

We've been looking together at some of the greatest prophecies found in the Bible concerning the future and what shape FOREVER is going to take. In this study we dive into the subject of Revelation's mysterious 1000 year period also known as the 1000 years of peace, or the millennium. You see the Bible speaks of a period of 1000 years that will follow the Second Coming of Jesus, during which a number of significant things are going to take place.

Often this is referred to as the "millennium" in the religious world although that word is not found in the Scriptures. It comes from two Latin words: "Milli" meaning 1,000 and "Anum" meaning years.

But there is a lot of speculation about when and what will be happening during the 1000 years and we are going to let the Bible speak to this subject. You will see how very simple this whole subject is, for God's Word is always simple if you let it interpret itself.

Let's begin our study by returning to the wonderful promise Jesus gave to us before he left the first time. A promise that has been the hope of Christians throughout the ages.

John 14:1- 3, *¹"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. ²In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me. I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.*

Jesus is coming again!

You would think that this would be fantastic news to everyone living on the face of the earth, but the Bible says that just as there will be two separate groups at that time - the righteous and the unrighteous. There will be two very different outcomes for these groups. In fact for the majority of people living in that day it will be cause for great distress.

Look at Mathew 24:29-31, *²⁹"Immediately after the distress of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken. ³⁰At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and **all the nations of the earth will mourn**. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. ³¹And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and **they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.***

As we have already discovered together, it matters eternally that we understand that when Jesus comes, every person's case is decided, FOREVER. There will be no second chances for anyone.

The second chance is a false deception Satan has brought in to lull people into false security. The Bible teaches before Jesus comes all will have made a choice, and all will either be saved forever or lost forever.

We're now going to study how this all unfolds. To help us to understand what is going to happen, we will look at four groups of people.

We mentioned two groups – the righteous and the unrighteous, but clearly,

The righteous can be further divided into those who are **alive** at his second coming and those who **sleep in the grave**.

Similarly the **unrighteous** can also be divided into those who are **alive** at his second coming and **those who sleep in the grave**.

***So with this in mind let us turn our attention to the
RIGHTEOUS – LIVING AND DEAD***

1 Thessalonians 4:16- 17, *¹⁶For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.*

At this time all the righteous from Adam to those living at the end of time will go to heaven. On that day I think the most exciting place to stand would have to be next to a cemetery so I can see all of the believers have been buried come back to life!

Isaiah described the righteous and what they will say in Isaiah 25:9, *⁹ In that day they will say, "Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation."*

And indeed this group has reason to be glad – this event is fulfillment of Jesus promise that he will return and take those who have believed in him to be with himself forever! (John 14) Before he came to deal with sin, but now he comes as King of Kings and Lord of Lords and his reward is with him –eternal life. The righteous are about to be given new bodies, and the beginning of forever has arrived!

But sadly, -in contrast to this first group we find the other group are not joyful at all – in fact being in the presence of the Son of God in all his glory is the last thing they want. Having rejected him throughout their lives, nothing within them is excited to see him now, in fact they would rather die than be in the presence of the King.

THE UNRIGHTEOUS LIVING

Revelation 6:14-17 tells us *¹⁴The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. ¹⁵Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains*

¹⁶*They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!*

While the righteous are rejoicing, we see that there is another group – the unrighteous who are devastated by Christ's return. Again I can't speak for you, but it is clear in my mind that I don't want to be numbered among this group!

The brightness of his coming is simply too much for them to bear and it is in fact the glory of God that ends their life. Incidentally the lawless one will also be overthrown at the second coming of Christ:

2 Thessalonians 2:8, ⁸*And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.*

Luke likened this day to the days of Noah and the days of Lot – let's take a look, Luke 17:26 ²⁶*Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. ²⁷People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. ²⁸It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. ²⁹But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. ³⁰It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed*

Isaiah 13:9, ⁹ *See, the day of the LORD is coming —a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger— to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it.*

THE UNRIGHTEOUS DEAD

What of the unrighteous dead? The Bible is clear that the unrighteous who died prior to his return will stay dead until after the 1,000 years. How do we know that? The Bible speaks of two resurrections – the first resurrection is the for the righteous – and Revelation 20, makes it clear that the unrighteous do not come to life at the second coming of Christ, instead they do not come to life until the end of the thousand years.

Revelation 20:6 ⁶ *Blessed and holy are those who have part in the **first** resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.*

Verse 5 says ⁵*(The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.)*

Having seen what happens to the righteous and unrighteous **at** the Second Coming of Christ, let's see what follows immediately after it – because the Bible says that there are going to **be two great feasts, and depending on which group you're in – determines which feast you get to be part of.**

Let's begin with the feast that the righteous are part of.

THE RIGHTEOUS ARE AT THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB

Revelation 19 tells us that the first thing the righteous do in heaven is to celebrate the marriage supper of the Lamb! That is – they celebrate with Jesus what he has done to save them!

In Matthew 26 Jesus spoke of this day at the last supper he ate with his disciples – as they shared the bread and the wine, He said to them:

Matthew 26:29 *"I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until the day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."*

And so it is no surprise to learn in Revelation 19 that the day is coming when we will celebrate our salvation with Jesus at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Revelation 19:6 ⁶ *Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.*

Picture it! - What a glorious day when we get to heaven and we celebrate WITH JESUS – we meet with friends and family and with men and women in the Bible and together we all celebrate what Jesus has done for us! Well let's now turn to those who have rejected him. What happens to the unrighteous at the Second coming?

ON EARTH THE FEAST OF FOULS

Revelation 19 gives us a symbolic picture of His coming. This chapter precedes chapter 20, which tells of the millennium.

Revelation 19:11, ¹¹*I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war* ¹³*He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God.*

Here is a symbolic picture of Jesus coming on a white horse. Verses 13-15 continue with all heaven coming with Him.

¹⁴*The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.* ¹⁵*Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter. "He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.*

The sword proceeding from His mouth represents the Word of God. Then verses 17-18, ¹⁷*And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God,* ¹⁸*so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great."*

Luke 17 also mentions these birds (speaking of the day Christ returns) Luke 17:36-37 ³⁶ *Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left..* ³⁷*Where,*

Lord?" they asked. He replied, "Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather."

Matthew 24:27- 28, ²⁷*For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.* ²⁸*Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather..*

We see here the same people – those who during their lives rejected Jesus Christ and now as Christ returns a second time cry out to the rocks and mountains to fall on them (**Revelation 6:14-17**) are slain at the coming of Christ, and their bodies have become food for the fowls of the air.

THE LAKE OF FIRE FOR BEAST AND FALSE PROPHET

Let's move on: In Revelation 19, verses 19- 20 we see something interesting. You remember we studied the subject of the lake of fire last night. What we discover in Revelation is that there are in fact two lakes of fire. Having learned last night about the one in which the devil and the unrighteous are destroyed in at the close of the 1000 years, note what happens at the 2nd coming of Christ, at the beginning of the 1000 years:

Revelation 19:19-20 ¹⁹*Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army.* ²⁰*But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.*

We're not going to study the false prophet in this series, but we learn here that God singles out the Beast and the False Prophet from the rest of the wicked, and places them into "a fiery lake of burning sulfur." At this time only the beast and the false prophet are destroyed by fire, while the unrighteous lay dead for a thousand years.

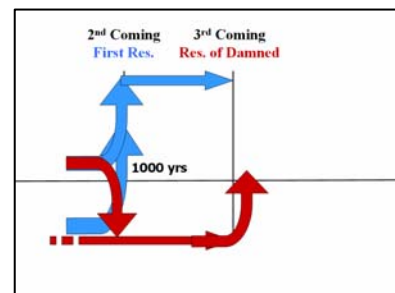
And Verse 21 we see the birds mentioned yet again, ²¹*The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.*

So to recap:

The **righteous dead** are raised to life to be with Christ

We who are alive and remain are caught up together with them – this ushers in the beginning of the 1000 year period.

The **unrighteous dead** stay dead until the thousand years are ended, the **unrighteous living** call for the rocks and the hills to fall upon them, and are slain by the brightness of his coming, and the **beast and the false prophet also come to their end** at this time. Does that make sense so far? Great – let's move on:



THE EARTH DESOLATE DURING THE MILLENNIUM

Now we titled the topic for tonight the 1000 years of peace. And the reason we did that is because many people believe that this period is going to be a time of peace and progress. But as we now see, even though there will be no war on the earth, the millennium is not an era of peace and progress, but actually a time of total desolation.

Several Bible prophets foresaw this earth during the millennium and described it. As we read the next few texts cast your mind forward into the near future and consider what Auckland is going to look like during the millennium:

Isaiah 24 paints a picture of desolation. It's a scene of total chaos.

Isaiah 24:1 *See, the LORD is going to lay waste the earth and devastate it; he will ruin its face and scatter its inhabitants*

Vs 3-5, ³ *The earth will be completely laid waste and totally plundered. The LORD has spoken this word.* ⁴ *The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers, the exalted of the earth languish.* ⁵ *The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant.*

Vs 19-20, ¹⁹ *The earth is broken up, the earth is split asunder, the earth is thoroughly shaken.* ²⁰ *The earth reels like a drunkard, it sways like a hut in the wind; so heavy upon it is the guilt of its rebellion that it falls—never to rise again.*

Notice Jeremiah 4:23- 27 ²³ *I looked at the earth, and it was formless and empty; and at the heavens, and their light was gone.* ²⁴ *I looked at the mountains, and they were quaking; all the hills were swaying.* ²⁵ *I looked, and there were no people; every bird in the sky had flown away.* ²⁶ *I looked, and the fruitful land was a desert; all its towns lay in ruins before the LORD, before his fierce anger.*

What an amazing thought, no one alive on planet earth! Imagine Auckland with no people in it. Imagine the world with absolutely nobody left alive on it.

I remember June 19 this year, an extremely cold and windy night, when my wife decided that she was definitely in labour and that the contractions were getting closer together, we grabbed our son Colin and hopped in the car and took off to the hospital.

As we drove down East Coast Road and out onto the motorway, my son aged 3 exclaimed "Where have all the cars gone?" He had a point – there was but no-one out that night except for those in labour on their way to the hospital!

But someday very soon the Bible says that the power of Jesus' coming is going to leave this earth desolate. All the cities leveled and darkness covers the earth.

Picture the whole of Auckland empty. In darkness, desolate. No cars on the roads, no people, no boats in the harbour, no-one on the internet, no-one anywhere! Everything lies in ruin!

All of the righteous have been taken to heaven, and what remains on the earth is the remains of the bodies of the wicked.

Considering where the righteous are at this time, the contrast could not be greater! We're going to look at the righteous in a minute and see what they're doing, but as we leave this passage in Jeremiah, notice the very next verse:

v 27 ²⁷ *This is what the LORD says: "The whole land will be ruined, **though I will not destroy it completely.***

Why not? Because the 1,000 years must pass and then God deals with sin once and for all. The earth is completely desolate - Ok, let's now see what the redeemed are up to in heaven with Christ – what are they doing there?

IN HEAVEN THE RIGHTEOUS REIGN WITH CHRIST

Revelation 20:4 ⁴ *I saw **thrones** on which were **seated those who had been given authority to judge.** And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. **They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.***

Vs 12 ¹² *And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. **The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.***

We are going to be set on thrones and judgment will be given us. You see, there will be three surprises just after the second coming - when you get to heaven:

1. **You're there !!**
2. **A lot of folks will be missing** you thought would make it for sure.
3. **A lot of folks you knew would never make it, did!**

God will take all the saints, those who here were oppressed and looked down upon, those who were tempted and tried, all who were faithful to Jesus, and He will say. "You judge." And for 1,000 years we will be able to see and know God's justice.

You see, Satan has accused God of not being fair, and to be sure, God will say, "Okay saints, *you* open the books and see."

Let's say you know someone you thought should be in heaven and isn't and you ask, "Why Lord?" God will say "check and see." And as you do, you will see God is just and good!

Let's get some more verses for this.

1 Corinthians 6:2, *²Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases?*

The saints will judge the world. Verse 3 *³Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!*

Beside all the great things that are going to happen in heaven in the first thousand years, the Bible says that there is an important work of judgment that will occur.

Now this is probably a good time to clarify together just how the phases of the judgment work together. There is some confusion about the judgment that results from the fact that there are three words for judgment in the Greek, which are all translated as 'judgment' in our English translation. But in fact the judgment need not be confusing to us at all – as we'll see now.

The judgment of God in fact follows very closely the kind of judgment that takes in our own judgment system (with the exception of course that with God, the judge is also our defense lawyer! – The righteous judge is actually eager that we might all be saved! That's good news:

But in any court case you can expect to see the following 5 phases of judgment:

1. A trial
2. A verdict
3. An appeal
4. A final verdict
5. Execution of the judgment – if guilty, sentence is carried out. If innocent, then they are acquitted.

With God's judgments and our subject tonight, things are no different:

THE TRIAL

Prior to 2nd Coming – we learned in our study of the time of the end, that there is going to be a time of judgment prior to Christ's return – during the time period known as the time of the end, there is a special work of judgment going on in which every case is decided by the righteous judge – Jesus Christ himself.

Romans 14:10 *For we shall all stand before God's judgment seat.*

Daniel 7:9 Describing a time just prior to the 2nd coming says *"Thrones were set in place and the Ancient of days too his seat.*

A VERDICT

We also learned that at the second coming of Christ, this phase of judgment comes to a close. Every case has been decided.

Revelation 22:11 says there will come a time when Christ will declare *"Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong, let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right, and let him who is holy continue to be holy. Behold I*

am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. After that time, often referred to as the close of probation, everyone's eternal fate will have been sealed.

Accordingly at the 2nd coming, some rise to be with Jesus, and others die to await their penalty at a later time. We have already studied the Second Coming of Christ

AN 'APPEAL' PROCESS

During the 1000 years what we have just learned that the righteous are in heaven. And what are they doing there? The Bible says that the books are opened and the righteous judge the dead. In effect they are going over the judgments of God, discovering why some made it and others did not, finally declaring that just and true are his judgments!

After this there is a final verdict – the appeal phase confirms that God's judgments are right, in fact it says that on that last judgment day – before his judgments are finally carried out – every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord!

EXECUTIVE PHASE – THE VERDICT IS ACTED UPON

Then of course as we learned last night in our topic 'The Lake of Fire', the Bible says that the unrighteous are destroyed along with the devil by fire. After that the earth is remade new, and it is given again to the righteous who have been acquitted because of their faith in what Christ did for them.

Can you see how simple the judgment really is? And the great news is that **no one** ever needs to fear the judgment if they only accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour. It's open to every person. Anyone who believes in him and what he has done for them, and asks him to become the leader of their life.

OK – back to our study of the millennium.

Well, we've seen what happens at the 2nd coming – **the righteous** are taken to the marriage supper of the Lamb and reign with him for a thousand years, there they will open God's judgment books and discover that in every case, God has been fair and just. Meanwhile, **the unrighteous** are slain by the brightness of his coming and they take part in the other feast – in fact they are the feast of the fowls. And of course we learned that the **beast and the false prophet** are thrown into their own lake of fire.

Some of you are saying to yourselves – OK I understand that, but you haven't said much about the devil himself.. what happens to him??

THE ABYSS

Concerning the devil, Revelation 20 tells us that he's not going anywhere.

Revelation 20:1-3 ¹ *And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain.* ² *He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.*

³ *He threw him into the **Abyss**, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years are ended. After that he must be set free for a short time.*

So Satan is bound and thrown into the Abyss.

KEEP YOUR FINGER THERE BECAUSE WE'RE COMING BACK TO THIS PASSAGE IN A FEW MOMENTS

But you may be wondering, "What is this abyss?" The word in the Greek is "ABUSOS." Just a few hours south of Auckland is a place called Waitomo – how many of you have been there? If you have been there recently you will know that there is a certain cavern known as the ABYSS, into which you can descend on ropes to explore. But let me tell you that descending into the Abyss at Waitomo is quite different to the description of the Abyss, or ABUSSOS here in Revelation 20.

In the Septuagint Scriptures the word **abussos** is used in Genesis 1:2, ² *Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.*

This earth in a state of darkness and void is the "pit." Knowing this and the fact that there is simply no-one left upon the earth for him to deceive, we could say this

That Satan is bound to this earth in a state of darkness and ruin not with a literal chain, but with a chain of circumstances. There is nowhere for him to go, and there is simply no-one alive on the earth for him to tempt.

SATAN CHAINED BY CIRCUMSTANCES

Satan then has 1,000 years to contemplate. What is he going to do? The earth is covered with darkness, dead bodies are everywhere, and all is absolute desolation. Satan is now forced to live with himself for 1,000 years with no one to deceive at all – just thinking, thinking, thinking. And you'd think that with all of that time to think there might be a change of heart.

I've met with many men in our maximum security prison at Paremoremo – and one thing seems common to all. When there is only yourself and time to think about what you have done – great turnarounds can occur and tremendous transformation can take place. In fact a friend of mine – let's call him Paul – he came into prison having committed rape, kidnapping and murder all in the same afternoon. He came in as an angry young man, not wanting to talk, unrepentant for what he had done, and ready to do it again. But once in prison he met some people from this church who visited the prison to teach the men there how to cook, and from there he formed a friendship that introduced him to Jesus Christ. As Paul began to read his Bible and study some correspondence Bible courses, his life turned completely about. He began to seek forgiveness from the family he had devastated, he enrolled himself in a University degree, began discipling other men in the prison, and started trying to win his family to Christ.

A short time ago he was transferred to a medium security prison down country closer to his home and family – and the best part is that seeing the turnaround in their son, both parents and some members of his family recently began attending church to find out more about Jesus!

Time to think can do wonderful things – but what of the devil? The Bible tells us plainly that nothing about the devil is going to change even with all the time in the world to contemplate the enormous death toll and suffering he is responsible for. You see transformation only occurs when a person responds to God's Spirit in their lives.

So Satan is left to his own devices on an empty planet for 1000 years.

GOD DEALS WITH SATAN AND SIN

Are you ready to see what happens to Satan and sin? It's a sobering scene.

Let's go back to Revelation 20:1-3

*¹And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. ²He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. ³He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. **After that, he must be set free for a short time.***

At the end of the thousand years:

Revelation 21:1 *¹Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ²I saw the **Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.***

Notice *New Jerusalem* comes down. This great city will come down after the millennium. It's an awesome city, a massive city. (Revelation 21:16).

And God's people will be inside. The prophet Zechariah says it will come to rest on the Mount of Olives. Then the final events of earth's history take place.

As the New Jerusalem descends from heaven, the rest of the dead rise in the second resurrection and we enter the "short season" spoken of in Revelation 20:5, 7,

The deceiver has had none to deceive for a thousand years. But now, as the unrighteous are resurrected, the Bible says he is “set free for a short time”. Can you start to see how it is all coming together?

In Revelation 20:5 we learned that the unrighteous dead will be raised when the thousand years are ended, and ⁵*(The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.)*

Vs 7 tells us that ⁷*When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison*

Satan is released from his prison for a short time – that is, now that the 1000 years are ended the unrighteous are brought back to life. Then the Bible tells us that Satan goes straight back to his old tricks in one last effort to defeat God and his kingdom.

Accordingly we read in v8 that he ⁸ *will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore.*

You've heard of Armageddon? The great battle on Mt Meggido? This is it. Satan attempts to lead the unrighteous in battle against the New Jerusalem.

Imagine the scene! Everyone who has ever lived will be present.

See Satan's group. The majority of people are here—including every evil person from every generation since Adam till then. Knowing that they have lost eternal life you can imagine their desperation. The devil leads them in a final charge against God's people in the holy city. With warfare, they go up against the city and try to capture it.

See them as they charge to attack the walls of this city. The walls are transparent. The saints are inside, but those who refused to do God's will are on the outside. Each of us will be either in or out. In their rage, they try to take the holy city, and then our great King of Kings at last puts an end to sin.

Revelation 20:9, 14- 15, ⁹*They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. **But fire came down from heaven and devoured them.*** ¹⁰ *And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

(and we've dealt with suggestion of eternal torment, but the next few verses reiterate for us exactly what the lake of fire is) look at v 14.

Vs 14 ¹⁴*Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.* ¹⁵*If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

You can just imagine how hard this is going to be for God's people as they stare out through those walls and see the unquenchable fire come down and destroy the unrighteous.

I believe it's going to be the saddest day not only in the history of the earth, but since time began. Never before has God put an eternal end to any of his creatures, but now every person who has rejected him, along with the devil and all of his evil angels are forever destroyed in the second death.

As hard as it must be for us, I'm sure it will be the hardest thing God has ever had to do. But see what He does next – He wipes every tear from their eyes, takes away all pain and suffering and death:

Revelation 21:1- 4 paints a beautiful picture of it.

*¹Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ²I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴He will wipe every tear from their eyes. **There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away"***

And having done this, the Bible says that former things will no longer be remembered. Although the redeemed will understand the terrible consequences of sin, God in His mercy will remove the pain from our memories – see Isaiah 65.

Isaiah 65:17-19 ¹⁷ *"Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. ¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. ¹⁹ I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more.*

All is new. In our new home, we will live as it was in the beginning. We will each have a place to live with God in the beauty of heaven, we will not remember this former earth. There will be no temptation or sin. May God give us the grace to live with an eternal perspective, that whatever comes our way we might live in eager expectation of his soon return.

Next Lesson #12 "When My Past No Longer Matters"