

WHERE WILL YOU SPEND THE MILLENNIUM?

In the 1930's, a group of scientists, looking at charts and studying trends, said that the safest place in the coming decades would be an island in the Pacific called Okinawa. This turned out to be the location of some of the fiercest fighting in World War II. Making predictions about the future can be difficult. Many people have made predictions about how our world will end. However, as followers of Jesus, there is good news. The Bible says, "Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets." (Amos 3:7) If we believe in the Bible, we don't have to worry about the future. God has revealed to us what the future holds. And if you love Jesus, you don't have a thing to worry about!

KEY POINTS

Listen to Jesus' own words describing the manner of His return:

"Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out...' For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be . . . Then will the Son of Man appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." (Matthew 24: 26, 27, 30)

Christ's coming will not be a secret. On the contrary, Jesus' return will be a dazzling event. John's description goes like this: "Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him." (Revelation 1:7)

Next we learn that every ear will hear Him: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God." (1 Thessalonians 4:16) This trumpet will be so loud it will wake the dead! This wonderful event of the dead in Christ coming back to life is called the first resurrection. "This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power . . ." (Revelation 20: 5, 6).

If the Bible talks about a first resurrection, can we assume there is also a second? What does the Bible say?

"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 that 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 17:28-30)

This text is describing the destruction of the wicked at the second coming of Christ. The second resurrection is the resurrection of the wicked at the end of the millennium.

What is this "millennium" period? The answer is found in Revelation 20:1-10. Take a minute and read this passage over. It details the closing events of this terrible battle between Christ and Satan.

Let's outline, in chronological order, what transpires prior to, during and after this millennium:



Satan is forced to remain on a desolate earth with no one to tempt for 1000 years.



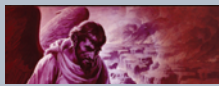
At the Second Coming, the dead in Christ are raised to immortal life, and those who hate Him are slain.



- At the second coming of Christ, the dead in Christ are resurrected. (1 Thess. 4:13-18)



- At the second coming of Christ, the wicked that are alive are destroyed by the brightness of His coming. (Luke 17:28-30; Rev. 6:15-17; 2 Thess. 1:8)



- Satan is left on this earth, bound to an empty planet, with no one to tempt, for one thousand years. (Rev. 20:3; Isa. 26:21; Jer. 4:23-24)4:13-18)



- The righteous sit on thrones and judgment is given them. (Rev. 20:4; Dan. 7:27; 1 Cor. 6:2,3; 1 Cor. 4:5) This judgment reviews the justice of God. Questions that might be considered are: Why are those we expected to see in heaven not there? Why are those we never expected to see in heaven, actually there? Is God just? (Rev. 16:7):13-18)



- At the end of the millennium, the second resurrection takes place – the resurrection of the wicked to everlasting damnation. (Rev. 20:5; John 5:29; Dan. 12:2)



- The New Jerusalem, along with the saints, comes down from heaven to earth, which will be the eternal home of the saved. (Rev. 21:2)



- Satan is unbound and he goes back to his old tricks – deceiving the nations. (Rev. 20:2-3; 20:7-8)



- The wicked, led by Satan, surround the New Jerusalem. In the midst of their attack, fire comes down from God out of heaven, and devours Satan, his angels, and all the wicked of all the ages. This is hell – the final destruction of the wicked. (Rev. 20:7-9; 20:14-15) This is the second death, from which there is no resurrection.

This leads to a crucial point. We've all heard about hell. The question is, what does the Bible really teach about it? Remember the familiar verse: "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." (John 3:16) Notice the contrast between "perish" and "everlasting life." Perish means to be destroyed, to no longer exist. That's not the same thing as being eternally tormented in hell somewhere.

Notice too that the Bible talks about "everlasting punishment," not "everlasting punishing." "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life." (Matthew 25:46) Psalms 37:20 puts it this way: "But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away." (See also Jude 7; Isa. 34:9-10; Jer. 17:27 and Mal. 4:1)

TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

The fires of hell were not prepared for you. They were prepared for Satan and his angels. (Matt. 25:41). Jesus is preparing a place for you in heaven (John 14:1-3); a place where you can live with Him forever. The millennium will be a time when the redeemed review the justice of God and enjoy the fellowship of heaven. When the millennium is complete, this earth will be cleansed by the fires of hell. Then, a new earth will come forth to be the habitation of the redeemed for eternity.

BETWEEN YOU AND GOD

This is not a theory. This is something eternally personal to Jesus your Lord. He came to this earth and died a criminal's death on a cross so that you would be among those seated on thrones in heaven during the millennium. He wants to spend eternity with you. Why? Love. "For God so loved the world..." Won't you daily commit to be His disciple?