

The King Reigns!

An angel of the Lord surprised Joseph when he told him that his future wife, Mary, would have a baby who would save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21). It was a stunning announcement. Jesus would be a fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14. But He would be more than just a Savior from our sins. He came into this world to do more than forgive the sins of those who believed in Him. We discover in the gospel of Luke that sometime earlier, the angel Gabriel had also told Mary that the baby would be called Jesus (Luke 1:31). This is amazing! Joseph and Mary knew the baby would be a boy before it was born. It has not been possible until modern times for anyone to know if their baby would be a girl or a boy until he/she was born. What great news they had! But Mary heard something else even more wonderful. Gabriel told her that Jesus would be a king some day,

He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end. (NASB) Luke 1:32-33

Jesus would be the Savior of the world and a great King - the Eternal King (Isa 9:6).

In our last study in Revelation, that baby finally arrived as King of kings and Lord of lords on a white horse. He arrived to defeat the realm of men and set up His Kingdom. He came with an army of Christians, His holy ones, to defeat the powers of the world. With just a spoken word, He removed the Antichrist and the False Prophet, and then destroyed the armies of the world with the sword of His mouth. But best of all, Jesus had an angel bind Satan and throw him into the abyss along with his demonic forces. When it happens, it will be the end of the rule of men and Satan for awhile.

IN THE ABYSS. The old dragon, also known as the serpent of old, the devil or Satan will be humbled by a holy angel (Rev. 20:1-2). Just imagine - God will not do it. He will have a holy angel put Satan in the abyss, and he will be in the abyss for a very long time - one thousand years. What a humiliation! Just an angel will do it.

... and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would

not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. (NASB) Rev. 20:3



Luke 8:30-31 tells us that the abyss is a place where demons do not want to live. Jude 6 says that other extremely wicked demons, fallen angels, are already there. 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6 suggest that the abyss is a prison that was originally created for certain angels who

committed a terrible sin in Genesis 6:1-4. The abyss has existed for a long time. Many demons are already there and it will become home to Satan some day too!

THE CHAIN. Satan is not bound today in any sense, except that he must submit to God's control (Job 1:9-12). He has always been our enemy. He was the enemy of Adam and Eve (Gen 3), as well as Job (Job 1-2), and he is our enemy today. We must not forget that he was active while the gospel was spreading in the Old Testament among the Egyptians by Israel, the Assyrians by Jonah, the Babylonians by Daniel, and even down into Africa during the time of Solomon. The gospel was spreading at the time of the early church while they were under great persecution by both the Jews and Romans. The gospel was distorted and suppressed by the Roman Catholic Church throughout the "dark ages" and the wave of suppression still continues today. Satan has been and is still opposing the advance of the kingdom. He has never stopped. He is not suppressed.

The Word of God reminds us that he still urges us to lie (Acts 5:3). He tries to take advantage of us through his deceitful schemes (2 Cor. 2:11). He appears as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14), attacks Christians (Eph. 4:27; 2 Cor. 12:7), hinders the growth of ministries (1 Thess. 2:18), and he tries to lead us astray (1 Tim. 5:15). He is the sower of tares among

the wheat (Matt 13:24-30), and the one who sifts people as wheat (Luke 22:31). He is the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4), and he prowls about after us like a lion (1 Pet. 5:8). He is the ruler of this world (John 12:31; 14:30) and the prince of the air (Eph. 2:2). Satan is still very active today.

We must watch out for Satan's schemes. He wants us to think that he is not a threat because he wants to prevent

men and women from believing in Jesus Christ, and he seeks to cause Christians to be a poor example of holiness. He wants humanity to be like himself. We should not be surprised that he is aggressively active in the world today. The world is blind to this fact, but some day he will be imprisoned.

THE 1,000 YEARS. The 1,000 years is a literal period of time. When we look back over the book of Revelation, we are reminded that the book is full of numbers. It has referred to 7 churches, 7 angels, 7 lampstands, 7 stars, 4 creatures before the throne, 24 elders, 12,000 people from different tribes, 144,000 witnesses, 7 seals, 7 trumpets, 7 bowls, a 200,000 man army, 1/3 of the sea, 1/3 of the ships, 1/3 of the

waters, 1/3 of the sun and moon and stars being struck, 2 witnesses, 3.5 days, and 42 months, and 1,260 days. Revelation has been very specific so far. The term 1,000 years was also used in Rev. 7 in reference to the 144,000 witnesses. These numbers have meaning; otherwise, why use them?



Why use unique numbers if they are unknown periods of time?

When we come to Revelation 20:2-7, we are told six times that the 1,000 years is the length of Satan's imprisonment, and it is the length of Jesus' reign on earth - the length of His kingdom. The thousand years are literal and real. This means that the world will finally be free of Satan's influence. Wow! That will be awesome! The world will finally have peace because of the Prince of Peace, and His justice will rule. There will be no more biased politics or deceitful legal maneuverers on this earth; and sin will not be called holy, and holiness will not be called evil because the Righteous One will rule and He will be just. Glory to God!

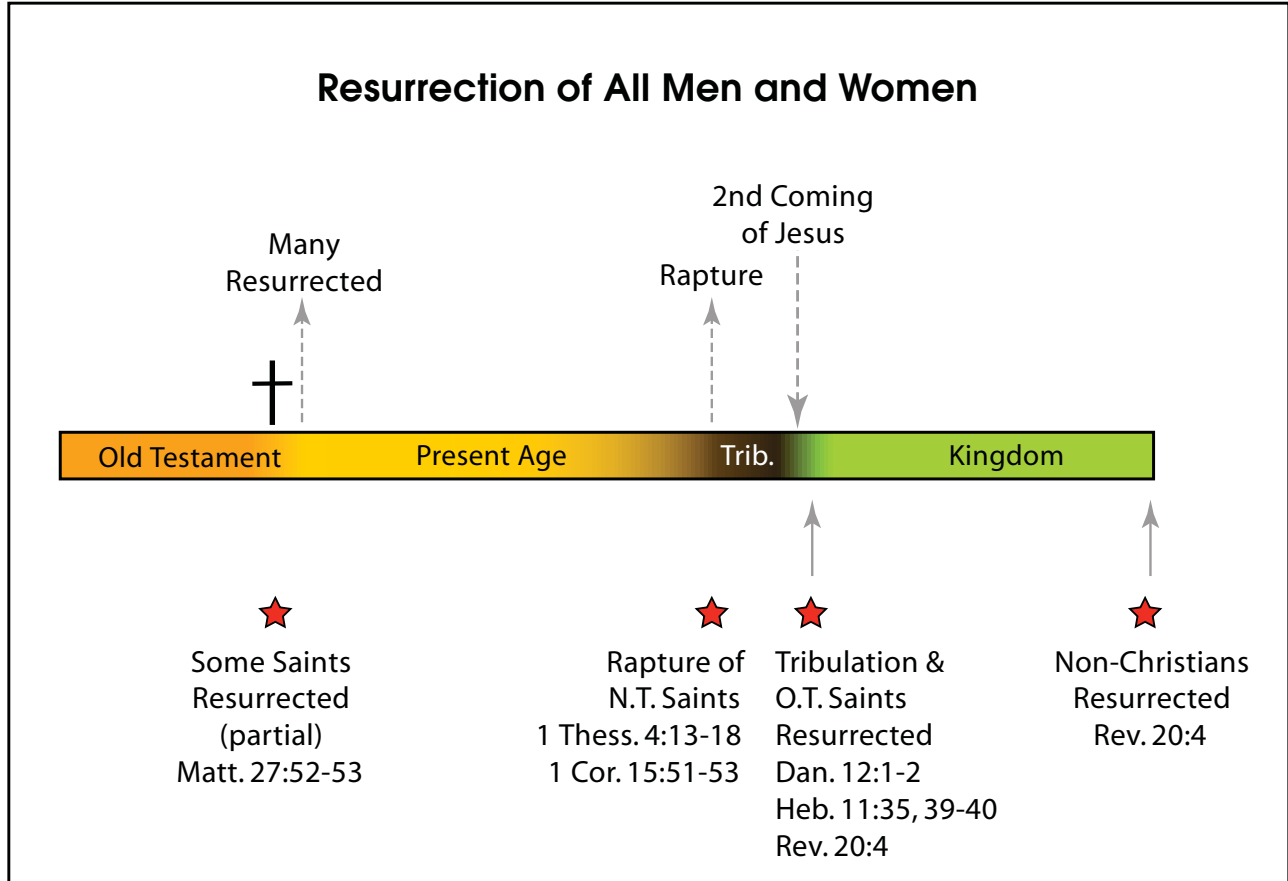
THE THRONES. Next, the Apostle John sees people sitting on some thrones.

Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the

word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. (NASB) Rev. 20:4

Who is sitting on these thrones and why? The answer is found in Dan. 7:27, Matthew 19:28, 2 Tim. 2:12, and Rev. 2:26 where God promised the Old Testament saints, the twelve apostles, and all the New Testament believers that they would reign with Him during the kingdom. Rev. 20:6 also says that everyone - all the saints - who come to life at this time will reign with Jesus.

This means that those who were "beheaded" or murdered for Jesus Christ during the Tribulation will return to life and sit on the thrones. The Greek word for the phrase "come to life" means "to live." That is, these folks who were once dead will some day live again. They will be part of the resurrection for all of the saints. Daniel 12:1-2 and Hebrews 11:35, 39-40 tell us that the Old Testament saints will also be resurrected



at this time and reign with Jesus for 1,000 years. This is great news! Every saint since Adam and Eve will reign with Jesus during the kingdom for one thousand years.

God will not forget any of His saints. Have you ever wondered if God will forget about you, or if you will miss the kingdom? Jesus gives us the answer when He said this,

No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. (NASB) John 6:44

And He has also made this promise to us,

He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received authority from My Father . . . (NASB) Rev. 2:26-27

Jesus will not forget about you. There will be no bureaucratic errors, long lines of people, forms to fill-in, or red tape. The heavenly computers will not malfunction, nor will heaven's electrical system breakdown. There will be no lawyers or legal stuff to get in the way. Our all-knowing and all-powerful God does not need any of these things. Our God is faithful and He will raise up His saints and we will be able to enjoy the kingdom. We are going to miss the horrors of the Tribulation but not the fun!

CITIZENS.
Then you might

ask, "Who are the citizens of the kingdom? Who will the saints rule over?" The answer is found back in Rev. 19:20-21 and Rev. 20:7-10. In Rev. 19:20-21 we are told that only the Antichrist, the beast, and the armies of the world will be completely destroyed. That means the rest of the people of the world will still be alive, and they will enter the kingdom. Just imagine what it will be like for non-Christians to be among millions of saints in the kingdom. We will discover in Rev. 20:7-10 that many babies will also be born in the kingdom and as adults they will eventually rebel against God. They will not want His holiness nor His kingdom - the kingdom of peace.

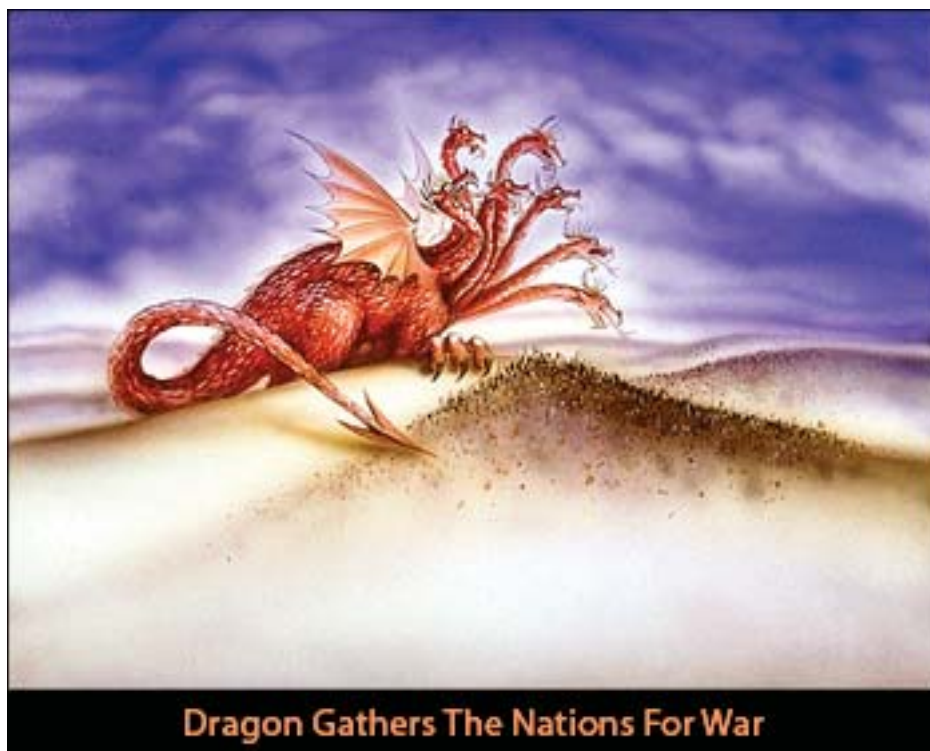
THE OTHER DEAD. The Apostle John now sees the rest of the dead. So far only some have come back to life.

The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. (NASB) Rev. 20:5

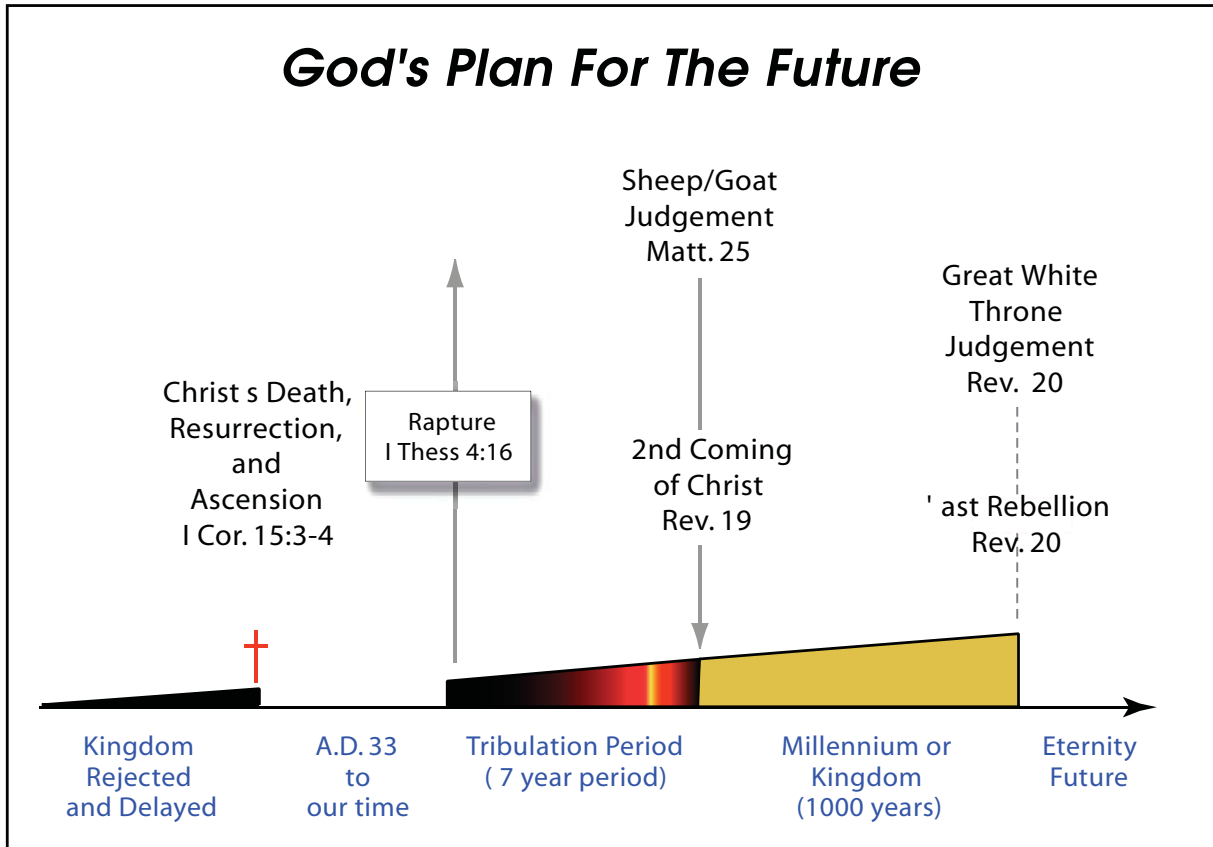
If you had any doubts that the tribulation saints in verse 4 had been dead and were then resurrected, this verse makes it clear - "the rest of the dead." The Greek word for "rest" is LOIPOI. It means "that which is left after an action is taken." This means that after the events of verse 4, there were

some who were still dead. Those "remaining" men and women will not come to life until the 1,000 years is finished. The first resurrection has occurred and there is one more to come.

BEATITUDE.
This first resurrection is the one every man and woman was to be in. Would you like to be resur-



God's Plan For The Future



rected only to discover that you are going into an eternal hell? Listen to the fifth beatitude in the book of Revelation. The first four can be found in Rev. 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; and 19:9.

Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years. (NASB) Rev. 20:6

Blessed are those who are resurrected here and not later. God gives us three reasons why this is the best one. First, the second death is eternal life in the Lake of Fire which will occur after the 1,000 year earthly kingdom according to Rev. 20:11-15. Every man and woman will want to miss the next resurrection. Second, those who are resurrected at this time will be God's priests. Revelation 1:6 and 5:10 seem to suggest that being a priest involves a very close relationship with God.

You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and

they will reign upon the earth. (NASB) Rev. 5:10

It may also suggest that they will be God's ministers on the earth to the other citizens of the kingdom. Third, we will also reign with Jesus during the 1,000 year kingdom. The first resurrection is the one you want to be in.

THE KINGDOM. God's kingdom has existed (Ps. 10:16), does exist now (Matt. 6:10), and will physically exist some day on the earth for 1,000 years. When the kingdom becomes an earthly kingdom, it will not be a spiritual or heavenly one because flesh and blood people will be living on the earth along with the saints. It will be both in some sense.

Isaiah 2 and 11 give us some great details about the kingdom, and Ps 2 and 72 provide others. Isaiah 2:2 says that in the "last days" the mountain of the house of God will be the chief of the mountains. The phrase "mountain" was a common ancient term symbolic of kingdom (see Dan. 2:35). That appears to be the meaning here. If not, then it implies that Jerusalem will be the most significant place on earth and the message is the same. Isaiah 2:3 and Ps. 2:6 tell us

that the city of Jerusalem is on this mountain and it will be the capital of the kingdom.

Now it will come about that in the last days the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say, come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths, for the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. (NASB) Is. 2:2-3

So Isaiah was predicting that the kingdom of the Lord will be established on the hill of Zion, in the city of Jerusalem.

Isaiah 2:4 tells us that the kingdom - the world - will be at peace. There will be no war during Jesus' reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.

And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war. (NASB) Isa. 2:4

Those who long for no guns in this life will rejoice at this event. Psalm 72:8-11 says that the Lord's kingdom will cover the earth and those rulers of the various nations who are still alive will come and give Him honor.

Jesus will reign as the perfectly just judge over the world (Isa. 11:4). Not only will there be peace in the world among the human race, there will be peace among the animals.

And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little boy will lead them. Also the cow and the bear will graze, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den. (NASB) Is. 11:6-8

But the people of the world might not rejoice when the gospel of Jesus is preached throughout the land. They might be very unhappy when God reveals Himself. Non-Christians

may not like seeing the sinfulness of their sin. Isaiah 2:5 says they will walk in light - the light of truth. This will be better than Bible studies about God because we will finally know in ways we can only imagine.

They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (NASB) Is. 11:9

But the saints along with those who finally believe in Jesus Christ will have a different experience in the kingdom. They will rejoice at the awesome opportunity to know God. This will not be some sterile and cold relationship between God and the saints. Listen to what Jesus said to His disciples,

... that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (NASB) Luke 22:30

Jesus plans to eat with His disciples. He will be "warm and friendly." When Romans 14:17 says,

... for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (NASB) Rom. 14:17

The Holy Spirit is talking about the purpose or the emphasis of the kingdom. The kingdom is not for personal pleasure but for holiness, peace, and joy. But did you see the word "joy"? We will enjoy the kingdom. We will enjoy it for 1,000 years!

THE KINGDOM TEMPLE. Ezekiel 40-48 also tells us that there will be a temple during the kingdom. There has always been a temple, either on earth or in heaven. A temple existed at the time of Moses in the form of a tabernacle. There was also a temple at the time of Solomon and during the life of King Herod. There will be a temple during the Tribulation in Israel (2 Thess. 2:4). The books of Hebrews and Revelation reveal a surprising fact. There is a temple in heaven today (Heb. 9:19-24; Rev. 7:15; 11:19; 14:17; 15:5-8; 16:1, 17). Then why not a temple in the kingdom?

The description of the kingdom's temple is different from any previous temple and why not? This one will be God's temple. Ezekiel tells us that the Old Testament feasts will be re-established, but not the Feast of Pentecost nor the Feast on the Day of Atonement. There will be no Day of Atonement, because Jesus has already died for our sins. There will be no Pentecost, since the Holy Spirit has already come in power.

But there will be sacrifices in the kingdom. The sacrifices will be a memorial to Jesus' death - the King's death. Some suggest that this cannot be true. But Christians already take communion as a reminder of Jesus' death and return to life. Jesus has already died, but yet we "do this in remembrance of Me." (1 Cor. 11:24). The millennial sacrifices will do the same thing. The sacrifices do not forgive sins. They never have. They only looked forward to Jesus' death. In the kingdom they will look back to Jesus just as the Lord's Supper does today. This will be a wonderful time of praise to Jesus - the perfect Lamb of God - who took away our sins. These will be great celebrations for the King who now reigns. I can just imagine the angels of heaven singing. It will be beautiful. Praise the Lord!

WICKEDNESS OF SIN. After 1,000 years Satan will be released from the abyss. When he is released he will not repent and seek God's forgiveness. This wicked angel will have no sorrow, no remorse, and no regrets after 1,000 years in a place where he did not want to be. Yet, he will try it all over again.

When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather

them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. (NASB) Rev. 20:7-8

He will deceive the non-Christians of the world, and bring them to Jerusalem in an attempt to defeat God.

And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. (NASB) Rev. 20:9

God will destroy the armies of the world with fire. Why will the people of the world reject God? There was peace in the kingdom. Life was wonderful, but they did not like God's moral law because they did not love Him. It appears

that God will allow this to occur in order to prove how evil men and women really are. Men and women love their sin, and they hate God. This rebellion after the wonderful kingdom will be just one more justification for God sending everyone who rejects Jesus to the Lake of Fire. Just think - the gospel message about Jesus will be preached over and over again through the sacrifices. There will be no excuse. God will be justified. God will have given everyone many opportunities to trust Jesus to forgive their sins.

SATAN'S DOOM. After the last battle on mother earth, God finally throws Satan into the lake of Fire to join the Antichrist and the False Prophet.



Dragon Thrown Into Lake of Fire

And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. (NASB) Rev. 20:10

He will spend the rest of eternity in suffering and pain. The

old deceiver will finally receive what he deserves.

THE JUDGMENT. The end of the world is near and the movie is about ready to show “THE END” on the big movie screen. It is time for judgment for all the rebellious and God rejecting men and women of all the ages.

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. (NASB) Rev. 20:11

When God the Father arrives on His great white throne ready for judgment, the earth and the universe will vanish. They will disappear. Did you notice that the verse says, there will be “no place found for them”? That will be a terrifying experience. Then the dead, the rich ones, the popular ones, the great singers and actors, the leaders of great nations and empires, great scientists and inventors, magicians, and the poor who have rejected God will come to life. It will be judgment time. They will have no attorneys. There will be no defense for the “innocent.” God will not be interested in how many good deeds you have done. The decision will have already been made.

Some years ago a famous individual declared that he was

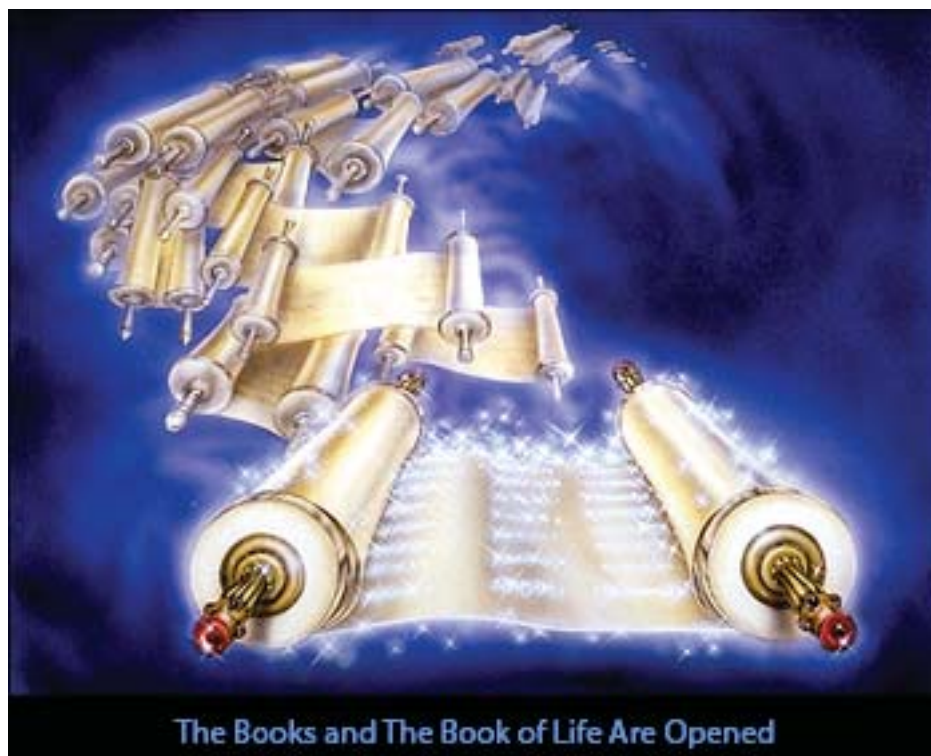
confident that when he meets God, he will be able to convince Him to let him into heaven. Others believe that their mother or father, or some relative who is “close to God” will be able to convince God to allow them into heaven. These are nice thoughts and wonderful hopes, but the next verse gives us the facts.

And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. (NASB) Rev. 20:12

God will open some books and see what each person has done! The truth will be written in the books.

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. (NASB) Rev. 20:13

Every person will be judged according to their deeds. But God will discover that none of their deeds will be good





enough to allow them into heaven.

And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (NASB) Rev. 20:15

None of their names will be recorded in the Book of Life. If you say, "The verse does not say that," then look back to verse 6. The only people who come back to life at this time are those who have refused to accept Jesus as their Savior.

The only men and women who will experience the second death - spiritual death - are those who did not believe in Jesus. Those who did not want Jesus to forgive their sins - those who rejected Him!

Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. (NASB) Rev. 20:14

CONCLUSION. This is a wonderful ending and a horrible ending all at the same time. It is a horrible ending for all of us, including God because of His great love for everyone. God has, is, and will continue to call to each person in our world to believe in Jesus Christ. He is doing this because He loves all of us. But some continue to reject Jesus Christ.

Therefore, God gives this warning,

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him . . . (NASB) Heb. 2:3

What salvation is God talking about? He is talking about forgiveness and an escape from the Lake of Fire. Is that good news? Yes! It is great news! God does not want anyone to go into the Lake of Fire (2 Pet. 3:9) because He loves every person. Some years ago a man asked me, "Why doesn't God just reveal Himself to us? Then we will all believe." I responded with, "He already has!" Jesus Christ came into the world to forgive our sins and allow us to escape eternal punishment. Revelation 20:4-6 is all about God's love for us. Those saints who take part in the first resurrection will be men and women who believe that Jesus was and is God Who died for their sins, and returned to life. They were trusting Him to forgive their sins. It cost them nothing.

A large department store unsuccessfully attempted to sell a doll that looked like the baby Jesus. It was advertised as unbreakable, washable, and cuddly. But it did not sell. So

the store manager panicked and put out a large sign in the store window with these words,

**Jesus Christ
marked down 50%
get it while you can.**

(Charles Swindoll, *Growing Deep in the Christian Life*)

The store manager had it wrong. Jesus, the real Jesus, is free!

The King of kings, the Savior of the world, the Faithful and True, came to give us life, and all we have to do is believe in Him,

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (NASB) John 3:16

This is also a wonderful ending, because evil will have finally been removed and heaven is coming next . . .