present by foreseeing the future, thank the Lord! Seeing heaven helped him endure all that he had to go through here on earth.

“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.” He could have been pharaoh, the king of Egypt. “Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward” (Hebrews 11:24–26).

He esteemed the reproach of Christ greater than all the riches of Egypt, the most powerful nation on earth, the richest nation in the world in that day, of which he could have had the most powerful position as its king. He looked beyond this earthly veil, this earthly level, and looked for an eternal heavenly city whose builder and maker is God.

All of those wonderful Bible heroes who are memorialized in God’s hall of fame in the 11th chapter of Hebrews considered themselves pilgrims and strangers here because they all looked for that heavenly city which hath foundations, the one country that really belonged to them and that they belonged to. They were able to endure all kinds of tribulation on this earth, and suffering and hard

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

work and even torture and death, because they looked forward to that city, “a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Corinthians 5:1).

So it pays to think about heaven and talk about heaven and try to visualize heaven and what you have to look forward to—knowing that the suffering of this present time is nothing compared to the glories that we are going to share in the near future. “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:17–18). Hallelujah!

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come” (Colossians 3:1–2; Hebrews 13:14).—The heavenly city, which will come down from God out of heaven and dwell with men. This is the hope of all ages: That now-unseen eternal world where we shall dwell with Him forever. That’s what we’re all looking forward to. Not pie in the sky, but heaven on earth! A new heaven and a new earth with its eternal city.

THE NEW HEAVEN & THE NEW EARTH

So as you read the following description of heaven and our wonderful future there, pray and ask the Lord, as did David of old: "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law" (Psalm 119:18). Paul the Apostle, when writing to some of his followers about heavenly things, told them that he prayed continually "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (Ephesians 1:16–18). Ask Him to open your eyes and thrill your heart as you read about the wonders He has in store for you.

*This world is not my home, I'm just a passing
through.*

*My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue.
The angels beckon me from heaven's golden shore
And I can't feel at home in this world any more.*

*Oh Lord, You know, I have no friend like You.
If heaven's not my home, then Lord what would I
do?*

*The angels beckon me from heaven's golden shore
And I can't feel at home in this world
anymore.—J. Reeves*

The Bible's picture of heaven

Revelation chapters 21 and 22 offer the most detailed, specific description in the entire Bible of what heaven is like. “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea” (Revelation 21:1). The earth today is clothed with its surface and its atmosphere, but at the end of the Millennium, in the Battle of Gog and Magog, God is going to completely remove them both by fire and renew and recreate a beautiful new earth and new heaven—clean air, no pollution, no contamination, no poisonous gases or chemicals. It'll all be cleaned up and purged with fire. He will then recreate the beautiful Garden of Eden and the surface of the earth, and we will have a new earth under a new heaven.

The new earth and the new heaven will be without sin, without war, destruction, death, sickness, tears, pain, without any of these things we suffer today.

There will be no more sea. Today, more than two-thirds of the earth's surface is covered by water, by seas, so when the seas are all dried up and evaporated during the fiery cataclysm of Gog and Magog, there will be room for the billions of resurrected folks of all ages who don't make it into the heavenly city, but will be living outside. He also says that “every valley shall be exalted, and every

THE NEW HEAVEN & THE NEW EARTH

mountain and hill shall be made low” (Isaiah 40:4), so there will be four to five times as much habitable and arable land area then.

“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God” (Revelation 21:2–3). You’re not going to go to heaven to live with God; God is going to come to earth to live with you! The Bible says so. John didn’t say, “I saw the heavenly city and we took off for it.” He said, “I saw it coming down from God out of heaven.”

The place we’re going to dwell with the Lord forever hereafter is not some fanciful dreamland way off in outer space, but an even more amazing city that’s going to come down from God, out of heaven, to a new earth, and God’s going to come down and live with us, and us with Him. We’re not going to go off to some faraway place called heaven where God is supposed to live, but we have a real down-to-earth God, who’s going to come live with us, and make heaven on earth.

First the Lord is going to purge, purify, and renew the whole earth so that it will be perfect, beautiful like the Garden of Eden, a new heaven

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

and a new earth, and then the heavenly city, New Jerusalem, is going to come down. Like a bride adorned for her husband, it will come down out of heaven from God to the earth. And He says that the tabernacle of God, or the dwelling place of God, is then going to be with men.

It will be like God taking over the world by invading it from outer space—bringing down the heavenly city—restoring Him forever as the King of kings, and His nation and His kingdom and His government as the new world order. Science fiction stories and space stations and space cities don't even come close to this one! Ours is 1,500 miles long, 1,500 miles wide and 1,500 miles high—2,400 kilometers. No sci-fi movie or book or story can compare with this reality.—Nothing as beautiful or as enormous or as magnificent as God's great heavenly city.

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Revelation 21:4). To me, this is one of the most beautiful verses in the entire Bible. But if you'll read carefully, you'll see that it doesn't say there aren't going to be any tears. I think a lot of us, when we get to heaven and face the Lord, are going to be ashamed and cry and weep over our sins and failures.

THE NEW HEAVEN & THE NEW EARTH

But isn't the Lord wonderful and loving and merciful? He says He's going to wipe away all those tears, and He's going to wipe away the memories of those evil years, and there will be no more pain, no more death, no more sorrow, no more tears. Only eternal, wonderful happiness, joy, and paradise on earth, like what we who love the Lord have now, only better, forever and ever and ever. Hallelujah!

All the evil and sad things will be forgotten and blotted out like a bad dream, like a nightmare, and He'll wipe away all the tears from our eyes. There'll be no more pain or sorrow or death or crying, and everything will be happiness from then on. Isn't that wonderful?

It's going to be so wonderful that you're going to forget about all your troubles of the past. It's going to be so wonderful that you're going to forget about all the trying and terrible things you've been through. It will be worth it all when we see Jesus.

Life's trials will seem so small, when we see Christ.

One glimpse of His dear face, all sorrow will erase.

So bravely run the race, 'til we see Christ.—E. K.

Rusthoi

All things new

“And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son” (Revelation 21:5–7).

In this wonderful heavenly city, His overcomers shall “inherit all things.” And “who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:5, 4). The Lord loves faith and He loves His faithful children, and He is going to reward them greatly.

But I don’t think you could possibly realize or appreciate what heaven will be like or what He has in store for you there unless you first know what you’re going to be like. His children will be raptured and resurrected in new, supernatural, eternal bodies when Jesus comes to temporarily take His bride off the earth at the end of the Great Tribulation period. He’s going to come down in glory and we’re going to rise in glorious, resurrected, heavenly, raptured bodies—just like His.

“We shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible (our present bodies) must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the

THE NEW HEAVEN & THE NEW EARTH

saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Corinthians 15:51–54).

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2). We’re going to have the same kind of body that He has now and has had ever since His resurrection, the one which He went to heaven in and came back and visited in and still has today.

When Jesus came back from the dead, He still looked like Himself, could still eat, drink, and even cook. He said, “Touch Me. Feel Me. See that it is I. A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have” (Luke 24:39). Then He sat down and ate with them. And if you ask me, that’s pretty human, pretty natural! He said to Thomas, “Thrust thy hand into My side and see, and touch the nail prints in My hands, and be not faithless, but believing” (John 20:27). He still even had the scars.

So Jesus was still “human” and still had a body of flesh and bone. And we will be the same. Because “He shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body” (Philippians 3:21). We are going to have a new kind of spiritual, resurrection, eternal, glorified body, and yet it’s going to be material enough and natural enough and recognizable enough to actually be constructed as we are now, of flesh and bones, but eternal, incorruptible, immortal flesh and bones.

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

Jesus said, “I am come that you might have life, and have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). So although I don’t know just exactly what it’s going to be like in heaven, I know it’s going to be better than it is today, a beautiful heaven on earth without sin, without wickedness, without trouble, without weariness, pain, sickness, or problems. We’re going to have wonderful new bodies, new models, and will be able to enjoy this world to the full as we never enjoyed it before.

“How excellent is Thy lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures. For with Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light shall we see light” (Psalm 36:7–9).

Another wonderful thing about heaven will be our reunion with all of our loved ones. It’ll be the greatest family reunion ever known, with all of your loved ones and relatives and children and parents and ancestors and descendants and ascendants and fellow laborers and friends from whom you’ve been separated, or who have departed already. So that’s another thrilling aspect of heaven to look forward to.

*When we all get to heaven,
What a day of rejoicing that will be.
When we all see Jesus,
We’ll sing and shout the victory.—M. Gilley*

THE NEW HEAVEN & THE NEW EARTH

Everyone there is going to be good and loving and kind and helpful, loving the Lord and caring for each other. The perfect society, the perfect community, in perfect fellowship with each other and the Lord. There will be no hate or jealousy or selfishness or cruelty.

Our heavenly home's divine design

“And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal” (Revelation 21:9–11). Like a diamond, in other words.

The city is so beautiful that God likens it unto His crowning creation, a beautiful woman. Earlier in verse 2, John said that he saw the holy city descending “as a bride adorned for her Husband,” so we know this reference to the city as “the bride” is symbolic, as it’s obvious that this marvelous city which He has prepared for His true bride, His church, is a very literal, down-to-earth, heavenly home with literal walls and mansions and a river and trees and gates and exact physical measurements and dimensions.

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

“And it had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations (or twelve levels) and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (Revelation 21:12–14).

There was an angel guarding each gate. Now why would the city have a big tall protective wall like that and each gate guarded by an angel unless there were some people outside who they didn't want to get in? This is another indication to me that there will be people outside who are not quite in good enough shape to enter the city.

He says that the names of the twelve original apostles are on the wall. What better way could He immortalize and honor them for their great work in laying the foundation and preparation for the whole church than to put their names on the gates and walls?

“And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal” (Revelation 21:15–16).

THE NEW HEAVEN & THE NEW EARTH

Do you have any idea how long 12,000 biblical furlongs equals in modern measurements? One furlong equals one-eighth of a mile, or 200 meters. Thus 12,000 furlongs equals 1,500 miles, or 2,400 kilometers. And that is a very big city: 1,500 miles in each direction—wide, long, and high. It's almost beyond comprehension.

The base area would be as large as half of the United States or half of Europe. And can you imagine it being 1,500 miles, or 2,400 kilometers, high? Airlines usually fly their planes around six to eight miles high, thirty to forty thousand feet or so. But God's heavenly city is going to be 1,500 miles high.

His great space city is coming down to earth, but it won't even be able to get all the way out of space. The apex and most of it will still be up there in outer space. What a view! If you were to divide its 1,500-mile height into twelve levels, you'd have 125 miles to each level, or about 650,000 feet—room for 65,000 floors on each level.—Or nearly 800,000 stories high. How's that for a skyscraper? When it comes to building a heavenly home for His children, God's no piker. No wonder the Bible calls Him, "He that buildeth His stories in the heaven, and hath founded His troop in the earth: The Lord is His name" (Amos 9:6).

Although I can't prove from the Bible that the heavenly city is in the shape of a pyramid, there are some scriptures about heaven which

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

seem to indicate that it is so. Hebrews 12:22 says, “Ye are come unto Mount Zion, the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.” So it must be mountain-shaped. And several other scriptures speak of “the mountain of the Lord’s house” (Isaiah 2:2; Micah 4:1).

Just imagine, if you were to get up on top of that pyramid, 1,500 miles high, do you know how far you’d be able to see? You’d be able to see 4,000 miles or 6,400 kilometers. And since the structure of the city is transparent, you’ll also be able to see out through the walls to the beautiful new earth outside, God’s new creation. You’ll still be able to see the beautiful sunrises and sunsets in a new atmospheric heaven, probably even more beautiful than the one we have now.

You won’t even have to wear oxygen masks on the upper levels. And it’s all automatically illuminated by Jesus. Of course, the people living up that high within the city will all have supernatural bodies and they won’t need oxygen; they will be able to live without it.

The tremendous capacity of this marvelous, final, great heavenly city that Jesus has gone to prepare for His followers is simply amazing. I remember hearing unbelievers trying to disprove the Bible, say, “Even if He made it that big, there still wouldn’t be room enough to hold all the real born-again Christians, much less anybody else.” That’s ridiculous.

THE NEW HEAVEN & THE NEW EARTH

Being 1,500 miles square means that the base area is 2,250,000 square miles—or three-fourths the size of the continent of Australia. And with a height of 1,500 miles from the bottom to the apex, it has a total volume of 1,125,000,000 cubic miles. (That's 1 billion, 125 million cubic miles.) "In My Father's house," Jesus said, "are many mansions [rooms or dwelling places]: If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:2–3).

Just think, one of these days you're going to own a mansion that isn't going to cost you anything. No upkeep, no expenses, absolutely nothing except what it's already cost Jesus. It will be commensurate with your works on earth, what you already paid for it down here. There are some things that you're working for right now that you're not going to receive till you get there, but you'll find that whatever you've paid here is not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed there.

I remember William Branham, a famous prophet of God that I met in the U.S. many years ago, relating a dream the Lord gave him about heaven. He had recently been through a personal tragedy, as he and his wife were caught in a big flood and he got lost from her. He finally found her at the hospital, but she died shortly afterwards from exposure and shock.

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

William Branham also got very sick with tuberculosis from exposure and cold and wandering around in the wet and the water, and he nearly died too. In fact, I think he wanted to die because he'd lost his wife and child in the flood. But he said that while he was so sick in the hospital and telling the Lord that he wanted to die, he dreamed that he was walking across these beautiful flowery fields surrounded by wooded hills, and there was this beautiful little cottage.

Suddenly his wife and little child ran out to greet him and took him in their arms and loved him and said, "We're so glad you got here. It's so lovely here." She took him into the cottage and said, "We've even saved your favorite old rocking chair." And there it was, sitting in the living room. He sat down and rocked in it and thought, "How beautiful, how beautiful." He said, "I realized it must be heaven because there was my wife and child, but I never dreamed it would be this beautiful. Just like I always wanted—only even more beautiful and better."

Heaven is the place that Jesus has gone to prepare for you, that where He is, there you may be also. So I'm sure that when you see what He has for you there, you'll agree that "eye had not seen and ear had not heard, neither had it entered into the heart of man" what the Lord had in store for you (1 Corinthians 2:9).—Things you didn't even imagine could be so beautiful and so wonderful,

THE NEW HEAVEN & THE NEW EARTH

and I'm sure you'll be quite satisfied with your quarters.

Back to the angel with the golden measuring reed in Revelation chapter 21: "And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits (216 feet high) according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass" (Revelation 21:17–18).

"And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper (diamond); the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony (sparkling quartz); the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx (striped onyx); the sixth, sardius (ruby); the seventh, chrysolite (olivine); the eighth, beryl (magical crystal aquamarine); the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus (green emerald or jade); the eleventh, a jacinth (amber); the twelfth, an amethyst (clear purple quartz)" (Revelation 21:19–20). Some of the most precious stones in the world today, precious jewels of all colors of the rainbow. What a city!

Man has never seen such beauty, such riches, such luxuries, such wealth of precious stones as you're going to see in the day the heavenly city comes down to earth. The wall alone would be enough to thrill the heart of any connoisseur of precious stones.

"And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl" (Revelation 21:21).

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

Can you imagine the gates for such a city, whose wall was 216 feet high? Can you imagine a pearl with a diameter of ten or twelve feet? Each gate a pearl, twelve gates altogether, three gates on each side of the city, north and south, east and west.

“The street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass” (Revelation 21:21). The gold of this earth is not transparent and it doesn’t look like glass; it’s very heavy and solid. But the gold of the city will be transparent glass, like beautiful golden crystal. It’s going to be an everlasting gold, crystal gold.

Not only the streets are made of this pure, crystal-clear gold, but as we read a few verses earlier, the entire “city was pure gold, like unto clear glass” (Revelation 21:18). Think how beautiful that is! The whole city is like crystal gold. So you’ll be able to see out of the city through those transparent walls, out onto a beautiful, fully restored and re-created new earth.

“And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it” (Revelation 21:22). God Himself and His Son are the temple of it. The place of worship is Jesus. Everyone is going to worship in the Lord without buildings, temples, synagogues, mosques, cathedrals, or churches.

“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God

THE NEW HEAVEN & THE NEW EARTH

did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof” (Revelation 21:23). It doesn’t say there’ll be no moon and no sun, but it says in the city they won’t need the moon and the sun, because it will have its own light, the light of God and His Son Jesus. But the sun and moon will still continue on in the world outside the city on the planet earth, which will still exist with its new Garden-of-Eden-like surface.

But inside this heavenly city we won’t need these earthly lights, because the Lord is the light thereof, and it will be light all the time, all day and all night. We’ll never have to sleep, because we’ll never get tired or weary. And for those on the outside, it will be a blessing just to live anywhere within view, within sight of that city, just to be able to see it at night and thrill to its gorgeous splendor, resplendent with the golden, supernatural, miraculous light of God. God’s Word says that even the sun and the moon shall be ashamed in comparison with the glory and the beauty and the light of that holy city here on the surface of the earth (Isaiah 24:23).

The inhabitants of the earth will be able to look up and view that beautiful city and know that God is there, that God now lives on earth with man. He’s come down out of heaven to make His dwelling place with man, and that’s His beautiful city, His capital city. And if you’re not one of its

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

citizens living inside the city, you'll be able to look up from the surface of the earth and be thankful that you're even there at all.

“And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it (in the city) and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it” (Revelation 21:24). There will still be nations and kings on the surface of the earth, outside the city. Of course, they'll be nations ordained by God and kings appointed by Him—righteous kings, good kings, teaching the people to love and serve the Lord. And they'll be bringing glory and honor into the city.

“And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life” (Revelation 21:25–27).

The city's going to be open day and night, 24 hours a day, and only the saved, only those written in the Lamb's Book of Life, shall enter through its pearly portals. No dirty city streets, no vile vice, no filthy crime, no sin; not Sin City, as most are today, but the sacred City of God.

God's city is going to be perfect and pure and governed by God Himself. It will be the peak and ultimate of heaven on earth, in a perfect

THE NEW HEAVEN & THE NEW EARTH

atmosphere, a heavenly environment, with the most excellent housing the world has ever known. Full of precious stones and jewels, and best of all, full of precious souls, immortal souls, saved souls that love Jesus and that you won to the Lord—billions who will be there because there were millions of faithful witnesses down through history, from the time of Adam and Eve in the first Garden of Eden until the Millennium, the next Garden of Eden, until the new heaven and new earth.

“And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. And in the midst of the street of it”—or, in other words, in the midst of the course of it—“and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (Revelation 22:1–2). Here we see a beautiful river that flows right out of the throne of God right through the center of the city, which is like a beautiful park. In some places it’s going to be like a beautiful park, and this wonderful river of life is going to flow right through it. “There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved” (Psalm 46:4–5).

The prophet Ezekiel also caught a glimpse of this wonderful river and these heavenly trees

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

and described them thus: “And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine” (Ezekiel 47:12).

“Healing” for the nations

“And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (Revelation 22:2). What nations? If there’s not going to be any more pain or death or sickness or sorrow or crying, then what in the world are the leaves of the trees and why do they have to be used for the healing of the nations? To me the answer is apparent. The kings and nations outside the city who “bring their glory and honour” to the city (Revelation 21:24–26) are obviously a class of people who still need some kind of healing. They are not in hell, not in the Lake of Fire in the center



THE NEW HEAVEN & THE NEW EARTH

of the earth, nor are they the born-again, the bride, who enter and enjoy the heavenly city.

Remember, only the saved will be allowed to walk in the city. “And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it.” The only ones who can enter it are those “written in the Lamb’s book of life.” But it also says that “the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.” So it’s clear that there will be whole “nations” outside the heavenly city of the saved, whose “kings” will pay their respects to the city. Although these “unsaved” nations, peoples, and kings will not be allowed to live inside the holy city, New Jerusalem, they will be allowed upon the recreated surface of the beautiful new earth. They will have been resurrected and been to the Great White Throne Judgment of God, and each one’s judgment will have been decided, where he should go.

Apparently, although these folks were not saved in this life and thus will not be allowed entrance and citizenship to the great heavenly city, they will have either been entirely spared from or even released from the Lake of Fire, the place of severe punishment, and will be allowed to live on the surface of the earth outside the holy city, where His saints will rule over them. Speaking of the inhabitants of the holy city, it says, “And they shall reign forever and ever” (Revelation 22:5).

So the new earth will apparently be populated by both those who were judged at the Great White

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

Throne Judgment and were not considered bad enough to go to hell but were not saved enough through Jesus to go to heaven, and those who actually did go to hell, to the Lake of Fire, but who learned their lessons there, served their sentence and were then mercifully released, having finally come to the light and repented and reached some sort of reconciliation with God.

Since none of them were a part of the First Resurrection—the salvation of the first saints of God, the saved of this age of grace—but were all a part of the Second Resurrection, they will be in a separate class from us and will be permitted only to live on the surface of the new earth outside the heavenly city, while we will occupy the city itself. But to be able to enjoy the surface of the new earth, a genuine heaven on earth, will be a heaven in itself, salvation in itself, so they will certainly be thankful.

It will be paradise compared with hell and its prisons and its Lake of Fire and its torments, so that they will come, in a sense, to their final reward, depending on the degree of their sin, the degree of their punishment, the degree of their repentance, the degree of their reformation, you might say, or regeneration or reconciliation—but never within the holy city, only outside.

Even then, God's going to continue to have mercy. He's going to send His saints out of those twelve pearly gates of that holy city with the leaves of the tree of life for the healing of the nations. If

THE NEW HEAVEN & THE NEW EARTH

that's not a literal tree or literal leaves, it certainly is a marvelous figurative picture of the fact that we will be taking life from the city, some healing power or healing methods, to those outside who apparently still need some kind of healing. Maybe it is spiritual healing, maybe it's mental healing, maybe it's just simply to get them better prepared to know God and worship Him and love Him and serve Him in the outside.

It will definitely be another one of God's ages or stages, one of His eras in which things are all going to be settled and made right and purified. The nations of the earth are going to be healed of all their diseases and sins and rebellions, and everything is going to be made perfect in a complete, eternal, universal reconciliation of all things to God Himself, both His natural creation and also man, all men who have ever lived on the face of the earth. It's thrilling to think that we will still be engaged in the thrilling, soul-satisfying process of the redemption of man, of all men everywhere, the whole world for whom Jesus died. God's Word says that He died for all men, "that all men might be saved" (1 Timothy 2:4).—Even those who don't receive Him now, but who will believe and receive Him later.

So we will still have a job to do even in that heavenly city on the new earth and new heaven. Outside there will be all kinds of people who will still need the Lord's healing and our help. That idea

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

of us floating around on clouds, fiddling with harps and doing nothing, that's the imagination of some cartoonist who has no idea of what it's really going to be like!

It says we shall "reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 22:5). No matter how powerful and supernatural you are, ruling and reigning and governing is still a form of work. Even the angels are called "ministering spirits" (Hebrews 1:14), which means "serving" spirits. So if even the angels are ministering spirits, surely we'll be ministering and helping others too.

You're going to have lots of work to do in the afterlife, but it's going to be a lot easier, thank the Lord. There'll be no sorrow, no sickness, no pain, no weariness, no death, no more tears, and no more crying. That's certainly going to make things easier.

But let's hope that even in the new earth, there will someday come an end to the healing of the nations with the leaves from the tree of life.— So that all suffering and all punishment and all hell on earth will eventually end; so that all men everywhere, all the billions who ever lived, will finally be restored and reconciled and in a sense, saved, and live either with the elect, the elite, within the city, or else outside the city on the new earth, in varying stages and conditions and levels of either forgiveness or shame and contempt or whatever.

Not willing that any should perish

It sounds like a monumental, colossal task, that God is finally going to save everybody, or at least reconcile everybody, and restore everybody to some form of bearable existence on the earth. There are scriptures indicating that the time will come when everybody will believe, everyone will repent, every knee will bow, everyone will worship the Lord, every man will know Him, everyone will be corrected and virtually everyone will change.

What more could God do to show His almighty power and the fact that He never fails than to reclaim and regenerate and reconcile and reconstitute His entire creation, including everybody He has ever created? What greater thing could God do to prove that He never fails and love never fails than to finally “save” everybody? It won't all be the same kind of salvation, but if He wants to, in a sense, He can save everybody and change everybody and restore everybody.

I am convinced that He still wants to teach and train and show everyone His love, and help them to receive it and get used to it and adapt themselves to it and His kingdom and His way of doing things and thus completely restore His whole kingdom and His whole creation, so that it will be one great grand victory in the end. So that nothing will be lost, nothing will be destroyed that was good, and He salvaged everything He possibly could.

BOOK OF THE FUTURE

The day is coming when, “At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:10–11). The Bible even says that He is “the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe” (1 Timothy 4:10). For “God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Who will have all men to be saved” (2 Peter 3:9; 1 Timothy 2:4).

The Bible says there’s no end to His mercy. His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting. “The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will He keep His anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust” (Psalm 103:8–14).

It will be a better world then with better people who will have learned their lessons of the Law of the Love of God and will be happier than ever before, because at last they will be purged and

THE NEW HEAVEN & THE NEW EARTH

purified of their sins of rebellion against Him and healed by the leaves of the trees of life, which His saints shall minister to them from where they grow by the river of life within the city.

There will be nothing but righteousness then—no more evil, no more wicked, no more wickedness, no more disobedience. All men everywhere will worship Him, all men everywhere will know Him, all nations shall fall down before Him and serve Him, and the whole earth will be restored.

“That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him. That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 1:10, 2:7).

And when that’s all done, who knows what God will have in store for us? Who knows but what the Lord may want us to colonize other worlds. What’s the whole universe and all this huge amount of space for if He’s only interested in this one little planet? So maybe there will be other worlds that we will have to salvage and save and restore and regenerate, reconcile and teach and train and heal. Maybe God didn’t go that far in His Word because we don’t have to know that far. He went far enough even to tell us this much, as much as He has.

Heaven is not the end. It's only the beginning.

Are you ready for it? Have you got your reservation in? Are you going to be able to walk in that city? It says, "Only the saved shall walk therein" (Revelation 21:24).

Admission to this great heavenly city is free—already paid for by the blood of Jesus on the cross. All you have to do is receive Jesus as your Savior. Take Him now. Have your name put in the Lamb's Book of Life in heaven so you'll be sure you've got your reservation confirmed for one of those dwelling places in God's golden city. That's the place you'll be happy forever with Jesus. If you love and receive and live for Him now, you can enjoy Him and heaven forever.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). God bless you with His wonderful gift of eternal salvation and a truly heavenly future to look forward to.

THE BOOK OF THE FUTURE

Throughout time, people have speculated about the future of the world; countless books have been written and movies have been produced depicting ominous apocalyptic events that point to the end of the world.

The Bible records numerous prophecies with specific detailed descriptions of the era it refers to as the last days—the period of world history which precedes Jesus' return to set up His kingdom of love and peace on earth.

These final days of man's kingdoms on earth are known in the Bible as the "latter days" and the "time of the end." Many Bible scholars believe that this is the time in which we are now living.