

The 1000 Year Millennium

Shocking Facts about a Misunderstood Prophecy and *your* Eternal Destiny

A lie can travel halfway around the world, while truth puts on its shoes.

-- Mark Twain (1835-1910)

Massive confusion exists within Christian churches about the "Millennium," a unique thousand-year period depicted in the book of Revelation. Some teach this period is entirely symbolic, and not worth fretting over. Others say we're in the Millennium now, and that it began when Jesus Christ defeated Satan by His death, burial, and resurrection. Most prophecy teachers contend that this apocalyptic period is still future, that it will immediately follow the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, and will be a time of universal peace on earth as Jesus Christ governs all nations from Jerusalem.

What is the real truth about the thousand years?

To discover the answer, we must carefully examine the only authoritative source where it's taught, the Bible, especially chapter 20 in the book of Revelation. Let's see what Revelation 20 actually says and doesn't say.

Here's Revelation 20 in its entirety:

"1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 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. 4 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. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 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. 7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 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. 9 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. 10 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. 11 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. 12 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. 13 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. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20, King James Version, with verses left in)"

Now here's a brief summary of each verse (we will soon take a closer look at these events):

vs. 1 - An angel descends from heaven with a key and a chain.

vs. 2 - He binds Satan for 1000 years.

vs. 3 - During the 1000 years Satan cannot deceive the nations anymore.

vs. 4 - Martyrs are resurrected to reign with Jesus Christ for 1000 years.

vs. 5a - The rest of the dead will be raised at the end of the 1000 years.

vs. 6 - Those in the first resurrection will reign with Jesus for 1000 years.

vs. 7 - Satan will be loosed at the end of the 1000 years.

vs. 8 - After the rest of the dead are raised, Satan deceives them again. There will be billions - like the sand of the sea. They are called Gog and Magog. Satan gathers them for a final battle.

vs. 9 - Satan and this host surround God's City. Fire comes down and devours them.

vs. 10 - Satan, the Beast, and the False Prophet end up in this lake of fire.

vs. 11 - Before this fire falls, a final judgment occurs.

vs. 12 - All the resurrected lost are judged.

vs. 13 - Another description of the resurrected lost being judged.

vs. 14 - Death and Hell [Hades-Grave] are cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death.

vs. 15 - All the resurrected lost are cast into the lake of fire.

To break it down even further: there is a 'good resurrection' (called "the first resurrection") at the beginning of the 1000 years

(vs. 4-6), whereas “the rest of the dead” are resurrected at the end of the 1000 years (vs. 5a). Satan is bound during the 1000 years (vs. 3), but is loosed “when the thousand years are expired” and “the rest of the dead” are raised (compare verses 5a and 7). Satan gathers the lost for a final battle against God's City (vs. 8). A final judgment occurs, and then the lost are punished in the lake of fire (verses 9, 14-15). Then the old earth passes, and the new earth comes (Revelation 21:1).

The above points are undeniable, for this is exactly what Revelation 20 says. Two significant facts should be noted:

- Revelation 20 doesn't say there will be peace on earth during the 1000 years.
- Revelation 20 doesn't say Jesus Christ will rule during the 1000 years from the present city of Jerusalem.

These common doctrines are being taught worldwide but are not found in Revelation 20, the only place in God's Word that specifically mentions the 1000-year period. Now let's go deeper.

The Two Resurrections

There are two defining 'bookends' marking the beginning and the end of the thousand years, the two resurrections (vs. 4-6). Let's see what else the Bible says about them.

Jesus Christ taught two resurrections. “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:29). The apostle Paul did too. “[T]here shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust” (Acts 24:15). Thus both Jesus Christ and Paul taught two resurrections, the first being “the resurrection of life” for the saved, the second being “the resurrection of damnation” for the lost.

Revelation 20 revolves around these two resurrections. As we've already seen, verses 4-6 reveal that one takes place at the beginning of the 1000 years, the other at the end. The Word says, "Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (vs. 6). This is the good, or "first resurrection," at the start of the 1000 years. Those in it need not fear the second death. "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished" (vs. 5a). This is the bad or second resurrection, at the conclusion of the 1000 years. Jesus Christ called it "the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:29).

Thus it is plain that there are two resurrections - one at the beginning of the Millennium, in which true believers in Christ are raised to eternal life; and one at the opposite end of the Millennium, in which the "unjust" awake to something else entirely.

The Second Coming

If the thousand years begins with the resurrection of the just, the question is, when does this good resurrection take place? When we find the answer, then we will understand what initiates the thousand years.

Scripture teaches that the return of Jesus Christ results in the resurrection of His saints. In 1 Corinthians 15:23, 51-55, Paul tells us plainly that it is at "His coming," when "the trumpet sounds," that "the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Paul also wrote, "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 them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

According to Paul, "the dead in Christ shall rise first." This is the same as "the first resurrection" depicted in Revelation 20:6.

In summary, Revelation 20:4-6 begins the 1000 years with the resurrection of the saints. 1 Corinthians 15:51-55 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 teach that the resurrection of the saints, who are called "the dead in Christ," occurs when Jesus Christ returns. Thus it is the return of Jesus Christ, when His saints are resurrected, that marks the beginning of the Millennium.

Left Behind

Jesus returns, the righteous dead are raised, and along with the righteous living they all are "caught up" to meet the Saviour in the air. This is great news for true believers!

But what about those who are not "caught up," those who are left behind? Popular teaching says they will have a second chance during a "seven-year Tribulation," an idea heavily promoted in the wildly popular Left Behind novels by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins. Though those books have sold by the millions, the important question for us should be, Is that theology truly biblical?

Immediately after Paul describes true believers being "caught up," he then declares, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. For when they shall say Peace and Safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them ... and they shall not escape" (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3). Thus, according to Paul, those who are not "caught up" will reap "sudden destruction" and "not escape."

Does this sound like 'the second chance' so graphically depicted in Left Behind novels and films? Hardly.

It gets worse. How widespread is this "sudden destruction"? Jesus Himself explained it: "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that

Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Luke 17:26 -30, italics added).

In Noah's day, all who refused to enter the ark were left behind, destroyed in the deluge. In Lot's day, everyone except Lot and his family were consumed by falling fire. Jesus Christ said, "Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

Other texts make it clear that when Jesus returns, those left behind will be destroyed, not given another chance during some hypothetical "seven-year Tribulation" (which, by the way, is nowhere specifically referred to in the Bible). Here are just a few texts describing the global desolation that follows Jesus' return.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 - When Jesus returns in flaming fire, the lost will be destroyed.

Revelation 16:17-18 - At Armageddon, cities crumble around the world.

Revelation 6:14; 16:20 - Every island sinks, and all the mountains disappear.

Jeremiah 4:23-26 - Planet Earth is totally devastated, with "no man" left alive.

Jeremiah 25:30-33 - Those slain by the Lord lie dead, unburied, all around the world.

Revelation 19:17-18, 21 - The birds eat the flesh of every human being worldwide.

These verses teach that those not "caught up" when Christ returns will be destroyed, and the destruction will encompass all the earth, as it did during Noah's flood. Jesus Himself taught this.

"The flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the son of man be" (Matthew 24:39).

The Rest of the Dead

The last sentence in Revelation 19 describes birds feasting upon "the flesh of all men" (vs. 21). Immediately following is Revelation 20, which depicts the binding of Satan so that he can "deceive the nations no more" during the 1000 years (Revelation 20:1-3). Why not? The answer's easy--there's nobody left alive on earth to deceive. Those in the first resurrection were "caught up" to be with Jesus, and the rest, those left behind, were slain.

This helps explain what follows (Read carefully): "that he [Satan] should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years should be fulfilled" (Revelation 20:3). Notice these three words "no more until." What do they tell us? They teach that those "nations" are entirely Satan's nations. Satan is deceiving them now, but can't continue deceiving them during the Millennium, "until" a certain time.

What time is that? When the 1000 years are over, obviously. Now put two and two together. At the end of the Millennium, "the rest of the dead" (who missed "the first resurrection") are raised back to life. Then Satan deceives them again. Look again, and don't let anyone convince you otherwise:

Verse 5a - "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished"

Verse 7 - "When the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison"

At the end of the 1000 years, "the rest of the dead" are raised, and Satan is "loosed." Therefore the raising of the "rest of the dead" is what "looses" the devil. Satan then swoops into these resurrected nations (now alive in the four corners of the earth), deceives them again, and then gathers them for the grand finale (verses 8-9).

What does all this mean? The answer will come shortly after we examine a few more crucial points. What should be clear so far however, that the common notion of the Millennium, reflected in Left Behind, leaves much to be desired. In fact, it's completely bogus.

The Bottomless Pit

Crucial to understanding the Millennium are the first texts of Revelation 20, verses 1 and 2. According to these texts, Satan is bound with "a great chain" and confined to "the bottomless pit" for 1000 years. The expression, "a great chain," doesn't mean a literal chain. Even today, all of "the angels that sinned" with Lucifer are described as being in "chains of darkness" (2 Peter 2:4). These words do not refer to actual clinking and clanging metal, but to circumstances of darkness that these angels find themselves in after having been booted out of heaven.

During the 1000 years, Satan is represented as being bound with a chain because his new circumstances prevent him from deceiving the nations during the Millennium (Revelation 20:2). Again, what are those circumstances? Everyone left on earth is dead.

What's this "bottomless pit"? In the Old Testament the word "pit" often refers to a grave, a cemetery, or to the place of the dead.

Psalms 55:23 - Evil men will go "down into the pit of destruction."

Numbers 16:32-33 - "the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up ... into the pit."

Ezekiel 32:22-23 - "his graves are about him ... in the sides of the pit ... all of them slain."

Psalms 28:1 - David prayed not to "become like them that go down to the pit."

Psalms 69:15 - "Let not the pit shut her mouth upon me."

Isaiah 14 contains one of the Old Testaments clearest prophecies about Lucifer. He was cast out of heaven (vs. 12) for exalting himself (vs. 13). Yet he is to be brought down "to the sides of the pit" (vs. 15). Isaiah 14:18-21 perfectly parallels the prophecy in Revelation 20:1-3. "All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house [the grave]. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcass trodden under feet. Thou shall not be joined with them in burial" (Isaiah 14:18-21)

These verses predict a time when all the nations are slain and lie in their graves, yet Satan will not join them in burial. He will be left, instead, to wander among earth's ruins. Notice carefully: "Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, thou inhabitant of the earth ... The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be moved like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it, and it shall fall and not rise again. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in prison, and after many days shall they be visited" (Isaiah 24:17-22).

This is a prediction of a destroyed and devastated earth. Its inhabitants are gathered as prisoners in the pit [the grave]. When Revelation 20:1-3 describes Satan as bound with a chain for 1000 years, this means that a chain of circumstances will prevent him from deceiving the nations. The major circumstance is the return of Jesus Christ in "flaming fire" (2 Thessalonians 2:8), the "sudden destruction" of sinners (1 Thessalonians 5:3), the largest earthquake in history (Revelation 16:18), the global crumbling of cities (Revelation 16:19), the disappearing of mountains and islands (Revelation 16:20), and the total depopulation of planet

Earth just like "it was in the days of Noah" (Matthew 24:37-39). This "great day of the Lord" will come "as a destruction from the Almighty" (Joel 1:15). "And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be as dung upon the ground" (Jeremiah 25:33).

Earth will then be like one gigantic bottomless pit, a huge cemetery. Jeremiah predicted: "I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by his fierce anger" (Jeremiah 4:23-26). As Satan and his angels behold their kingdom in ruins, they can only wander about, counsel together, and contemplate with trembling the final events to occur at the end of the 1000 years.

Yet it doesn't end here. We mustn't forget the last section of Isaiah 24:17-22, which predicts that those who lie dead in their graves "shall be visited" (Isaiah 24:22). What could that possibly mean other than what we have seen in Revelation 20:5? "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." It's what Jesus was talking about when He warned about the "the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:29). This occurs at the end of the Millennium.

Far, then, from being a time of earthly glory when Jesus reigns from Jerusalem, the Millennium is a time when earth lies waste, in desolate ruins, a prison house for Satan and his demons.

The Saints in Heaven

If this doesn't sound inviting, it's because it isn't supposed to be inviting. It's a time of chaos, desolation, and ruin, a time when sin takes another step toward its horrific ending. The Millennium is not some idyllic era of peace and goodness upon this old earth,

with Jesus ruling from Jerusalem, but a time of utter devastation and judgment.

What about God's people? What about those who participated in "the first resurrection," who were "caught up" with Jesus as opposed to being left behind? What happens to them during the Millennium?

Near the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus told His followers that He was going to heaven, where He would be preparing mansions for His children (John 14:1-2). When He returns, He will take us to Himself, "that where I am, there you shall be also" (vs. 3). When He comes, Jesus will take us to the place where He is now, in heaven in the New Jerusalem (see Revelation 3:12; 21:10). As we saw earlier, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 tells us that at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ we shall be "caught up." Thus, we are going up to glory. In perfect agreement with this is Revelation 19:1-2, which teaches that immediately after the destruction of Babylon (Revelation 18:8-24), John beheld God's saints in heaven. "And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand" (Revelation 19:1-2).

According to Revelation 20:4, 6, the saints will "reign" with Jesus for 1000 years. Contrary to popular opinion, Revelation 20 does not say they will reign on earth during that time. Why would Jesus and His people rule over a devastated and ruined world anyway? The Bible says we will soar upward when Christ returns (1 Thessalonians 4:17), that He will take us to the New Jerusalem (John 14:1-3), and that we will then be in heaven praising God (Revelation 19:1-2).

Some might ask, How can we “reign” for 1000 years if we’re in heaven? Don’t we have to be on earth to “reign” over others during this time? Not necessarily. The Bible also says the saints will “reign forever and ever” (Revelation 22:5). Thus this “reign” idea implies we will be in some position of authority, just as Adam originally exercised dominion over the earth, that’s all.

Now, if planet Earth is depopulated, with no survivors (except Satan and his angels), and the saints are in heaven, then what is the purpose of the 1000 years? A few possibilities exist:

- 1) It gives the loyal universe an opportunity to behold the terrible results of Satan’s rule;
- 2) It gives the saints in heaven an opportunity to go through heaven’s records and to have all their questions answered about why some of their loved ones are there and some are not;
- 3) It provides a period of time when Jesus and the saints together can make decisions about the just punishments to be carried out upon the lost at the end of the 1000 years (see 1 Corinthians 6:2-3);
- 4) It also gives the saints a period of time to prepare mentally for the events at the end of the 1000 years, at which time many of their loved ones will be resurrected, judged, and sentenced to the lake of fire (Revelation 20:5a, 11-15).

The Resurrection of Damnation

Okay, we have seen that at the Second Coming, Jesus returns, the saved (both the resurrected dead and those alive at His return) are taken to heaven where they “reign” for a thousand years, the earth is destroyed--and Satan remains captive there for the allotted thousand years. What then happens at the end of the thousand years?

Revelation 20 (as we've already seen) is clear that two events occur:

- 1) The "rest of the dead" are raised to life (vs. 5a).
- 2) Satan is "loosed" (verses 3, 7).

Both events occur simultaneously. When the lost are resurrected, Satan now has people once again to deceive; thus he is, in effect, "loosed" from his chains. Satan then "will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea" (vs. 8). The "sand of the sea" means myriads of people (all the lost--from the days of Adam down to the last person who experienced "sudden destruction" at Christ's return). During the 1000 years, they remain in their graves; now, they are raised to life in "the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:29).

Immediately after the lost are resurrected, Satan gathers "them together to battle." What Hollywood movie producer could even envision such a scene: billions of lost people, including (no doubt) great military commanders, gathered together in one final burst of rebellion?

The next question is, Who will this terrible army attempt to fight? The Bible makes it plain: "They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city..." (vs. 9). This is the New Jerusalem, the home of the saved (Revelation 3:12; 21:10), which descends from heaven to the earth (Revelation 3:12; 21:2) right before the second resurrection. Then Satan and his macabre army surround the "camp of the saints" in a last-ditch effort to conquer God's fortress.

Picture this scene: all the world's lost and all the world's saved are together for the first time--the saved inside the city, the lost

outside. The lost will behold the reward of the righteous, the saved the doom of the damned.

This is Satan's last stand, his final opportunity to conquer Jesus Christ, His New Jerusalem, and the redeemed of all ages. But he can never defeat the King of the Universe. He failed miserably when Jesus was a lowly carpenter in human flesh. What chance does he have against Him now as King of the New Jerusalem? None whatsoever!

Fire from Heaven

After Lucifer's legions gather round God's holy city to make war against it, what happens next? The Bible explains explicitly: "[Satan] shall go out to deceive the [resurrected] 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 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 20:8-9).

Notice, "fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." That's their fate!

Before the fire falls, a vast cosmic judgment scene unfolds. "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it ... And I saw the [resurrected] dead standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it [another description of the resurrection of the lost], and Death and Hades [the grave] delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged each one according to their works" (Revelation 20:11 -13).

This judgment occurs while Satan's army is gathered around the city; it concerns only the lost, who are then judged "according to their works." As books are opened above them, they are allowed to see the complete record of their lives. They are shown why they are lost, why they are outside God's City, why they have forfeited eternal life with Jesus. As the Book of Life is opened, they discover their names are missing. Then Jesus will undoubtedly show them how much He loved them, how He tried hard to save them, and yet how by their own persistent efforts they resisted His tender appeals. Yes, they will see that Jesus Christ died for them, that on the cross He paid the full penalty for all their sins, and that they could have been inside the city with His saints; but now they are outside with another master, the master of their own choosing. They will see that, though Jesus willingly took upon Himself the punishment that was theirs, they spurned Him, and now they are forced to stand before His holy majesty in the shame of their spiritual nakedness, with every wrong thought, every wrong word, and every wrong deed bearing down upon their consciences to condemn them, and there is no longer any Mediator to represent them and intercede for them.

After sentence is pronounced, the fire of God brings final retribution upon the lost. By this time, all the unsaved understand why they are lost. This destruction is an act of justice, not cruelty. The book of Revelation is very clear about God's uprightness. "Just and true are your ways, O King of the saints" (Revelation 15:3); "You are righteous, O Lord ... Because you have judged these things" (Revelation 16:5); and "For true and righteous are His judgments" (Revelation 19:2).

The judgment at the close of the Millennium will be perfectly just, without any taint of imperfection chargeable upon God. By rejecting His love and mercy, and by a life of continued sinning, the lost have earned their just reward. "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). The Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit,

holy angels, and the saints will all weep over the unsaved. But nothing more can be done. Now it's too late.

Revelation 20:8 says the lost will march across "the four quarters of the earth" right before the fire falls upon them. Thus we conclude that God's fire will descend all over planet Earth. This unquenchable downpour will become a "lake of fire" (14-15) boiling everywhere. Malachi 4:1, 3 says that entire fateful day will "burn as an oven." 2 Peter 3:10 adds "...the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up." Thus God will totally purify and cleanse our sin-polluted earth with flames. In fact, 2 Peter 3 parallels the destruction of the world by water in Noah's day with the purification of the earth by fire at the end of the 1000 years (2 Peter 3:5-7). In Noah's day, the whole earth was under 'a lake of water'; at the end of the 1000 years, this planet will be wrapped in "a lake of fire." In Noah's day, God's people floated in the midst of the water but were protected inside the ark; at the end of the Millennium, when a lake of fire envelops our planet, God's saved "saints" will be right there, riding the storm safely inside the New Jerusalem.

The New Heaven and New Earth

Revelation 20 concludes with these solemn words, "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15). Fortunately, that's not the end of the story. The next verse reads: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away" (Revelation 21:1).

New heaven (sky), new earth! What happened to the old ones? We just saw. The lake of fire consumed them. When the Bible says, "...the first heaven and the first earth had passed away," this must include the lake of fire! After God's fire completely purifies this planet and its atmosphere, He will recreate the earth and sky, so long under the contaminating effects of sin. God will

make "a new heaven and a new earth." Eventually the cleansing fire will disappear, after purifying this earth from every trace of sin, sinners, Satan, and demons, and in place of smoggy sky and a polluted earth the Lord will create new ones.

"Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3:13).

Revelation 21 also adds, "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. Then He that sat upon the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.' And He said to me, 'Write, for these words are true and faithful'" (Revelation 21:4-5).

"Write, for these words are true," says God Almighty. When this finally happens, the lake of fire, death, sin, sorrow, crying, and pain will "have passed away." There will be no more terrorists, no more tears over the World Trade Center, nor crying over a million other things like natural disasters, sickness, divorce, child abuse, or graveside services. These will all have "passed away."

As Noah and his family finally walked out of the ark onto a cleansed world, so will God's faithful saints finally step out of the New Jerusalem into a brand new world.

Conclusion

Contrary to popular opinion, the biblical Millennium is a time of desolation and ruin, followed by more rebellion, then judgment, and finally, re-creation--when the Lord who first spoke heaven and earth into existence (Genesis 1) repeats His creativity, "His wonders to perform"!

The most important issue, however, isn't so much our knowledge of millennial details but our knowledge of the God who has revealed the truth about it. What this study shows us, perhaps more than anything else, is that there is no second chance, no middle ground, no neutrality in this Great War between Jesus

Christ and Satan. Remember, the devil deceives “nations” (Revelation 20:3) in many areas, including this one. You friend, will be on one side or the other. You will either be inside the city, safe and secure with Jesus, looking down on the hordes outside; or you will be outside, deceived by the Devil, looking up at what might have been yours had you only repented and given yourself fully to Jesus Christ for faithful obedience.

Jesus died for you! He died so that you could have a place with Him in that New Jerusalem and in the new heavens and new earth that are coming. Your final destiny, inside or outside, eternal life or eternal destruction, depends upon your choice. Will you give yourself to the One who gave Himself for you, and thus have eternity with Him, or will you continue resisting His pleadings?

The Millennium is coming; nothing you can do will change this. All you can do is decide – by your choice for or against Jesus – where you are going to spend it.

The Lord is pleading with you. Choose Jesus Christ now, before it's too late.