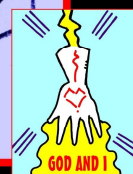


THE BOOK OF FUTURE THINGS



PREFACE: THE LOST ENDING

The real truth regarding the end of all things has essentially been **LOST** to the modern “Church”.

Beloved brethren, “lend me your ears”. What you’re about to read is something you’ve probably never heard before, and that in itself is another sign of the sorry times in which we live. Times in which we’re experiencing the fulfillment of brother Paul’s prophecy concerning a great “falling away” from the truth which must “first” take place before the end (2 Thessalonians 2.3); a falling away expressed thusly,

“The time will come when they will not **ENDURE** sound doctrine; but after their own lusts they shall **HEAP** to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall **TURN AWAY THEIR EARS FROM THE TRUTH**, and shall be turned unto **FABLES**” (2 Timothy 4.3-4).

May you have a humble, receptive heart to the truth of the Lord as found in His Holy Word and not despise the lowliness of the messenger. Amen.



WHAT DID JESUS TEACH REGARDING HIS SECOND COMING?

The portrayal of future things by Jesus and the New Testament writers is actually fairly simple and straight-forward; and, for the most part, not terribly difficult to grasp. It took our modern self-important “prophecy elitists” to transform it into a convoluted, incredibly complex system with little resemblance to the plain teachings of our Lord. Jesus taught,

“He that plants the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the weeds are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that planted them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

As therefore the weeds are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who do evil; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous shall shine forth in the kingdom of their Father” (Matthew 13.37-43).

This portrayal of the “harvest” which will occur at the return of Christ (i.e., the end of the world) is further described in Revelation 14:

“And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle.

And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Your sickle, and reap: for the time is come for You to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire: and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in your sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the winepress of the wrath of God” (Revelation 14.14-19).

Based on these two similar accounts there are several observations we can make. There will first be a time of planting the

seeds of Christ's Gospel throughout the world. At the end of this period the world will have only two types of people- the good seed (God's children) and the evil seed, or the weeds (satan's children); and both will be present on earth at the time of Christ's second coming.

At Christ's visible return in the clouds, there will be a gathering out of the world of these two groups, a time of harvest.

The believers in Christ will first be gathered unto Him to join Him together in the air. The angels will then go forth to gather the wicked out of the world and to cast them into the place of God's wrath, the furnace of fire.

The startling, awful realization of the wicked at this event is mentioned by both Jesus and His apostle John.

"And then the sign of the Son of man shall appear in heaven: and then all the tribes of the earth shall mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Jesus as recorded in Matthew 24.30).

"Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and those also who pierced Him: and all tribes (or peoples) of the earth shall wail because of Him" (Revelation 1.7).

Jesus again repeats this scenario in Matthew 13.49-50:

"So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth".

The end of this world, complete with the destruction of this current universe at Christ's coming are detailed by Jesus in Mark 13.24-27:

"But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.

And then they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then He shall send His angels, and gather together His elect (His chosen ones; the redeemed) from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven".

Imagine if you will an ordinary day. As it was in the days of Noah, and in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah, and most certainly as it will be in our own days- people will be going about their daily business; going to work, making plans, buying homes, getting engaged, getting married, with the majority completely oblivious to

the signs all around them of increasing wickedness, Divine judgments upon the earth and increasing tribulations, all of which foretells the return of Christ to those with eyes to see.

And then, suddenly and without any further warning- they behold with their eyes the most terrifying cataclysmic events in human history. The stars fall from the sky, the sun and moon are extinguished and the entire world is plunged into horrifying darkness.

But an amazing light appears- brighter than anything they have ever seen. It fills the sky the whole world over. And they see Christ returning, in great power and glory with countless angels and with His people who have now been miraculously gathered to Him out of the earth.

In that soul-chilling moment those remaining will realize **HOW COMPLETELY WRONG THEY WERE**. How empty and vain were the foolish things they spent their whole lives pursuing. How they had believed the lies of godless men and women, “experts”, “celebrities”, “politicians”, false “religious leaders”, instead of the Word of God. How they had wasted their entire lives on sin and idiocy and now IT IS TOO LATE. There are no words to describe that apprehension of **UTTER TERROR**.



“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called ‘Faithful’ and ‘True’, and in

righteousness does He judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a Name written, that no man knew, but He Himself.

And He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood: and His Name is called 'The Word of God'.

And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Revelation 19.11-15).

Christ is returning, not to "set up" His kingdom but to receive His completed kingdom- all believers from all time.

Brother Paul, speaking of the future resurrection of believers at Christ's return explains that Christ's resurrection was the "firstfruits; afterwards those that are Christ's at His coming. THEN COMES THE END, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must REIGN, UNTIL He has put all enemies under His feet." (1 Corinthians 15.23b-25).

His return will bring salvation and redemption to those of us who have embraced His mercy during the "millennium" of the Gospel (the period in which His spiritual kingdom is being built) and to execute His just wrath upon those who have chosen instead rebellion and unbelief.

"...the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those that do not know God, and that do not obey the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His holy ones, and to be admired in all those that believe" (2 Thessalonians 1.7b-10a).

On that day the period of Grace and Mercy shall come to an abrupt end. Then will be initiated Divine Justice. The storm will hit, the door of the "ark" will be shut forever. "TOO LATE" will be the hopeless cry of millions...perhaps billions.

HOW MANY TIMES IS CHRIST RETURNING?

Seems a strange question, right? Until you sit down and rationally consider the popular, widespread "prophetic" philosophy

prevalent in Christian circles today. Then you have to come to the conclusion that, according to these modern “Bible scholars”, Christ is scheduled to return at least two, potentially three more times.

Return #1 is slated to be a secret return. At this particular “parousia” (thought I’d toss that in; it’s a clever theological term referring to the return of our Lord), Jesus is scheduled to “rapture” His “Church” out of this world leaving the remaining masses (all unbelievers) to endure a literal “Seven Year Tribulation” period (I’ve often wondered: who exactly gets to decide what is or isn’t to be understood literally in the Book of the Revelation?).

Besides the fact that a secret return of Christ is taught **NOWHERE** in the entirety of Scripture and only exists as a concept to console lukewarm (predominantly American) Christians that we’ll be “bailed out” before things get “really bad”, we’re also taught expressly in Scripture that “no man” knows the day nor the hour in which Christ will return.

Now if millions of Christians disappear on such and such a day and year, the unbelievers who remain need only add seven years to that date to know exactly when Christ’s next (second) return is to take place. Surely enough people have seen movies like the “Left Behind” series and other “Christian prophecy” films to be well aware of that concept.

At Return #2 Christ will appear openly, in the sky, thus embracing part of what our Lord taught regarding His coming; yet the other events clearly spoken of by our Lord as taking place at this time (the removal and destruction of all the wicked as well as the cessation of this current universe) are generally omitted.

Instead we are told that Christ is returning to establish a literal thousand year reign on Earth, a “Millenium” (a concept derived from a few verses in the highly figurative Book of the Revelation, chapter 20.4-7, and **NEVER** taught by Christ, His apostles nor any of the writers of the New Testament).

In this “prophetic” conception Christ is going to attempt to **SALVAGE** this present evil world instead of destroying and transforming it into an everlasting kingdom of righteousness (as Scripture actually teaches).

They then assert, astonishingly, that after a thousand years of Christ’s immediate presence and perfect reign, coupled with an innumerable number of perfected believers, somehow satan will

make a comeback and convince the “nations” to rise up against Christ and His people.

These wicked multitudes, “the number of whom is as the sand of the sea” (that’s a LOT of people!), will gather themselves together in a bizarre coup attempt which will culminate in what may be interpreted (somehow) as Christ’s #3 return in which all of these rebels, along with satan, will be consumed by heavenly fire (reminiscent of what actually is to take place at Christ’s genuine return; 2 Thessalonians 1.7-10).

It’s never quite explained WHO these billions of heathen are or where they came from. They can’t be the offspring of perfected, resurrected believers “for in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in Heaven” (Matthew 22.30).

And the Millennialist must acknowledge that those who “reigned with Christ a thousand years” are those who “have part in the first resurrection” (Revelation 20.4,6).

Nor can they be the descendents of those unbelievers present at Christ’s “pre-millennial return” as Revelation 19, which portrays His return, pretty clearly establishes that ALL the wicked will be slain at this “parousia”(vss.17-21).

Think about it for a minute- is this what we have to look forward to as believers who have endured the tribulation and wickedness of this present reality? To experience the joy of our Lord’s return only to have the sinking realization, “Oh well, in a thousand years the whole world’s going to turn against Christ and us all over again”. What a strange and discouraging belief system to hold out as our “blessed hope”.

The truth is- the Scripture teaches only ONE return of Christ; His second coming to the world, this time to redeem His chosen ones and to judge the wicked.

END OF THE AGE, END OF THE WORLD ...OR BOTH??

Sadly, sometimes people will get a hold of a certain Greek or Hebrew word and will use it to bash the historic teachings of Scripture. All of a sudden, these individuals, who couldn’t read Greek or Hebrew if you actually handed them such a text, have become “experts” because somebody on the internet (who also most likely is

no expert in the original languages) tells them that what they've been taught or read in their English Bibles all these years is actually a mis-translation; usually with the implication that these terms were INTENTIONALLY mis-translated to mislead people.

A few of their favorite words to "monkey" with are "Hell" or this phrase translated in the Authorized Version as "the end of the world". No, they insist- the Greek word translated "world" means "age"! "It's the end of the Age that's being referred to! Not the end of the world!"

I have a simple question for you: exactly what's the **DIFFERENCE** between the end of the age and the end of the world? If we interpret Scripture by Scripture, as we're meant to do but as our modern internet savvy "Christians" are unable to do because they don't really KNOW the Scriptures; you would quickly discover that both Christ and His apostles clearly understood the end of this evil age to be **SYNONYMOUS** with the end of this evil world!

What is this "age" we're living in? It is the age of satan's and man's rebellion against the Holy Creator. It is an age in which all of human experience, all of creation itself, has been stained by the existence of sin and has been sentenced to "corruption"- aging, decay and death.

"The creature (created things) itself also shall be delivered from the bondage to corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now" (Romans 8.21-22).

It is not God's intention to "salvage" this current, sin-cursed creation, nor our present sin-cursed bodies- but to bring both into a form of death or cessation that both may be resurrected at the return of Christ.

"Looking for and hurrying unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat...nevertheless we, according to His promise look for NEW heavens (universe) and a NEW earth wherein dwells righteousness" (2 Peter 3.12-13).

Where is this "promise" found? In the prophecies of the Old Testament:

"For behold, I create NEW heavens and a NEW earth: and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind" (Isaiah 65.17).

These words are re-echoed in the final book of Scripture:

"And I saw a NEW heaven and a NEW earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away...and God shall wipe

away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat on the throne said, Behold, I make ALL things NEW" (Revelation 21.1, 4-5a).

These early translators, actual Greek and Hebrew scholars (not "pop-internet prophets") understood that the end of this age is equivalent to the end of this current reality, of this world, this cosmos!

WHAT DOES IT MATTER?

Some might wonder, "Why write yet another 'book on prophecy'? There are so many already. Why add to the chaos of Premillennialism, Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, etc.". A fair question and one that deserves an honest answer.

BECAUSE IT MATTERS. BIG TIME. If it didn't, satan would not be attempting to feverishly promulgate these false teachings regarding our Lord's return.

"OUCH! You mean anyone who preaches these types of prophetic theories is satanic?". No, I'm not saying that at all. But sometimes, by not clearly teaching God's actual truth, we can unintentionally wind up doing the work of the evil one.

It's my belief, and I know I'll take fire for this, but I am convinced it's true- that this misleading and essentially **FALSE** belief system originated out of the fact that the "Church" in general, at least here in America, has promoted what Paul referred to as "babes in Christ", individuals who were perhaps clever, interesting, or "popular" but not really solidly grounded in a **THOROUGH** knowledge of God's Holy Word.

I refer to these individuals as "kindergarten Christians". There's nothing wrong with being in spiritual kindergarten if you're a recent convert but there's a lot wrong with still residing there after years, sometimes decades, of being a true believer (1 Corinthians 3.1-3). Yet I'm convinced that the overwhelming majority of present-day "Christians" as well as probably the majority of "pastors" and "Christian leaders" have never graduated from spiritual kindergarten and here's the scary part- they don't seem to **WANT** to.

"When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (1 Corinthians 13.11).

“Brethren, do not be children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men” (1 Corinthians 14.20).

While it's frightening and tragic for one who purports to be an adult to still willfully cling to “baby things” it's even more horrifying when these individuals are glorified by the “Church”, promoted into positions of great influence and followed as “Bible scholars” or “prophecy experts”. But that's exactly what has taken place over the last century in our nation.

The apostle Peter tells us that it **DOES** matter what you believe concerning our Lord's return because it will greatly influence **HOW YOU LIVE YOUR LIFE** as a Christian. Consider these words:

“The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; IN THE WHICH the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be BURNED UP.

Seeing then that ALL these things shall be DISSOLVED, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation (behavior) and godliness...

...wherefore, beloved, seeing that you look for SUCH THINGS, be DILIGENT that you may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (2 Peter 3.10-11, 14).

The nature of what “things we look for” directly affects our attitudes and behavior in this world. Consider the widespread apathy today of so many professed “Christians” towards actively fighting the spread of evil in our society, justified by the “rapture-escape-clause” (“Don't worry! We're going to be raptured out of here!”). Additionally, why do so many American believers attempt to build earthly kingdoms, earthly riches, earthly fame when “all these things” shall be “burned up”?

And saddest of all- consider the absolutely **FALSE HOPE** given to countless unbelievers by our deceptive “Christian prophecy” films? There will be a frightening judgment someday for those who have unintentionally misled perhaps millions of souls into eternal damnation by deceiving them into thinking there'll be a “second chance to be saved” during some future seven year period.

Many unbelievers perhaps think- “well, if I see millions of Christians disappear then I'll KNOW this thing is true and I'll still have seven years to become a Christian!”. **WRONG**. When Christ returns, not secretly but openly, ALL who have rejected His offer of mercy and

forgiveness will be left with His justice and yes, His **VENGEANCE** (I realize it's illegal to mention things like this in our contemporary "politically-correct-church" atmosphere, but it's God's truth!).

No second chance. No seven-year "grace" period. Oh my brethren- **STOP LYING** to lost souls!!!

"...the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in **FLAMING FIRE** taking **VENGEANCE** on those who do not know God, and that do not obey the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; **WHEN HE SHALL COME** to be glorified in His holy ones, and to be admired in all those that believe" (2 Thessalonians 1.7b-10a).

Brethren, I know you "mean well" but that's no excuse. Tell people the **TRUTH** about what's coming...because it's coming **SOON!**



WHAT IS THE “FIRST RESURRECTION”?

In the brief section of Revelation which many misinterpret as referring to a “future Millenium” there is reference made to the “first resurrection”. What exactly does this mean?

If we are to accept the scenario of our current “prophecy” gurus we would have to come to the conclusion that those who participate in this particular “resurrection” are exclusively those who were martyred during the “seven-year tribulation period”. All the millions of believers who lived prior to this period will be excluded and forced to wait another thousand years for their resurrection.

“I saw the souls of those 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. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 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” (Revelation 20.4b-6).

Does two separate resurrections for believers sound even vaguely Scriptural? I trow not (good old King James for- “I think not!”).

The book of the Revelation is for the most part written in highly figurative language, almost in spiritual “code”, to believers living under incredible persecution and oppression in the first century.

They, knowing the Scriptures of the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus and the apostles, could rightly interpret these symbols based on the truths they had previously learned.

What does brother Paul teach?

“If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so those also who sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we who 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” (I Thessalonians 4.14-17).

And again-

"We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (I Corinthians 15.51b-52).

Remember these words of our Lord:

"Do not marvel at this: for the hour is coming, in the which ALL that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and those that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5.28-29).

This has reference to the physical resurrection of the dead described by Paul in the above passages and referred to in Revelation chapter 20, verse 5 as "the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished". It is also portrayed in strikingly similar fashion by the Old Testament prophet Daniel-

"And many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Daniel 12.2).

Nowhere in Scripture do we see two separate physical resurrections of the dead; in fact, we see the opposite- one general resurrection.

What then could the "first resurrection" refer to? In His teaching contained for us in John chapter 5, Jesus, prior to His mentioning the physical resurrection of the dead which is yet to come ("the hour is COMING") He makes reference to another resurrection which was taking place at the time He walked the earth!

"Truly, truly, I say to you, The hour is coming, and IS NOW, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and those that hear shall live" (John 5.25).

Who are these "dead" individuals? Obviously, the **SPIRITUALLY DEAD**; i.e.- you and me! This is the first resurrection, my friends, the spiritual resurrection which enables us right now, in both this present world and, for those who have now gone into His immediate presence, to live and reign with Him as kings and priests!

Remember, brethren- we are ALL

"...by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were DEAD in sins, has MADE US ALIVE together with Christ, by grace you are saved, and has raised us up together, and

made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2.3b-6).

Who are these individuals who will "hear the voice of the Son of God" and live? They, we, are Christ's "sheep", His "elect", His chosen ones. As He said to the unbelieving "skeptics" of His day-

"You do not believe, because you are not of My sheep...My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand" (John 10.26-28).

This is why we're told,

"Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power".

On whom will the "second death" (the lake of fire) have power?

"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And WHOEVER was NOT FOUND written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20.14-15).

We as believers in our Savior Jesus cannot participate in the second death because, as Jesus states in John 5.24:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, He that hears My word, and believes on Him that sent Me, has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life".

Obviously Jesus knew that all who believe on Him would still endure what we refer to as "physical death" but He has in mind the avoidance of true death, the second death. From this we are passed unto everlasting life! As Jesus encouraged His disciples,

"Rejoice because your names are written in Heaven" (Luke 10.20b).

Only "those who are written in the Lamb's book of life" will inherit the blessings and joys of the New Earth as described in Revelation chapter 21 (Revelation 21.27b).

A few questions need to be asked: When will Christ begin to reign over the earth? When will we begin to "live and reign with Him"? When will we be "priests of God and of Christ"? If you answered "NOW" you're correct.

Look at the first chapter of the very book in which this reference regarding the first resurrection appears. The apostle John rejoices in

"Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood...and has MADE US kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever" (Revelation 1.5b-6).

Note the present tense of our being made “kings” (kings reign!) and “priests”. Note the reference to Christ’s present “dominion” (or authority).

Consider also brother Peter’s reference to believers as being presently “a holy priesthood” (1 Peter 2.5) and again, “you are (present tense)...a royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2.9). The term “royal” implying royalty, kingly esteem.

What were some of the final words our Lord imparted to us before ascending back to the Father?

“ALL power IS given unto Me in heaven AND IN EARTH” (Matthew 28.18b). Call me crazy but it sounds like He’s reigning over the earth NOW. Isn’t that why we call Him “Lord”?

Brother Paul certainly interpreted Christ’s words in that manner.

“He raised Him (Christ) from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above ALL principality, and power, and might, and dominion (authority), and every name that is named, not only IN THIS WORLD, but also in that which is to come: and has put ALL THINGS under His feet” (Ephesians 1.20b-22a).

And again,

“God has also highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name: that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ IS Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2.9-11).

Notice this statement is all in the PRESENT tense. It’s not referring to some future time. Jesus Christ is Lord, Ruler, Master over ALL that exists NOW. And He began this reign when He ascended to the Father after completing His earthly mission. He is RIGHT NOW, “Lord of lords, and King of kings” (Revelation 17.14b). And we, brethren, spiritually speaking, are presently reigning with Him.

What if the “thousand years” mentioned in Revelation chapter 20 is, like many other numbers in the book of the Revelation, symbolic, in this case, of a lengthy period of time? What if the period in which spiritually-resurrected believers will live and reign with Christ is taking place NOW? Clearly, this is EXACTLY what the Scriptures teach.

You may counter with the argument that many are still in rebellion against Christ’s authority and resisting His reign. True, and this too is prophesied in Scripture. But, honestly, this doesn’t seem like a fair objection from those who embrace the idea that after a

thousand years of Christ literally reigning upon earth the entire world will once again rebel against His authority and be incinerated in Divine judgment.

ONE WORLD UNDER MAN?

Psalms 2 gives us a spiritual overview of what will take place during the reign of Christ (Messiah Jesus). It almost sounds like the prophet got a glimpse of our modern “secular” rulers assembled at their Disunited Nations (our modern-day Tower of Babel):

“Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a futile thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against Yahweh, and against His Christ (Messiah; Anointed One), saying, Let us break their bands in pieces, and cast away their cords from us” (Psalms 2.1-3).

Arrogant rulers, politicians, judges and vast masses of people all attempting, futilely, to get out from under the authority of their Creator Yahweh and He Whom the Father has set over them—Messiah Jesus. If that is not a picture of our present world I don’t know what is. Indeed, call it what you will—“secularism”, “humanism”, “communism”, they each mean: man ruling himself apart from any reference to his Creator; i.e., **ANTI-CHRIST**.

This is the real reason our modern world has redefined the time-period in which we live from being referred to as “A.D.” (Anno Domini, Latin for “the year of our **LORD**”; i.e., acknowledging the current reign of Messiah Jesus) to the meaningless “C.E.” (“common era”).

As Jesus said, “**He that is not WITH Me, is AGAINST Me**” (Matthew 12.30a). There is no middle ground.

A king may reign yet within his kingdom there may be many, perhaps even a majority, who refuse to accept his authority. Nevertheless, that does not nullify his sovereign position.

Christ is reigning now. He has given to men and women His holy commandments, His glorious message of redemption and salvation. Whether people choose to humbly submit to His authority and obey Him or rebelliously reject His will is a choice left open to us during this present “age”. Those options will come to a screaming halt when Christ physically appears in the sky. Then we who served Him will be vindicated, redeemed while the wicked, those who chose the

way of satan and refused Christ's offer of mercy, will receive the terrifying justice they deserve.



WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR SATAN TO BE “BOUND”?

Jesus made this statement just before His crucifixion:

“NOW is the judgment of this world: NOW shall the prince of this world be CAST OUT” (John 12.31).

This phrase “cast out” is reminiscent of what we’re told regarding satan in the book of the Revelation:

“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, and did not prevail; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was CAST OUT, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, who deceives the whole world: he was CAST OUT into the earth, and his angels were CAST OUT with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, NOW is come SALVATION, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the POWER of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is CAST DOWN, who accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB...” (Revelation 12.7-11a).

Note that satan is cast out of heaven just after Christ’s victory on the cross and ascension to His place of authority on the right hand

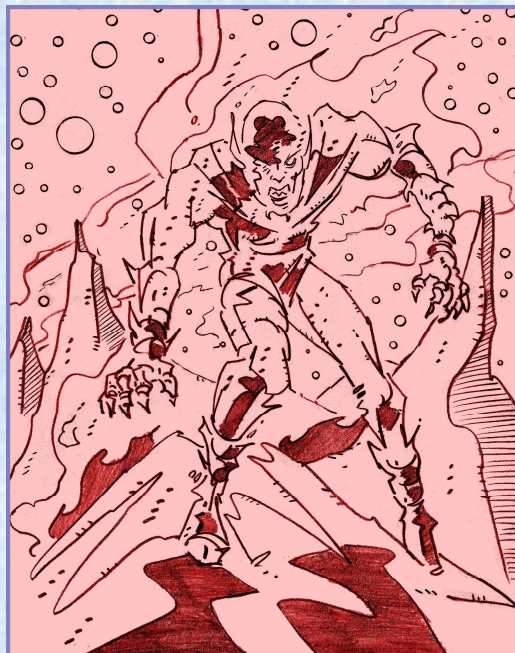
of God (verse 5). Note also that he can no longer accuse us of sin before God because Christ has fully satisfied God's justice regarding our sins. In similar wording we find a few chapters later:

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and BOUND him a thousand years. And CAST HIM into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should no more deceive the nations, until the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season" (Revelation 20.1-3).

It's hard for us today to conceive of a time in which all the nations of men upon earth were under the complete deception of satan with the sole exception of tiny Israel and even they spent much if not most of their time in rebellion against God.

Until the coming of Christ the entire Gentile, non-Jewish world was lost in sin, darkness and superstitious ignorance. There was virtually **NO GENUINE SPIRITUAL TRUTH** known upon planet earth outside of the relatively tiny Jewish nation.

This is why when satan tempted our Lord he could offer Him **"ALL the kingdoms of the world"** (Matthew 4.8b); because, at that time, they were ALL exclusively under his dominion. satan knew that Christ had come to "bind" him, to "spoil" him of the millions of non-Jews throughout the world and this was his last-ditch effort to thwart God's plan of redemption. Obviously, he failed.



Jesus said, "How can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he FIRST BIND the strong man? And then he will spoil his house" (Matthew 12.29).

And this is exactly what Jesus did. He directed brother Paul to "...the Gentiles, unto whom I now send you, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among those that are sanctified by faith that is in Me" (Acts 26.17b-18).

Having "bound" the strong man (satan) at the cross, Jesus now "spoiled his goods"- the multitudes of the Gentiles.

"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3.8b).

The evil one no longer had universal power over the nations to deceive them at will and unopposed. The truth of the Gospel of Christ has liberated men and women all over the world, from virtually every people and language. God's Word is now available throughout the world with translations into more and more languages taking place constantly. This is what it looks like for satan to be "bound" and "spoiled".

Yes, evil has always remained prevalent among men for a simple reason: we ourselves are evil. Evil is most often generated from the human heart and doesn't necessarily need any additional "coaxing" from outside sources. satan has always remained active in a sense but he is limited ("bound") by the power of the Gospel, the Truth of God's Word and the spiritual authority shared by believers in Christ as brother John states,

"Greater is He that is in you, than he (the evil one) that is in the world" (1 John 4.4b).

We are told that at the end of this "thousand year" period of Christ's reign the evil one

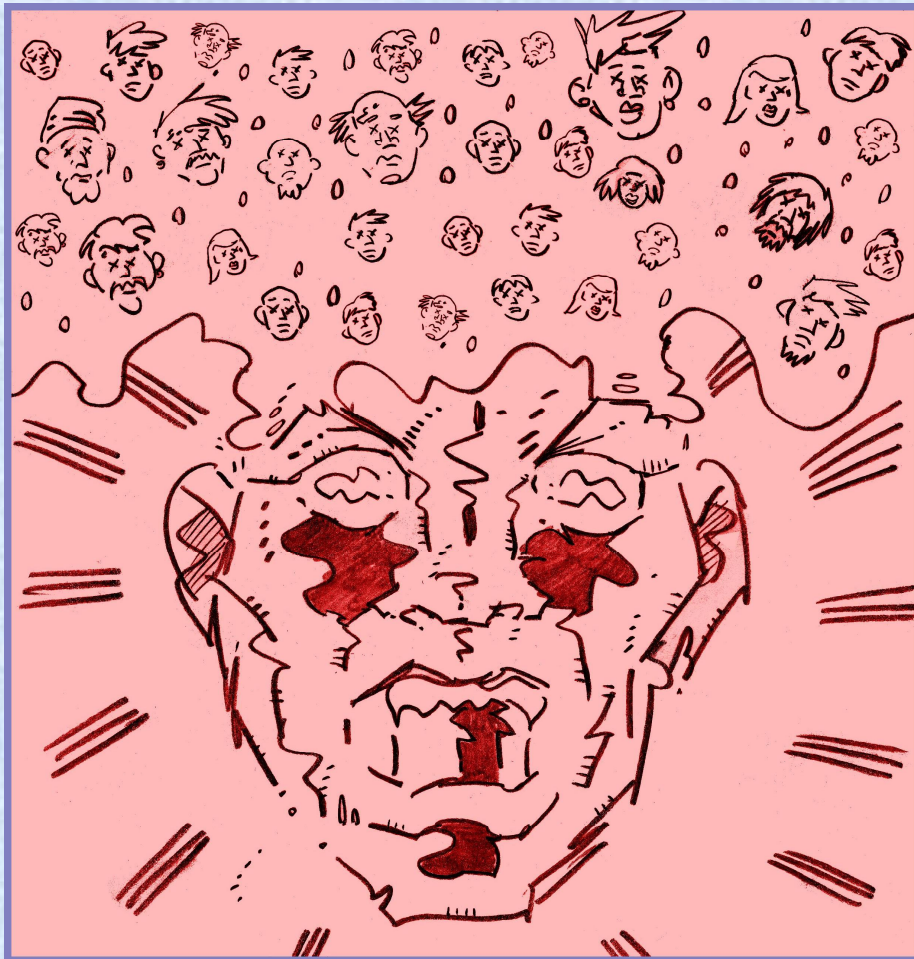
"...shall be loosed out of his prison...and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth...to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and encompassed the camp of the holy ones about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them" (Revelation 20.7-9).

My personal belief is that this is taking place in our lifetime. Towards the end of the nineteenth century a global philosophy of atheism evolved (pardon the pun) unknown in previous eras. Even

prior to the coming of Messiah the heathen nations were not primarily atheistic but embraced bizarre conceptions of deities and gods and practiced almost universal idolatry. This is really the first time in history in which atheism has spread to become a world force of evil.

The evil one has been briefly “loosed” to send forth his spirits of mass-delusion in order to “deceive the nations” once more:

Evolution; an understanding of human origin apart from the Creator; **Psychology**; a pseudo-science contrived to portray our ills as being derived from mental aberrations instead of personal sin; and **Communism**, a political, social movement which portrays the State as “god” and which consistently seeks to oppress Theism in any form it takes, particularly Christianity.



These false ideologies are actually the visible essence of the spirit of Anti-Christ which is sweeping the world and finding expression in the legalization in nation after nation of the breaking of

all of God's sacred commandments. satan has indeed been "loosed" and is gathering together, uniting the godless, into an antagonistic, hate-filled, anti-God, anti-Christ, anti-Christian mob bent on surrounding us, isolating us, marginalizing us, and, though many of you may not wish to face this: eliminating us. Yet this is exactly what the book of the Revelation predicts.

THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST

The "beast" in Scripture is portrayed as rising up "out of the sea", in other words- a unified, powerful world-system which arises out of many nations of people. It receives its power, position and "great authority" from the "dragon" (satan).

This is the kingdom of Anti-Christ but doesn't necessarily need to be viewed as a literal one-world political order but as what we're essentially seeing now- a body of powerful nations united spiritually in their rebellion against God, His authority and His commandments.

This will manifest itself in some prominent personage, "the son of perdition" (2 Thessalonians 2.3b); someone of the character and behavior of the ancient hater of the Jews, the self-deifying Antiochus Epiphanes ("God manifest") who appeared about two hundred years before the coming of Messiah Jesus (prophesied in Daniel 8.9ff and 11.21ff; and perhaps a foreshadow of the final enemy of God's people, 1 Thessalonians 2.1-12).

We're informed that this evil system, the world united against Christ, will establish or create an "image" of itself;

"he had power to give life to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed" (Revelation 13.15).

Some religious publishers have portrayed this "image" as a statue that comes to "life". I'm not sure that's what is really in mind here.

What is the unifying "image" around which our entire planet now gathers? Have you never heard of "the miracle of television"?

What looks like a man, talks like a man, even seems to be "alive" but is not actually alive? The image of the beast, patterned in the likeness of fallen, rebellious man; the idols which are worshipped throughout our world: televisions, computer screens, motion picture screens and most universally: the cell phone.

Through this “image” we see and hear men and women talking, acting, preaching, teaching. Seems almost like a “miracle”. Modern Man, the beast, has given a false sort of “life” to that which he has created in his own image. And through these “image-screens” the entire world is being controlled, manipulated, misled, corrupted and perverted.

What would be satan’s point in having a statue come to “life”? But, to deceive literally **BILLIONS** of people through innumerable image-devices, now that sounds like a plan worthy of Hell.

Although satan cannot be everywhere at once, the image-screens virtually ARE and they’re doing his work for him...spreading his view of things! Truly satan has been **UNLEASHED** in our recent times...truly **LOOSED** as **NEVER BEFORE!**



Recall, brethren, that satan is referred to by the apostle Paul as being “the prince of the POWER of the AIR” (Ephesians 2.2b).

Where do these “miraculous”, almost “living” images and voices come to us from? **THROUGH THE AIRWAVES.**

This does not mean to say that there are not many good and noble purposes to which those “airwaves” and these “images” are being used. But there’s little doubt that the lion’s share of these communications and creations exist to delude, distract, deceive and destroy the souls of men.

Remember, Scripture tells us that those who don’t “worship” the image of the beast are going to be killed. Those who refuse to “fit in”, to follow the unquestioning, image-screen-programmed crowd will be seen as “dangerous threats to progress, freedom and true equality”.

At first, they’ll be ostracized, ridiculed, harassed and sued; then they’ll be ordered to attend “rehabilitation classes” or camps; and finally, when the beast is in complete control- they’ll be “mercifully euthanized” as irredeemable, mentally-deranged hate-mongers.

THE “MARK” OF THE BEAST

“And he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, except he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that has understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred sixty and six” (Revelation 13.16-18).

This is another passage which has sadly received almost the “science fiction” treatment from both “Christians” and unbelievers alike.

Traditionally it’s believed that this passage describes an actual “mark” or tattoo to be literally inscribed on people’s bodies in either their forehead or right hand. Although most modern interpretations of this concept argue that the “mark” of the beast will be a unique number like one’s social security designation or perhaps some type of UPC or bar-code, that’s not what the Scripture says, is it? We’re told that the number of the beast and the number that will be upon every (godless) person is this number “666”, not innumerable identifying numbers particular to each individual.

If the 'beast' is the spiritual system of nations united against Christ and not necessarily an individual, what would this number represent? Some of course have tried to work out the numerology of various public figures to see if they perhaps are the "anti-Christ". But the "beast" is never referred to as the anti-Christ. In fact, the term "anti-Christ" is never even found in the book of the Revelation although the apostle John, who penned the Apocalypse, uses it several times in his own letters ("epistles") to believers.

It's interesting to note that in Koine Greek, the language in which the New Testament was written, there exists no indefinite article ("a") and this text could also be translated "...for it is the NUMBER OF MAN".

Man was created on the sixth day. Therefore we might say that the number of man or even "the number of a man" is SIX.

We believe in the "Holy Trinity": God the Father, God the Son (the Word), and God the Holy Spirit and "these three are one" (1 John 5.7b). There are also "three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one" (1 John 5.8). Jesus was in the tomb three days and then victoriously arose. The song of praise before the throne of God is "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty" (Revelation 4.8b). There is a spiritual significance to the use of the number three beyond what we currently can comprehend. Some feel it epitomizes a sense of "completeness".

We are living today, I believe, right now, in the kingdom of the beast. The spirit of Anti-Christ is everywhere; to deny that is an act of willful blindness. We are also living in a time period of unparalleled technological achievements. The things occurring today and taken for granted by us as "normal" would've been inconceivable just a little over a century ago.

We can talk to people on the other side of the planet on a small device we hold in our hands. We can watch real-time images and events taking place in countries thousands of miles away. We can, in a few hours, fly across the ocean to a distant country and then fly back again. We can jump on the internet and look up information on virtually any subject instantly.

We have refrigerators, air conditioners, washers, dryers. We can hop in a hunk of metal and drive to another city if we desire to do so. And our military capabilities would have caused Attila the Hun to salivate. Bombs that can devastate entire cities. Missiles that can

soar through the air and in a matter of minutes reach a foreign land decimating millions of individuals.

As a result of these achievements and technological “miracles” and “wonders” of the beast we are the proudest, most godless people in human history. We don’t feel we “need” God anymore. Yet amidst the deluge of wonder-working toys and endless entertainments people in general are profoundly unhappy. We must ingest alcohol, smoke a joint, or snort a drug to be “happy”. Countless people are on anti-depressant drugs even though we have an easier life than our forefathers ever dreamed of.

Yes, Man is at his highest stage of advancement in one sense but in the moral and spiritual realm, we’ve never sunk lower. Murder, cruelty, divorce, the glorification and normalization of all sorts of sexual sins, sexually-related diseases, suicide, theft, betrayal at the highest level by the politicians we’ve foolishly “trusted”, hatred, division, riots, terrorism, mass murders (even in our public schools), rampant child abuse and the monstrous trafficking of children for sexual purposes, the desecration of marriage and the family, kidnapping, a plague of pornography corrupting even our children and teenagers, and most satanic of all- the legalized global genocide of our most defenseless persons, our unborn children, to the mind-boggling tune of tens of millions of innocent lives per year.

This is our awful reality, the true face of the beast. Man, at his highest attainments still falls pathetically short of the glory of God, of attaining anything near moral perfection.

666 (three sixes; completion): the walking-skeleton’s foolish rebellion against his Creator; an abysmal, **COMPLETE FAILURE**. And he hasn’t the faintest idea how to get out of this horrible mess...which he has created.

Our first parents believed a simple lie: “You shall be as gods”. And despite all this monstrous horror...we still somehow believe that LIE.

So if the “mark” is not necessarily physical in nature what could it actually represent? Plainly the “forehead” symbolizes the cognitive part of the brain, the mind or “heart” of Man. Accepting the “mark” of the beast signifies that men and women have believed and received within their innermost person, their mind, the philosophy of Anti-Christ; their “right hand” thus symbolizing the evil works which naturally proceed from this satanic mindset. The overwhelming

majority of human beings have this spiritual “mark of the beast” in their foreheads **RIGHT NOW** and aren’t even aware of it!

Those who have not received the mark of the beast are the chosen ones, God’s elect, whose minds embrace God’s truth as revealed in His Holy Word. These have their “**Father’s Name written in their foreheads**” (Revelation 14.1b). They, we have received God’s eternal Truth and it has become our controlling, guiding principle.

This is why we will always be at odds with the evil world around us which has, in accepting Man’s view instead of God’s, ultimately chosen the message of satan rather than the truth of Christ.



WILL THERE BE A “GREAT TRIBULATION PERIOD”?

Perhaps the better question for the true children of God (referred to in Scripture as “saints” or holy ones) is:

“When will this period of great tribulation **END???**”

Try asking our brethren in China, North Korea, or many other oppressive nations what they think about the “tribulation period”. They’ll most likely answer that they’re **ALREADY IN IT!**

The truth is, Jesus didn’t hand His disciples the rose-colored glasses being offered by today’s false prophets. He said bluntly,

“In the world you shall have TRIBULATION” (John 16.33b).

The experience of one who possesses the Spirit of God living within them should be the same as that of brother Lot when he dwelt in wicked Sodom:

“...God...delivered just Lot, oppressed with the filthy behavior of the wicked: for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, tortured his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds” (2 Peter 2.7-8).

If you as a professed child of God are not deeply grieved, even tormented by the wickedness surrounding you in this godless world you'd better check your spiritual pulse.



That the world will grow more and more wicked towards the very end of this time-period is clearly taught by Jesus and the apostles. That God's judgments will fall upon the earth in increasing measure during this period (although they will be met in general with continued rebellion by the majority of people) is also apparent. Yes, there will be times of great tribulation, great perplexity, and great judgments preceding the grand finale of Christ's return. That this will be a definite seven-year period is not clearly taught in Scripture.

“For many shall come in My Name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars;

see that you are not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and plagues, and earthquakes, in various places” (Matthew 24.5-7)

“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity (confusion, uncertainty); the sea and the waves roaring (psunamis?);

Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory” (Luke 21.25-27).

The “last days” actually began with the ascension of Christ to be seated at the right hand of God. The apostles recognized this.

Referring to the miraculous events of Pentecost, Peter stated, “THIS is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass IN THE LAST DAYS, says God, I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh...” (Acts 2.17a).

The writer of the book of Hebrews opens his dialogue with the affirmation:

“God...has IN THESE LAST DAYS spoken to us by His Son...” (Hebrews 1.1a,2a).

The apostle John says unequivocally,

“Little children, IT IS THE LAST TIME; and as you have heard that antichrist shall come, EVEN NOW there are MANY antichrists; whereby we KNOW that IT IS THE LAST TIME” (1 John 2.18).

Brethren, we have been living in the last days of planet earth for about two thousand years now. A long period to us, a day or two in God’s conception (2 Peter 3.8).

The entire period between the first and second comings of Christ is known as the “last days”. These are also the days of the spread of the kingdom of God (the “millennium” of the Good News) throughout the world and of Christ’s literal reign over all things.

Towards the end of this period we will see a great falling away from God’s truth and God’s commandments (1 Timothy 4.1-3; 2 Timothy 3.1-7), we will see evil “abound”; it will be literally everywhere, so much so that even the spiritual love in the hearts of many of the righteous will grow cold (Matthew 24.12).

Living in a time of unprecedented evil such as we are now, causes “great tribulation” to the soul of the believer. Note, it is

BELIEVERS not unbelievers mentioned in the Scripture which many use to justify the “great tribulation period”:

“These are those who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Revelation 7.14b).

Leaving this satanic hell for Paradise is indeed a coming out of great tribulation for the true believer for “we know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in wickedness” (1 John 5.19).

When I convey feelings like this to other “believers” and get a deer-in-the-headlights look as if to say, “What in the world is he talking about???”, I worry for their souls. I truly do. That is not a good sign of sonship, friends.

What is in us hates what is in the world and what is in the world hates us. If you are at peace with this present evil world odds are really good that you’re not at peace with God.

“Do not love the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is NOT in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2.15-16)



“You adulterers and adulteresses, do you not know that the friendship of the world is enmity (hostility) with God? Whoever therefore will be a friend of the world is THE ENEMY OF GOD” (James 4.4).

Strong words and not something generally (if ever) heard from our contemporary, popularity-seeking false shepherds.

THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH

For the children of God there is a happy and wonderful ending to the sad story of the human race. It is an ending supplied by God's grace (His unearned, undeserved favor and mercy).

This horrible reality in which our world was ruled by satan, sin and men and women in rebellion against God will be **FOREVER FORGOTTEN**. Never again will it come to mind.

All the pains, all the guilts of this reality too will be forever washed away. In their place will be granted eternal life and eternal joy in a new universe and a new earth which God in both the Old and New Testament promises His elect, His chosen ones, His redeemed children.

"For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isaiah 65.17).

"According to His promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness" (2 Peter 3.13).

The redeemed will have seen beyond any doubt what life apart from God really amounts to: a world of horror. The emptiness, the darkness, the slavery to futility, degradation and death will be replaced by "what might have been" had we not believed the evil one. Nay, the new reality God will create will actually be better! So much better in fact that no human words exist which can even begin to describe it!

"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those that love Him" (1 Corinthians 2.9)

The closing chapters of the book of the Revelation offers us but a glimpse of that soon-to-come paradise:

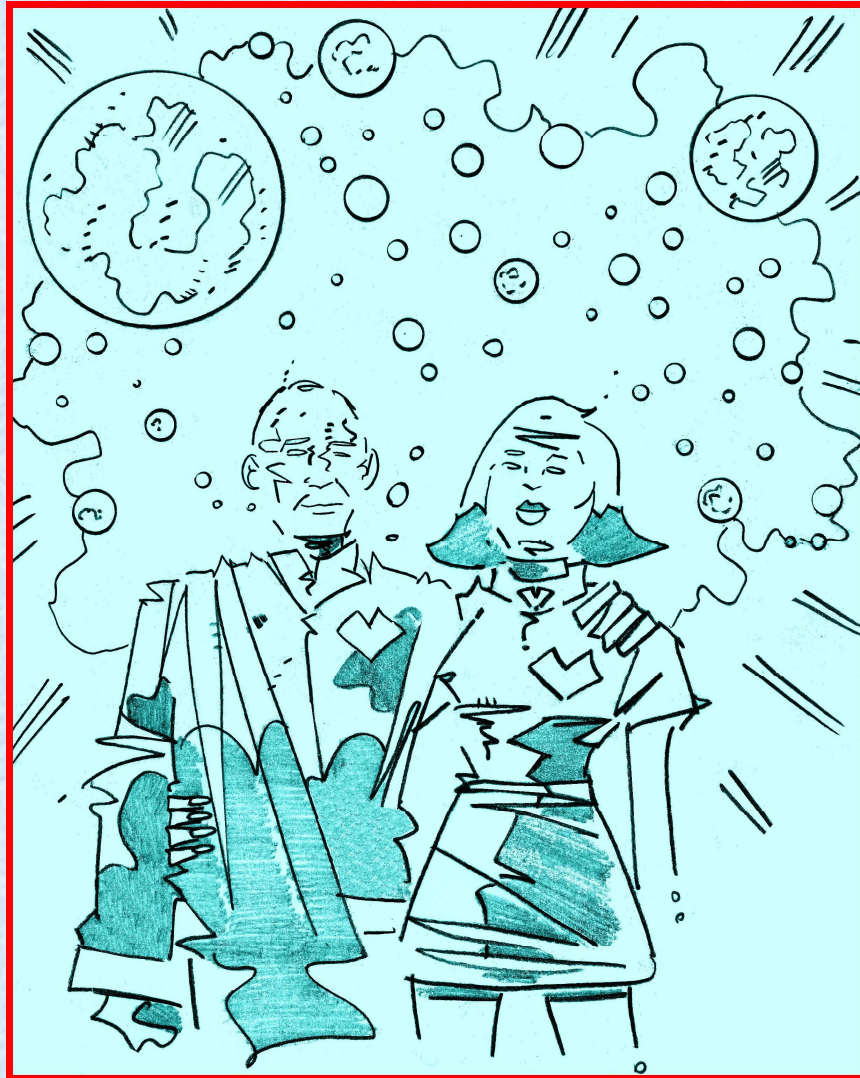
"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away..."

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make **ALL THINGS NEW**" (Revelation 21.1, 3-5a).

Oh you who read this book: may your eyes now be opened and may you truly turn from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God that you may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among those who are set apart unto God by faith. (Acts 26.18). Amen!



"Watch you therefore, and **PRAY ALWAYS**, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man"- Jesus (Luke 21.36)

