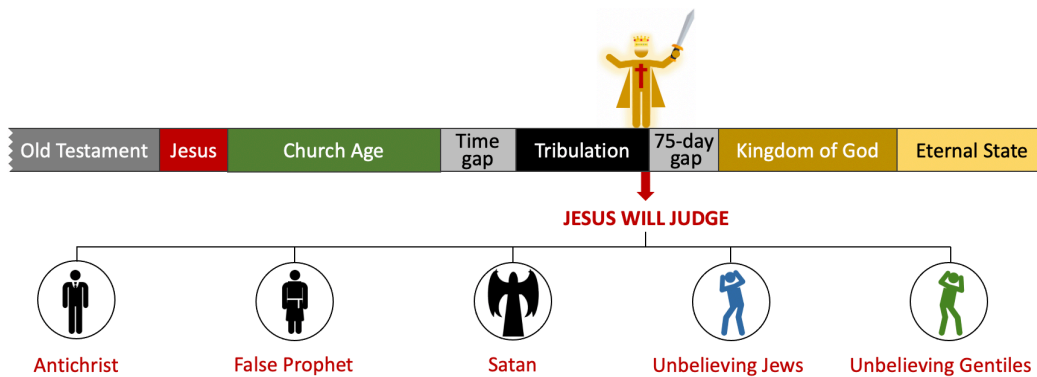


Lesson 52: The Kingdom of God

Previously...

Jesus tells John about the destruction of Babylon and then John sees great praise and rejoicing in heaven because God has finally judged the evil Kingdom of Man.

Then John sees Jesus' long-anticipated return! The people on the earth gather to battle against Him but Jesus utterly destroys all of them.



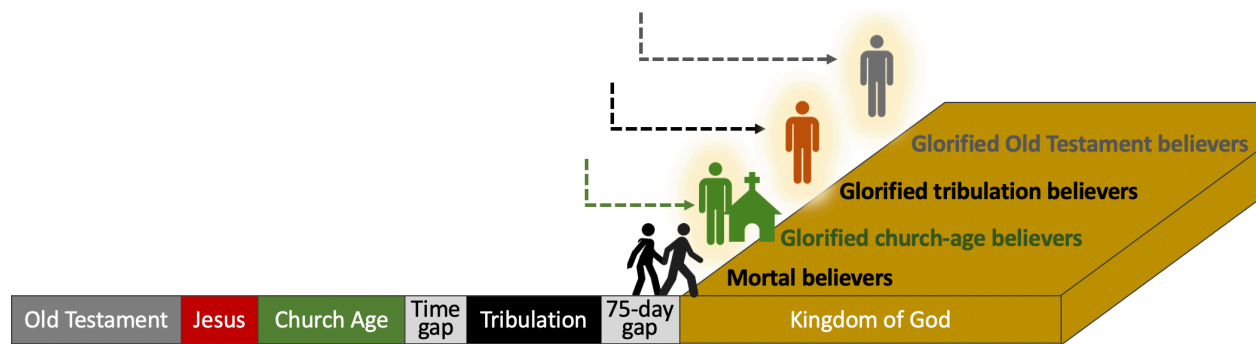
He throws the Antichrist and the false prophet into the lake of fire and He feeds the dead bodies of the unbelieving kings and armies to the birds.



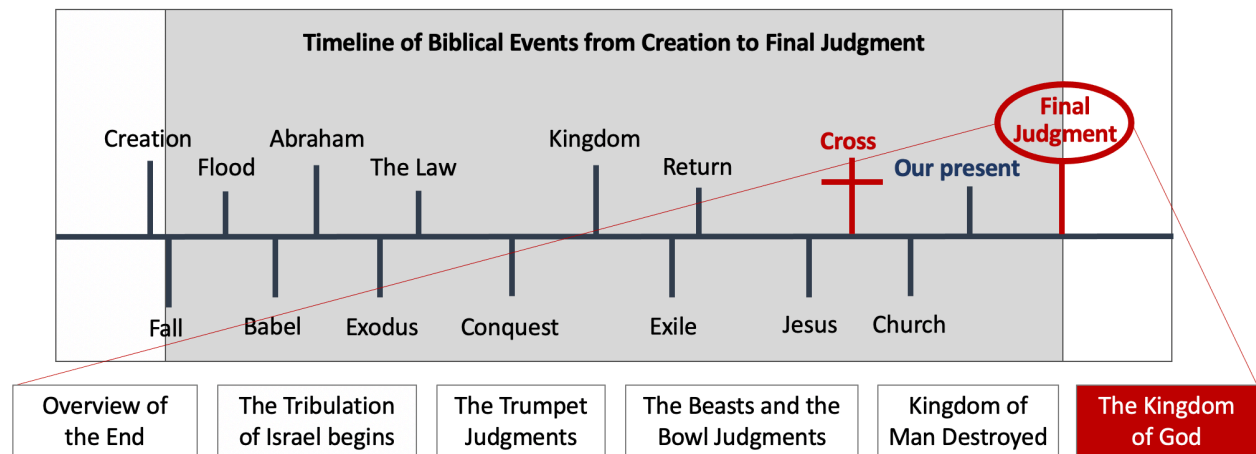
Jesus also judges the mortal tribulation Jews and Gentiles. He removes all unbelievers but invites all Jewish and Gentile believers to enter the finally returned Kingdom of God!



They will enter the Kingdom with the already resurrected church, Old Testament believers and tribulation believers who died earlier.



Finally, the Tribulation is over!



However, the thousand-year Kingdom of God does not start immediately. The Bible talks about a time gap.

75-Day Gap

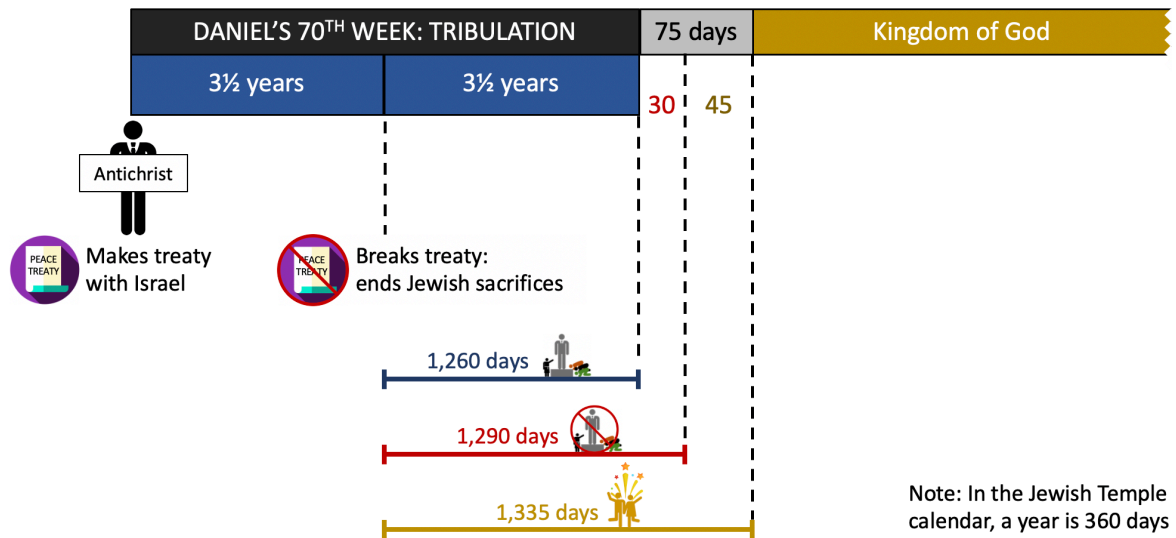


This is what the angel Gabriel told Daniel.

Daniel 12:11–12

¹¹ “From the time the daily sacrifice is stopped and the sacrilegious object that causes desecration is set up to be worshiped, there will be 1,290 days. ¹² And blessed are those who wait and remain until the end of the 1,335 days!”

What do all these numbers mean?



1,260 days: The sacrifices are stopped and the abomination of desolation (the statue of the Antichrist) is set up at the midpoint of the Tribulation. So there is 3½ years or 1,260 days left till the end of the Tribulation.



1,290 days: Only after 1,290 days will the abomination of desolation be removed from the temple.



1,335 days: The people who make it to the end of the 1,335 days are blessed. We believe this means they have made it to the start of the Millennium.



Putting all these numbers together, it appears there will be a 30 days + 45 days = 75-day time gap between the end of Tribulation and the start of the thousand-year Kingdom.

What happens during this time?

We know that the abomination of desolation will be removed. However, we're not sure what else fits into the time gap because the Bible does not give those details.












Perhaps some of the events of the last days of the Tribulation, for example, Jesus judging Israel and the Gentiles will actually happen during this time. Or perhaps this is when the Antichrist, false prophet and Satan will be removed. Possibly, this is also when the dead Old Testament and tribulation believers will be resurrected. Or perhaps the main purpose of this time would be to clean up and prepare for the Kingdom by starting to build the Millennium temple (Ezekiel 40–48).

Regardless of what happens in this time gap, what comes after is the Kingdom!

The Thousand-Year Kingdom of God

At long last, the Kingdom arrives! A lot of history will have occurred to get to this stage!

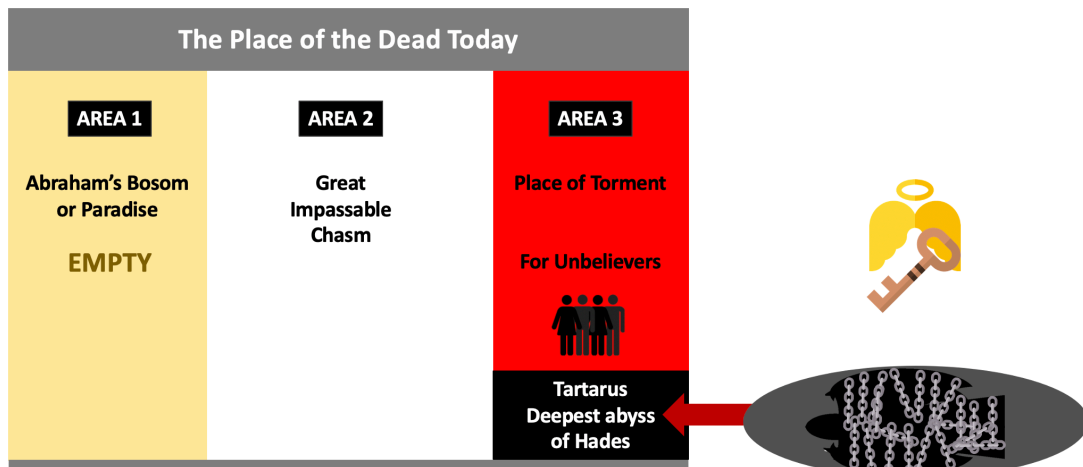


<p>Pagan Kingdom of Man Based on WORKS Man would save himself through his own ideas</p>	<p>Kingdom of God Based on GRACE God would save man</p>	
 Babel  Egypt  Canaan <p>God's restraining hand on the Pagan Kingdom of Man</p>	<p>Election</p>	
		<p>God chose Abraham</p>
		<p>God saved Israel</p>
		<p>God built Israel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Law ▪ National anthem ▪ Temple worship ▪ Feasts & festivals
		<p>Conquest and Settlement in the Promised Land</p>
		<p>Kings in Israel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unified kingdom ▪ Divided kingdom
	<p>Israel and Judah turned against God: Paganised—unbelievers</p>	<p>Few believers</p>
<p>Rise of the Kingdom of Man</p>	<p>Exile: Kingdom of God Ended</p>	
	<p>Babylon</p> <p>Medo-Persia</p> <p>Greece</p> <p>Rome</p>	<p>Partial return: Subjects of pagan nations</p> <p>Jesus offers the Kingdom, but the Jews reject Him: Delay of the Kingdom</p>
	<p>Revived Rome</p>	<p>Church Age. No King. Not the Kingdom.</p>
	<p>Crushing Rock, Jesus, destroys the Kingdom of Man</p>	<p>Kingdom of God Returns! King Jesus rules the world from His throne in Jerusalem!</p>

But how do we know that this Kingdom will last 1,000 years? This is what John sees.

Revelation 20:1–3

¹ Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven with the key to the bottomless pit and a heavy chain in his hand. ² He seized the dragon—that old serpent, who is the devil, Satan—and bound him in chains for a thousand years. ³ The angel threw him into the bottomless pit, which he then shut and locked so Satan could not deceive the nations anymore until the thousand years were finished. Afterward he must be released for a little while.



Satan bound up

John sees that Satan will be locked up in the abyss for 1,000 years while the Kingdom of God is in operation. Satan is not allowed to deceive the nations during the Millennium.

On a separate note, this is another reason why we believe the premillennial view fits better with what the Scriptures reveal. In the amillennial and postmillennial views, Satan is bound up right now during the church age. However, this seems to go against what the New Testament says about Satan's activities during the church age. This was Peter's warning to the church about Satan.

1 Peter 5:8–9

⁸ Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are.

After the thousand years, Satan will be released for a little while

The Bible uses a non-specific, general phrase “a little while” (Revelation 20:3) side by side with the very specific “a thousand years” (used six times in Revelation 20:1–7). This leads us to believe that the thousand years means 1,000 actual years. We believe the Bible is deliberately specific on this.

But John sees more.

Revelation 20:4–6

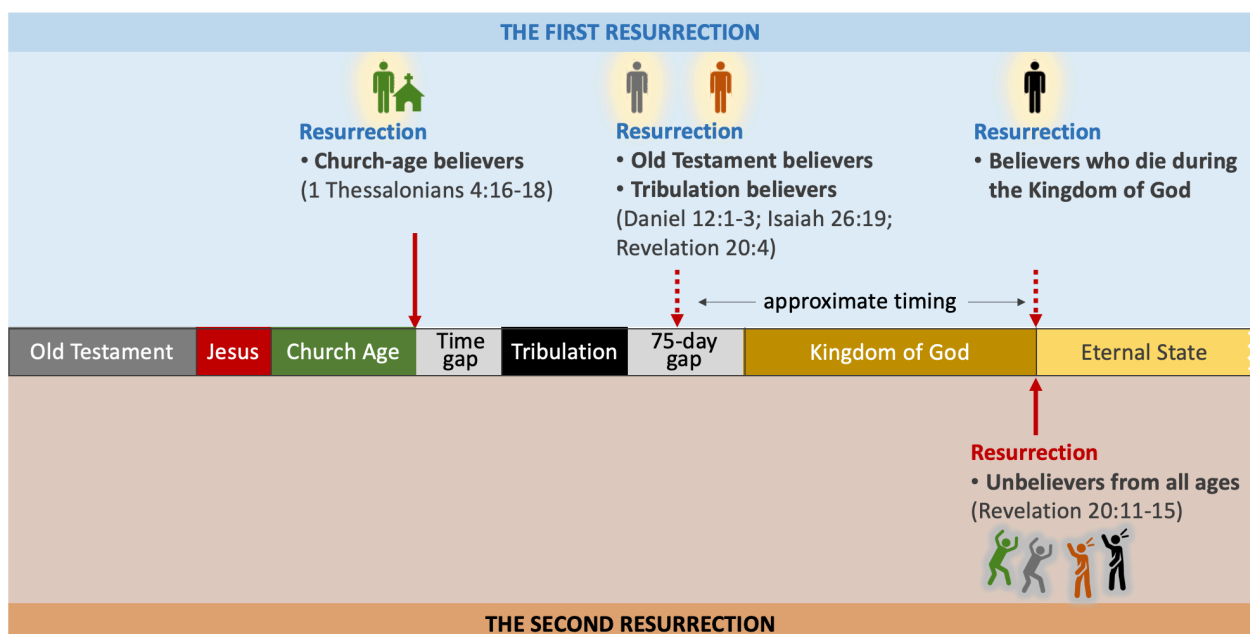
⁴ Then I saw thrones, and the people sitting on them had been given the authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony about Jesus and for proclaiming the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his statue, nor accepted his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They all came to life again, and they reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

⁵ This is the first resurrection. (The rest of the dead did not come back to life until the thousand years had ended.) ⁶ Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. For them the second death holds no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him a thousand years.

Believers reign with Jesus

In the Kingdom, the resurrected church as well as the resurrected tribulation believers will reign with Jesus.

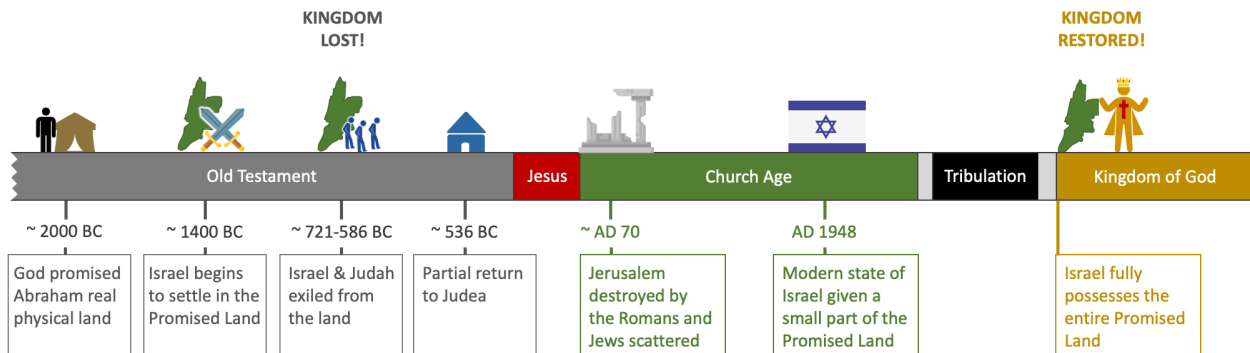
Interestingly, the Bible says that all believers are resurrected in what the Bible calls the “first resurrection”. The second resurrection is only meant for all the unbelievers throughout history.



The long-awaited Kingdom of God!

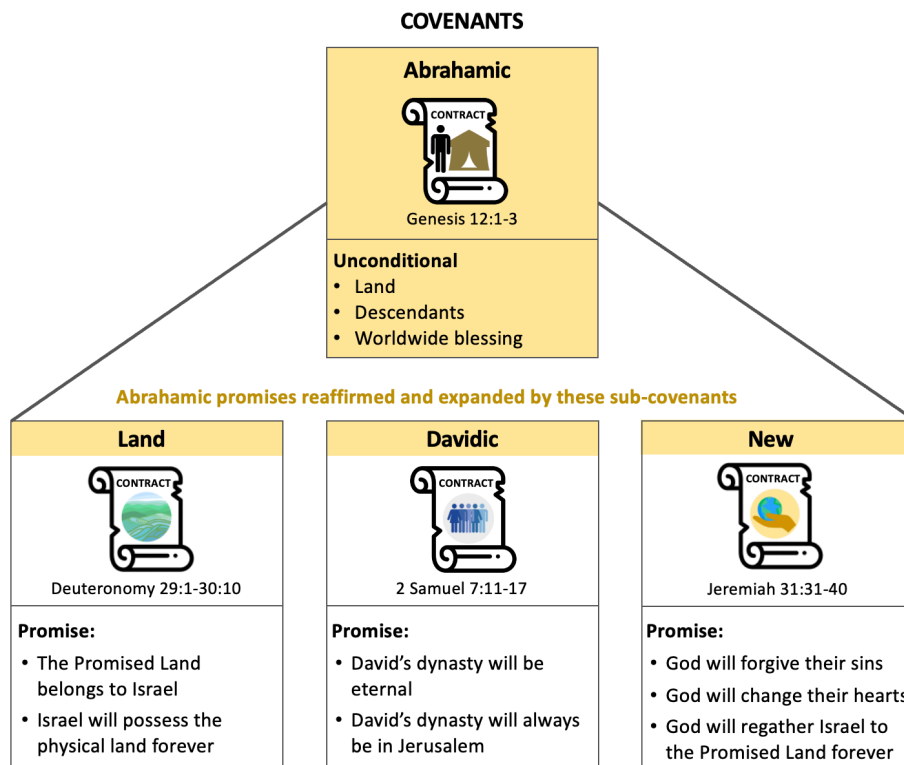
The Jews have been waiting for this thousand-year Kingdom of God for a long time! Ever since they lost their kingdom at the exile, they were never securely settled in their own land. Besides that, throughout all their history, they have never ever taken possession of the full area of land that Yahweh had promised them.

But now, with the Kingdom, Israel finally possesses all of the Promised Land!



In fact, the thousand-year Kingdom of God is when Yahweh finally and fully fulfils:


1. all the unconditional covenants He made with Israel and
2. all the prophecies and plans He gave!



1. All of Yahweh's Contracts with Israel Fulfilled

God made an unconditional covenant with Abraham which He later reaffirmed with three other unconditional sub-covenants. However, none of these promises have been fully fulfilled in history. But at the returning Kingdom, every covenant will finally be fully fulfilled.

a. Land

Land

Deuteronomy 29:1-30:10
<p>Promise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Promised Land belongs to Israel • Israel will possess the physical land forever

Israel will be given the full physical land area that God had promised them.

Amos 9:14a–15

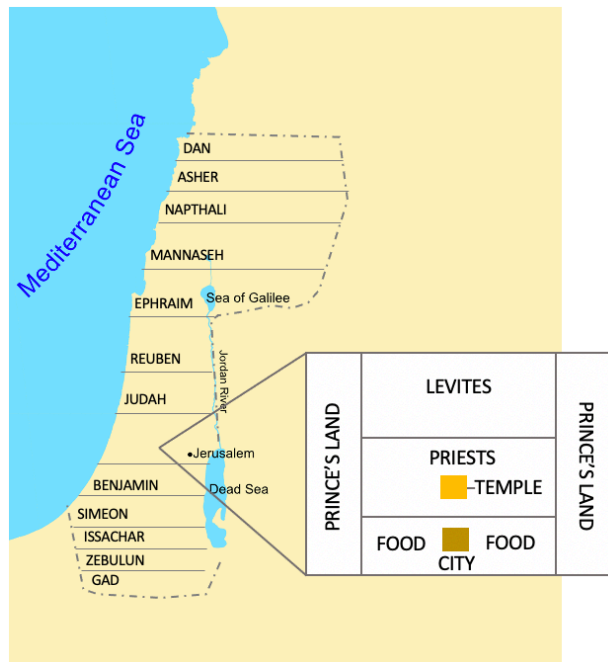
¹⁴ I will bring my exiled people of Israel back from distant lands,

¹⁵ I will firmly plant them there in their own land.

They will never again be uprooted from the land I have given them,” says the LORD your God.




In fact, God had told Ezekiel how the land will be divided up between the tribes as well as where the Temple will be (Ezekiel 47:13–48:35).



Gentiles who choose to become Jewish and live with the tribes can do so (Isaiah 56:3–8). However, most Gentiles will live spread out over the world and then come to Jerusalem to worship Yahweh (Zechariah 8:20–22).

b. Descendants

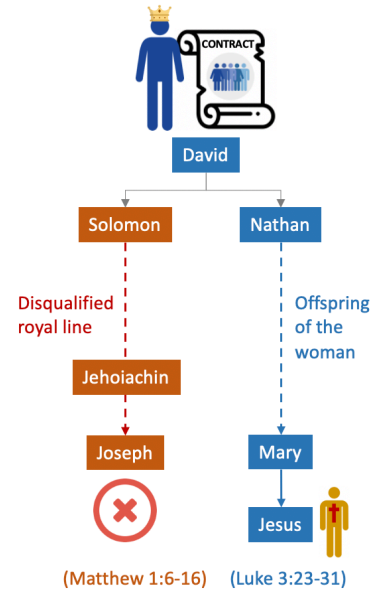
Davidic

2 Samuel 7:11-17
<p>Promise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David's dynasty will be eternal • David's dynasty will always be in Jerusalem

In the Davidic Covenant, God promised David that his dynasty will be eternal. God's saviour for the world, Jesus, came through David's line.

And during the Millennium, Jesus, David's descendant, will be the perfect Holy Spirit-led righteous God and King, over not just the Jews, but the entire world.

Isaiah 11:1–5, 10

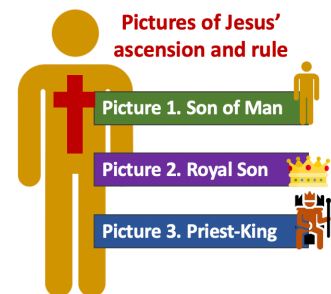
- ¹ Out of the stump of David’s family will grow a shoot— yes, a new Branch bearing fruit from the old root.
- ² And the Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
- ³ He will delight in obeying the LORD.
He will not judge by appearance
nor make a decision based on hearsay.
- ⁴ He will give justice to the poor
and make fair decisions for the exploited.
The earth will shake at the force of his word,
and one breath from his mouth will destroy the wicked.
- ⁵ He will wear righteousness like a belt
and truth like an undergarment.
- ¹⁰ In that day the heir to David’s throne
will be a banner of salvation to all the world.
The nations will rally to him,
and the land where he lives will be a glorious place.



Jesus will also finally fully fulfil His roles as “Son of Man”, “Royal Son” and “Priest-King”.

We first studied these Old Testament pictures of Jesus in Lesson 41: The Arrival of the Church, where we saw that Jesus has at present, only fulfilled part of these pictures.

But in the Millennium, He will fulfil them completely.

**Picture 1: Son of Man (Daniel 7)**

Daniel’s prophecy will come true: in the Kingdom of God, King Jesus will be the supreme ruler of the world and His people, the believers, will rule alongside Him. Jesus will delegate rulership, authority and government responsibilities to His deserving people (as He determined at the Bema). And David will be the prince (Ezekiel 37:25).

Daniel 7:18, 21, 22, 27

¹⁸ But in the end, the holy people of the Most High will be given the kingdom, and they will rule forever and ever.”

²¹ As I watched, this horn was waging war against God’s holy people and was defeating them, ²² until the Ancient One—the Most High—came and judged in favor of his holy people. Then the time arrived for the holy people to take over the kingdom.

27 Then the sovereignty, power, and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be given to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will last forever, and all rulers will serve and obey him.

**Messiah will rule
the entire world
from His office in Jerusalem**



**Prince David will rule
the nation of Israel
from Jerusalem, under Messiah**



**Believers in Yahweh will rule
the nations of the world
under Messiah**



Picture 2: Royal Son (Psalm 2)

As the Royal Son, Jesus will rule the world from His throne in Jerusalem. He will have total control over the whole world and there will be no rebellion, wars or fighting with Him as the leader.



Psalm 2:6–9

- ⁶ For the Lord declares, “I have placed my chosen king on the throne in Jerusalem, on my holy mountain.”
- ⁷ The king proclaims the LORD’S decree:
“The LORD said to me, ‘You are my son.
Today I have become your Father.
- ⁸ Only ask, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance,
the whole earth as your possession.
- ⁹ You will break them with an iron rod
and smash them like clay pots.”

Satan is locked up in the abyss during the time of the Millennium. He and his demons will not be around to influence the mortal people. (Immortal, resurrected people can never fall again so are in no danger from Satan.)

Picture 3: Priest-King (Psalm 110)

David's prophecy will be fulfilled: Messiah Jesus will be like Melchizedek, a King and High Priest not just for the Jews but for the whole world.



In David's prophecy, he even mentioned how Jesus will become the priest-king: Yahweh will make Jesus King through the judgment of evil.

Psalm 110:1–7

- 1 The LORD said to my Lord,
 "Sit in the place of honor at my right hand
 until I humble your enemies,
 making them a footstool under your feet."
- 2 The LORD will extend your powerful kingdom from Jerusalem;
 you will rule over your enemies.
- 3 When you go to war,
 your people will serve you willingly.
 You are arrayed in holy garments,
 and your strength will be renewed each day like the morning dew.
- 4 The LORD has taken an oath and will not break his vow:
 "You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek."
- 5 The LORD stands at your right hand to protect you.
 He will strike down many kings when his anger erupts.
- 6 He will punish the nations
 and fill their lands with corpses;
 he will shatter heads over the whole earth.
- 7 But he himself will be refreshed from brooks along the way.
 He will be victorious.

It is very important for us to know that Yahweh is very serious about all the contracts He had made with Israel.



There are some who don't realise this and view His contracts too casually. God doesn't want us to think this way at all.





In fact, Yahweh told the prophet Jeremiah how serious He is about His contracts with Israel and Judah.

Jeremiah 33:23–26

²³ The LORD gave another message to Jeremiah. He said,


²⁴ “Have you noticed what people are saying?—‘The LORD chose Judah and Israel and then abandoned them!’ They are sneering and saying that Israel is not worthy to be counted as a nation.

²⁵ But this is what the LORD says: I would no more reject my people than I would change my laws that govern night and day, earth and sky. ²⁶ I will never abandon the descendants of Jacob or David, my servant, or change the plan that David's descendants will rule the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Instead, I will restore them to their land and have mercy on them.”




Just as God will not change the laws of night and day, earth and sky...	...He will not change the promises He made about...		
	 Abraham, Isaac, Jacob	 David	 Messiah

c. Worldwide Blessing

The third promise God made to Abraham is that through him, God would bless the whole world. How?



Abraham's descendants will be **a worldwide blessing**. They give the world:

-  A Jewish book: The Bible
-  The Jewish Messiah who is the global Leader and Priest, who offers sacrifice for sin.
-  A kingdom of Jewish priests that will draw the world to God.

- His descendants, the Jews, would record God’s history and truth so the world would have access to it (Romans 3:2).
- It was from him that the Saviour would come (Isaiah 11:1–10).
- The Jews would be God’s witnesses to the world (Isaiah 43:10–12) and a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6) for all nations.

But importantly, God Himself would make man righteous through the Jewish Saviour.

All of history proves that mankind cannot make themselves right with God. Even the Mosaic Law failed to make Israel righteous.

God knew that if man were to become righteous at all, He would have to do it Himself. So God made a New Covenant with Israel and Judah. This is what He told Jeremiah.


Jeremiah 31:31–34, 38a, 40b

³¹ “The day is coming,” says the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. ³² This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant, though I loved them as a husband loves his wife,” says the LORD.

³³ “But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel after those days,” says the LORD. “I will put my instructions deep within them, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

³⁴ And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their relatives, saying, ‘You should know the LORD.’ For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will know me already,” says the LORD. “And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins.”

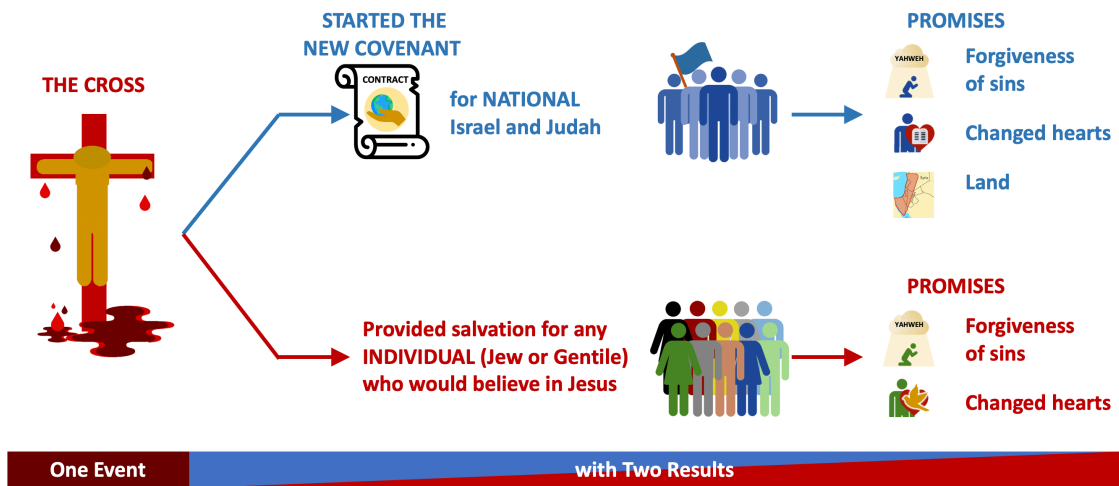
³⁸ “The day is coming,” says the LORD, “when all Jerusalem will be rebuilt for me... ⁴⁰ The city will never again be captured or destroyed.”

New

Jeremiah 31:31-40
<p>Promise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God will forgive their sins • God will change their hearts • God will regather Israel to the Promised Land forever

This all happens at the Millennium!



- Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, Yahweh is able to forgive the sins of all believing Jews and impute Jesus' righteousness into them.



- Then, God the Holy Spirit changes the hearts of all believing Jews so they can love God, be loyal to Him and obey Him. They will all know Him intimately and will not need to teach each other about Him. They will live in a way that glorifies and pleases Him.
- Yahweh will restore the Jews to the land He gave them and re-establish their kingdom with its capital in Jerusalem.



Indeed, during the Millennium, we will see with our own eyes that Yahweh is not only a contract maker but a contract keeper.

We can trust Him to keep His promises fully!

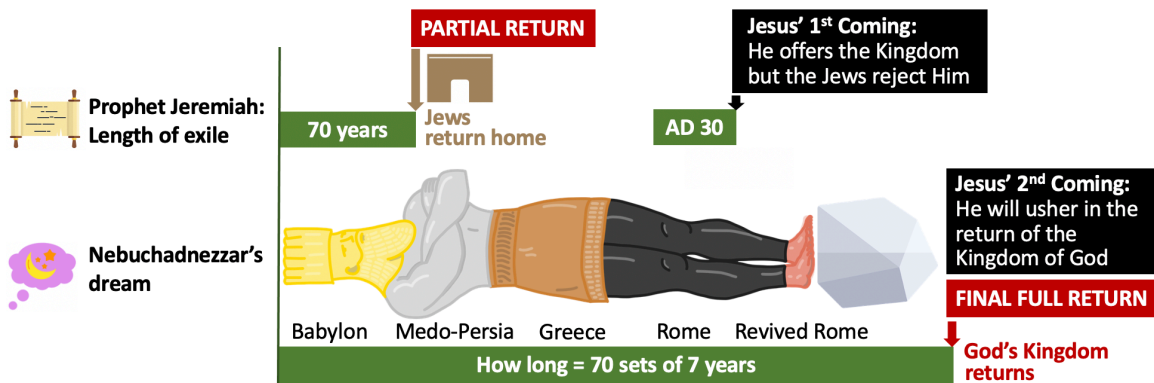
2. All of Yahweh’s Prophecies and Plans Fulfilled

The Bible contains many prophecies about the Millennial Kingdom that God will completely fulfil as well. Here are some examples.

a. Timing of the return of the Kingdom

The angel Gabriel had previously told Daniel that the full final return of the Jews to the Kingdom will be after 70 sets of 7 years.

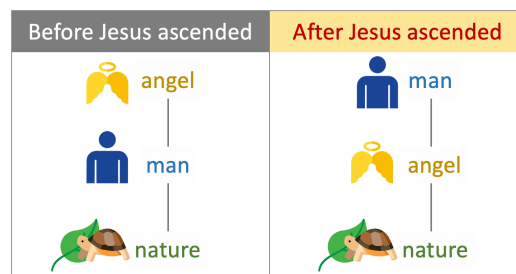
God had given King Nebuchadnezzar the dream of the different Gentile kingdoms reigning till the crushing rock (Jesus) destroys them all. This prophecy will finally be fulfilled with the coming of the Kingdom at exactly the prophesied time!



b. Resurrected mankind will finally be the perfect under-lord

Yahweh’s plan was always for mankind to be under-lord over His creation. When man fell, Satan became the illegal god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4a).

But Jesus being fully God and fully man, reclaimed that responsibility for mankind (Ephesians 1:19–23).

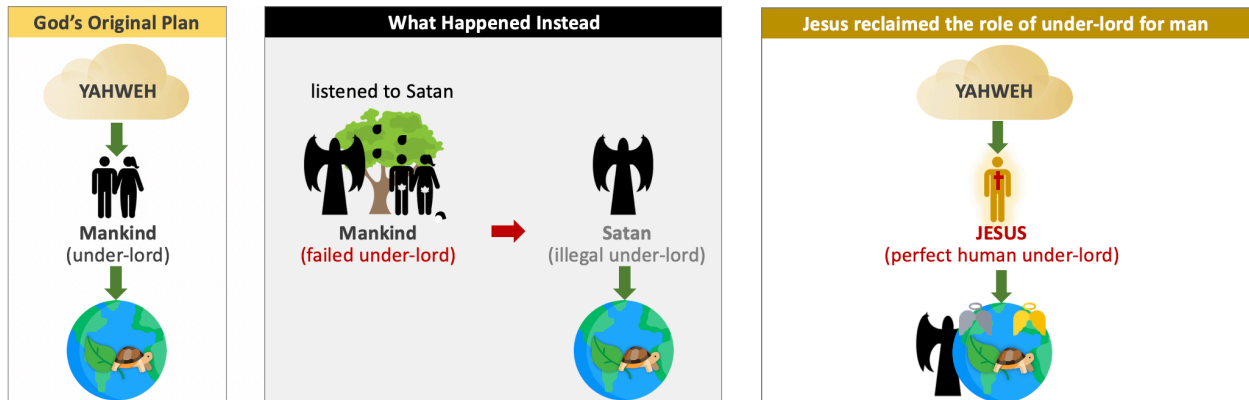


This means that in the Millennial Kingdom, Jesus will reign as God’s successful under-lord. And He will ensure mankind exercises responsible dominion well!

This is what David had prophesied.

Psalm 8:3–8

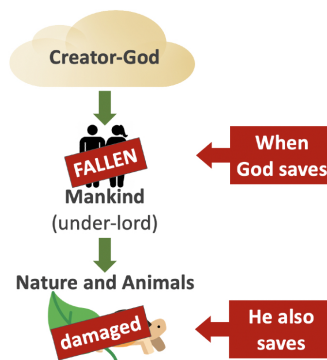
- 3 When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers—
the moon and the stars you set in place—
- 4 what are mere mortals that you should think about them,
human beings that you should care for them?
- 5 Yet you made them only a little lower than God
and crowned them with glory and honor.
- 6 You gave them charge of everything you made,
putting all things under their authority—
- 7 the flocks and the herds
and all the wild animals,
- 8 the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea,
and everything that swims the ocean currents.



During this time, mankind will flourish. Man’s creative talents will be used to the fullest. We can barely imagine the kind of architecture, music, paintings, inventions and more that Kingdom citizens will produce! The full potential of mankind will be achieved and on display under the all-encompassing management of God's grace.

c. Nature will be restored

Nature was cursed because of man’s sin. So when God redeems mankind, He also restores nature!



The earth will be amazing, unrecognisable and renewed in the Millennium.

- Weather and climate will be very favourable and cooperative (Isaiah 30:23–26).
- There will be no useless or “ugly” wastelands in all the world (Isaiah 35:1–7).
- Food will be plentiful for everyone worldwide (Amos 9:13).
- Animals will all be tame and only plant-eating (Isaiah 11:6–9).
- The geography and landscape will be changed for the better (Zechariah 14:3–8; Ezekiel 47:8–11).



However the Bible warns that even today, some people will mock the truth that there will be a renewed earth. They will claim that this is a ridiculous idea because everything has remained the same since the beginning.

Yet, God insists that a renewed earth is true. Just as there were different “worlds” in the past that are very different from each other, so the Kingdom will be different from our present world.

This is what Peter wrote.

2 Peter 3:3–7

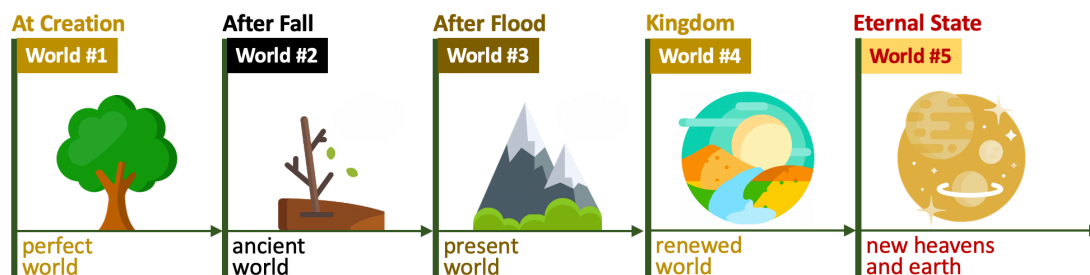
³ Most importantly, I want to remind you that in the last days scoffers will come, mocking the truth and following their own desires. ⁴ They will say, “What happened to the promise that Jesus is coming again? From before the times of our ancestors, everything has remained the same since the world was first created.”

⁵ They deliberately forget that God made the heavens long ago by the word of his command, and he brought the earth out from the water and surrounded it with water.

⁶ Then he used the water to destroy the ancient world with a mighty flood.

⁷ And by the same word, the present heavens and earth have been stored up for fire. They are being kept for the day of judgment, when ungodly people will be destroyed.

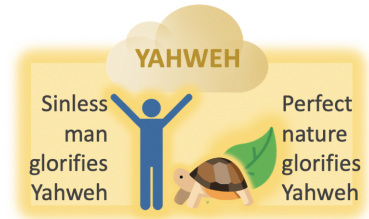
Overall, the Bible mentions five different worlds. The Millennium will be the fourth world.



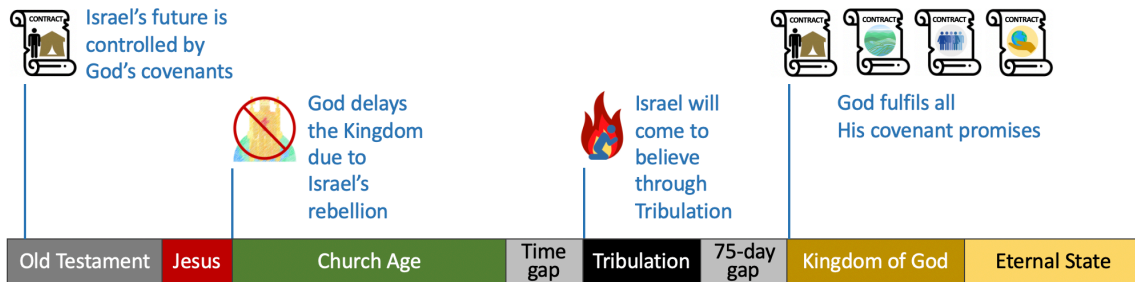
d. Both mankind and nature will glorify God

In the Millennium, resurrected mankind will finally enjoy and properly reflect God’s glory (2 Corinthians 4:14–15).

Nature too will reflect God’s glory as Yahweh originally intended (Romans 8:20–22; Isaiah 55:12–13).



The Millennium is absolutely necessary if God is to keep His covenantal promises and fulfil all His prophecies to Israel and mankind. Without a Millennium, it would be very difficult to understand when, where and how God will fulfil all the contracts and promises He made.



However, there will also be one very curious thing.

e. There will be animal sacrifices

During the Millennium, people will worship Yahweh at the Millennial Temple (Ezekiel 40–48). However, it seems that animal sacrifices will be restarted (Ezekiel 43:18–27).



Ezekiel 45:17

The prince will be required to provide offerings that are given at the religious festivals, the new moon celebrations, the Sabbath days, and all other similar occasions. He will provide the sin offerings, burnt offerings, grain offerings, liquid offerings, and peace offerings to purify the people of Israel, making them right with the LORD.

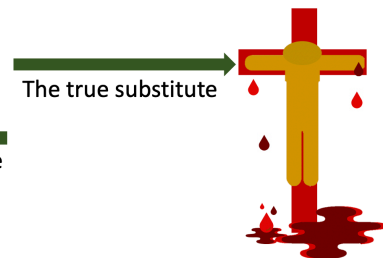
But why would animal sacrifices be needed? We know that in the Old Testament, the animal sacrifices provided temporary atonement or payment for the people’s sins. People still needed faith in God to be declared righteous.

The sacrifices never actually took away sin but pointed to the need for a permanent payment. And Jesus is the final and perfect atonement for mankind. All who trust in Jesus and His work on the cross are justified.

Lamb Sacrifice:
Temporary
payment for
the sin penalty



Jesus’ Death:
True and permanent
payment for
the sin penalty



Perhaps these animal sacrifices are for the ritual purification of the mortal humans who do not yet have their resurrection bodies. Because they are still in their sinful bodies, they will defile the Temple when they come to worship God. So perhaps God allows these animal sacrifices to purify them so they can worship God. It could also be a reminder for them that they also need Jesus to be their Saviour. This is a possibility as the Bible does not clearly explain the reason for this.

Another possibility is that when God fulfils the New Covenant for Israel and Judah, the Jews are finally able to act faithfully and properly in their roles as a nation of priests for the world (Exodus 19:6).

Nevertheless, overall, we see that the Millennium is an amazing time. However, this prosperous, peaceful Kingdom on a renewed earth doesn't go on forever. It lasts for a thousand years and then God does something unusual.

Satan's Final Rebellion



Revelation 20:7–8

⁷ When the thousand years come to an end, Satan will be let out of his prison. ⁸ He will go out to deceive the nations—called Gog and Magog—in every corner of the earth. He will gather them together for battle—a mighty army, as numberless as sand along the seashore.



Yahweh will release Satan from the abyss. Satan then makes one last attempt to get people on earth to rebel against their Creator-God.

1. Who will be tempted to follow Satan?

Immortal, resurrected believers will not be tempted by Satan. They can never fall again because they have an unchanging, righteous nature.

However, mortal believers who entered the Kingdom will have had a thousand years to have families and children.

All these mortal offspring would still be born with sin natures.

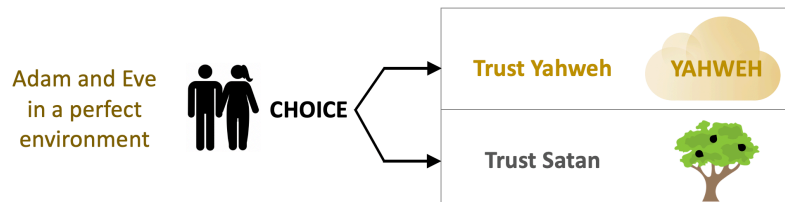


During the Millennium, Jesus will rule with “an iron rod”, meaning there will be no outward rebellion at all. It will seem as if every mortal offspring will put their trust in Jesus as their Saviour.

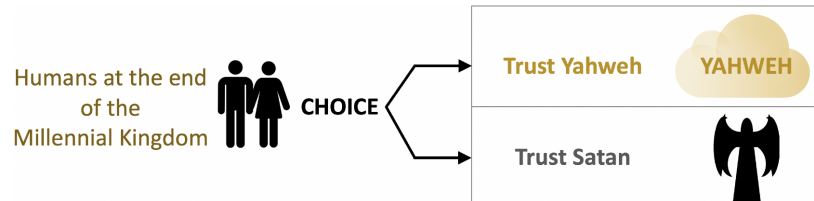
However, the reality is, with Jesus’ supreme rulership, they would not have had a real chance to choose or reject Jesus.

At the end of the Millennium, God allows them to reveal what truly is in their hearts: have they really put their trust in Jesus or have they just been pretending? God will allow them to make this very visible choice.

This will be just like with Adam and Eve. The first humans lived in a perfect environment and were given the choice between Yahweh and Satan.



In the same way, the mortals living on a renewed earth during the Kingdom period will also have to choose between Jesus and Satan!



Revelation tells us that many will choose to trust Satan. They never did put their trust in Jesus during all their time in the Kingdom. They were simply acting like believers.

Now, given the chance to rebel, they join Satan’s side! They reveal their true heart condition. In fact, Satan succeeds in gathering such a large army that the apostle John describes it as “numberless as sand along the seashore”. So many that they can’t be counted!

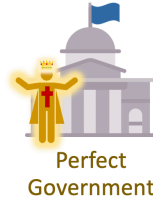
2. Why let Satan start this war?

The Bible doesn’t tell us exactly why God allows Satan to do this. However, here are two possible reasons.

a. Sinful mankind can never succeed

Yahweh is showing that many who are mortal people with a sin nature will still choose to rebel against God despite:

- Being ruled physically and visibly by Jesus Christ, the perfect King.
- Living in an Eden-like environment and enjoying wonderful lives.



Often, people claim that human sin is caused by the external environment: poor governments, poverty, illiteracy, lack of access to the basic things that humans need, etc. If only all the external problems were solved, mankind would be good.

But God is showing that there is absolutely no system, or environment, or government or set of external conditions where sinful mankind will succeed.

- Even **living with** King Jesus for a thousand years will not “cure” man’s sin nature.
- Mankind needs Jesus **living in** them in order for people to be able to love and obey God.

b. Satan never changes

Yahweh is showing that Satan never changes. The devil was evil in the garden of Eden and even after a thousand years in prison, he remains evil. There is no repentance from him. This means there can be no salvation for Satan because he doesn’t want it.



John goes on to describe this final battle between God, Satan and his followers.

Revelation 20:8–9

⁸ He will go out to deceive the nations—called Gog and Magog—in every corner of the earth. He will gather them together for battle—a mighty army, as numberless as sand along the seashore.

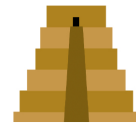
⁹ And I saw them as they went up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded God’s people and the beloved city.

But fire from heaven came down on the attacking armies and consumed them.

How is it possible that there are so many unbelievers in the Millennial Kingdom?

The thousand-year Kingdom of God will be a unique time in history. It will be filled with great peace, prosperity and a one-world government that will rule without tyranny but with wisdom and righteousness.

Ever since the Fall, mankind has longed for these conditions! At Babel, mankind first tried to gather and build a one-world government that would rule everyone. The goal was to create a society that could save mankind. Since then, mankind has not given up on the “Babel fantasy” of trying to build a Kingdom of Man that redeems people without God. But they have never succeeded.



With the Millennial Kingdom, we see these conditions:

1. a perfect ruler of a one-world government: King Jesus Himself.
2. a perfect government made up of incorruptible, immortal humans.
3. a near-perfect environment over all the earth.
4. the evil influence of Satan and his demons completely removed.

These appear to be the best possible conditions for mankind to thrive! Now mankind has the best chance to succeed in the Millennial Kingdom. So why are there still unbelievers?

The problem is that with fallen people, there are limits to how good the world can get.

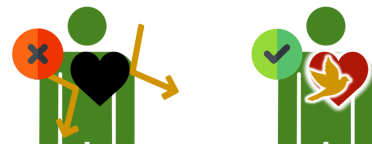
It's true that Jesus will indeed be the “King of kings” and His global government will exercise civil authority well (the fourth divine institution) and rule all the nations of the earth justly.

But under such a perfect government, mortal people with a sin nature will be under social peer pressure to act and behave in a righteous way. These unbelievers will have to hide or suppress their sin nature. They will act like believers and fool others!



The millennial rulership of the earth will show the limits of the post-Fall divine institution of civil government. This thousand-year Kingdom does not result in a perfect, sinless society!

This is because external authority (even a perfect one) cannot be a tool of redemption. External rulership can only restrain evil behaviours but it cannot change the evil thoughts and intentions of the mind and heart. Mankind cannot be truly changed from the outside. There has to be an internal change of heart.



Through the Millennial Kingdom, Yahweh answers this question: Can a perfect environment and government, freed from the evil influence of Satan, be capable of saving fallen mankind?

The answer is a clear no. God shows that when Satan is allowed to tempt fallen people who have enjoyed a thousand years of peace and prosperity under a perfect leader and government, many will still rebel!

This leads to two further thoughts.

1. Revelation contains wisdom for life today

The book of Revelation is not just about how God ends mortal history but is a source of wisdom about real life. Many of our “what if...” or “If only God would...” questions are answered in Revelation.



Remember how the Jews considered the book of Daniel a wisdom book and not just a book of prophecy? In the same way, Revelation contains much wisdom for us today.

The rebellion at the end of the near-perfect Millennial Kingdom tells us that we can never rely on human ideology, theories, plans or governments to save human society and the environment. Even with every possible external evil influence removed, evil still resides in the hearts of people so the desire of the Kingdom of Man to save the world without God is not possible.

2. Revelation tells us how godly families can still have unbelieving children

Revelation shows how there will still be unbelievers even under a perfect, godly government. This warns us that in the same way, there can be unbelieving children within godly families.

Even when the parents are faithful and mature disciples of Christ who do their best to guide their children, the children can grow up with unbelieving hearts while acting like good believers.

But when an opportunity comes (like for example, going out to work, going to university or moving to live in another city on their own) these children will reveal their true natures—they have been unbelievers all along.



Revelation has sober warnings for believers not to be surprised when children from loving, godly homes rebel against the faith of their parents.

But all is not lost. The Holy Spirit can and does work in the hearts of these children, reminding them of the peace, love, meaningfulness and wisdom of their family life. God is still able to turn them around and bring them to faith in Christ. And if they were believers but have turned unfaithful, the Holy Spirit can restore their fellowship with God and their family.

3. Gog and Magog: The Final Battle



Why does John call this gathering of nations “Gog and Magog”?

The only other reference to Gog and Magog is in Ezekiel 38–39. In Ezekiel, Gog is a person while Magog is a place. In Revelation, this isn’t clear. It seems John may be using “Gog and Magog” as symbolic names (like how he used “Jezebel” in Revelation 3).

In the battle Ezekiel prophesied about, the alliance or partnership of countries led by Gog (a leader) from the land of Magog (the place) was swiftly and completely crushed by God.

So perhaps when the apostle John refers to “Gog and Magog”, he is saying that this final battle with Satan will be similar. Satan will gather evil rebellious mankind to battle against King Jesus and His people. But God will end the battle swiftly and supernaturally with fire from heaven. Satan will be crushed.



4. Satan is Removed Forever

Revelation 20:10

Then the devil, who had deceived them, was thrown into the fiery lake of burning sulfur, joining the beast and the false prophet. There they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.



After Satan’s defeat, Yahweh throws him into the lake of fire. Unlike the abyss, there is now no escape. He will be confined there for eternity. Eternal separation and punishment is necessary and the only just treatment for Satan and all who rebel against Yahweh.

Notice how after a thousand years, the beast and the false prophet are still in the lake of fire. They are not annihilated nor utterly destroyed. They still exist. And they will continue to be tormented in the lake of fire forever. There is no end to their punishment.

It is interesting to note that there are only four chapters in the entire Bible in which Satan is not present: Genesis 1–2 and Revelation 21–22! God puts him away for all eternity! Hallelujah indeed! Wickedness and evil have been judged!

This is what John sees next.

The Great White Throne Judgment



Revelation 20:11–15

¹¹ And I saw a great white throne and the one sitting on it. The earth and sky fled from his presence, but they found no place to hide. ¹² I saw the dead, both great and small, standing before God's throne. And the books were opened, including the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to what they had done, as recorded in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up its dead, and death and the grave gave up their dead. And all were judged according to their deeds. ¹⁴ Then death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire. This lake of fire is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.

A note on the word “grave” in verse 14: this is from the Greek word “hades”. Many other English translations leave the word untranslated (for example, NASB, ESV, NIV, NET). Others translate it as “hell” (KJV) or “grave” (NLT).



This final judgment of the world happens in God's heavenly courtroom. This is the most sobering event in the Bible.

1. First, God destroys our current heaven and earth.

The psalmist describes in Psalm 102 that God will throw away the current universe, like changing from old to new clothes.

Psalm 102:25–26

²⁵ Long ago you laid the foundation of the earth and made the heavens with your hands.

²⁶ They will perish, but you remain forever; they will wear out like old clothing.

You will change them like a garment and discard them.



The prophet Isaiah also mentions the new heaven and earth.

Isaiah 65:17

“Look! I am creating new heavens and a new earth, and no one will even think about the old ones anymore.

Peter also talks about this.

2 Peter 3:10–13

¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment.

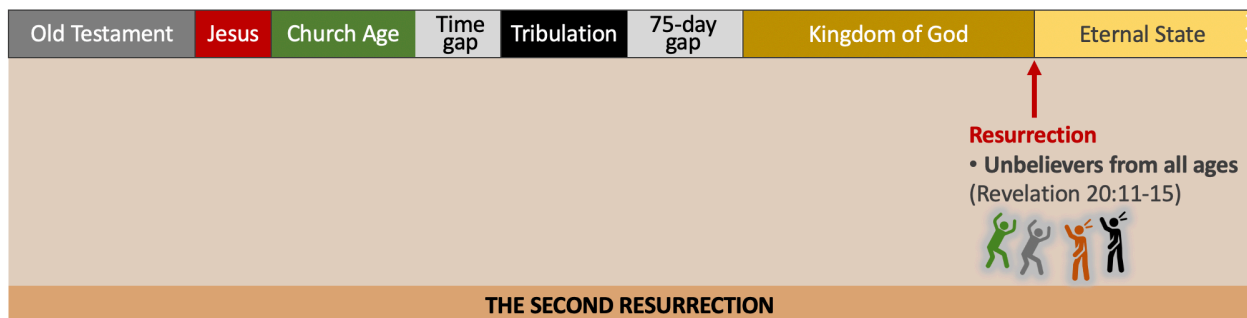
¹¹ Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live, ¹² looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along. On that day, he will set the heavens on fire, and the elements will melt away in the flames. ¹³ But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world filled with God's righteousness.

This is not simply a renovation or renewal! The very elements of our current universe will be destroyed by fire. Nothing will be left. Jesus said:

Matthew 24:35

Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear.

2. Then Yahweh resurrects all unbelievers from all of history.



With heaven and earth destroyed, it appears that this judgment might happen as they are suspended in space.

3. Yahweh pulls out two books of evidence and based on their contents, He will send all the unbelievers to the lake of fire.



The Books

Contains the record of the deeds of unbelievers



The Book

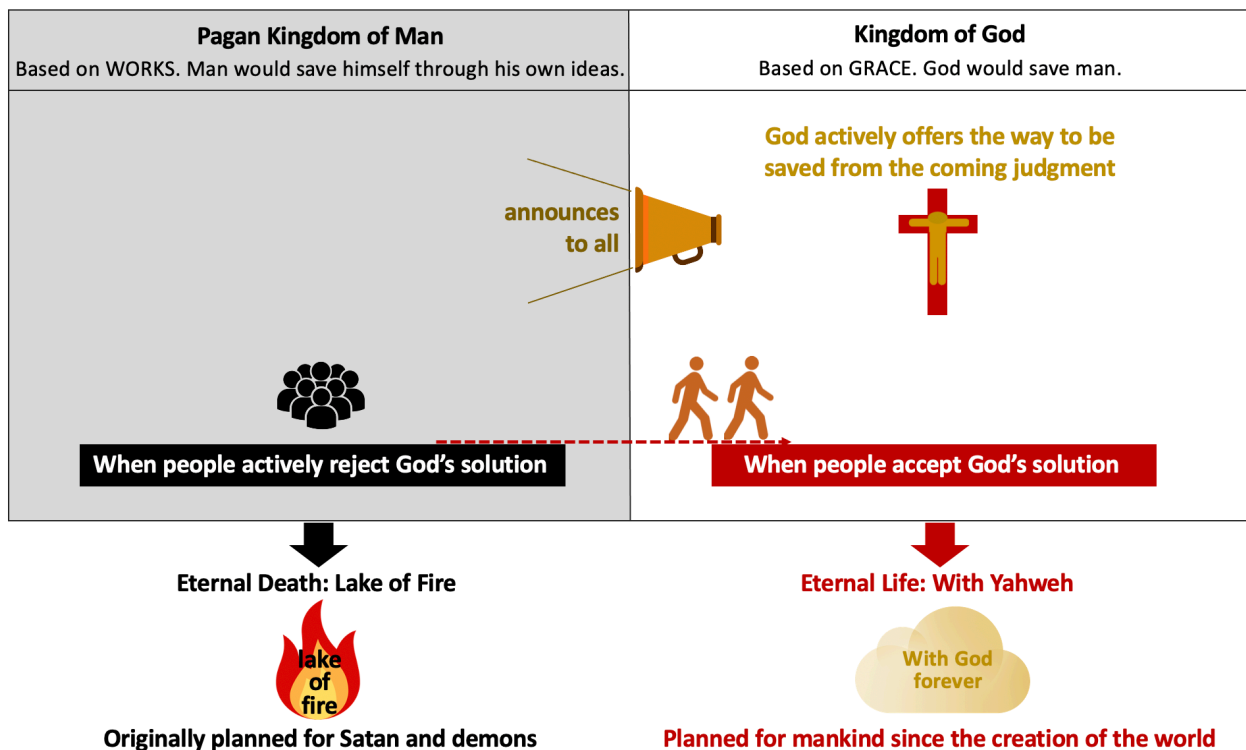
The Book of Life—
Contains the names of believers

a. The Book of Life

Looking at the Book of Life, Yahweh will find that none of these unbelievers' names will be in it. So they will be sent to the lake of fire.

We need to remember here that God did not create the lake of fire for humans. It was created for the devil and his demons (Matthew 25:41).

Instead, from the creation of the world, God had prepared and planned for humans to live with Him in His Kingdom (Matthew 25:34). However, rebellious humans who refuse to acknowledge Yahweh as Creator-God and Jesus as their Saviour will join rebellious Satan and his demons in the lake of fire.



b. The Books

The books of records will show the deeds of each unbeliever. Just as there are different levels of rewards for believers based on their work (2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Corinthians 3:10–15), we believe there will be different levels of punishments in the lake of fire, based on how evil and wicked each unbeliever had been in life.

Why do we think this?

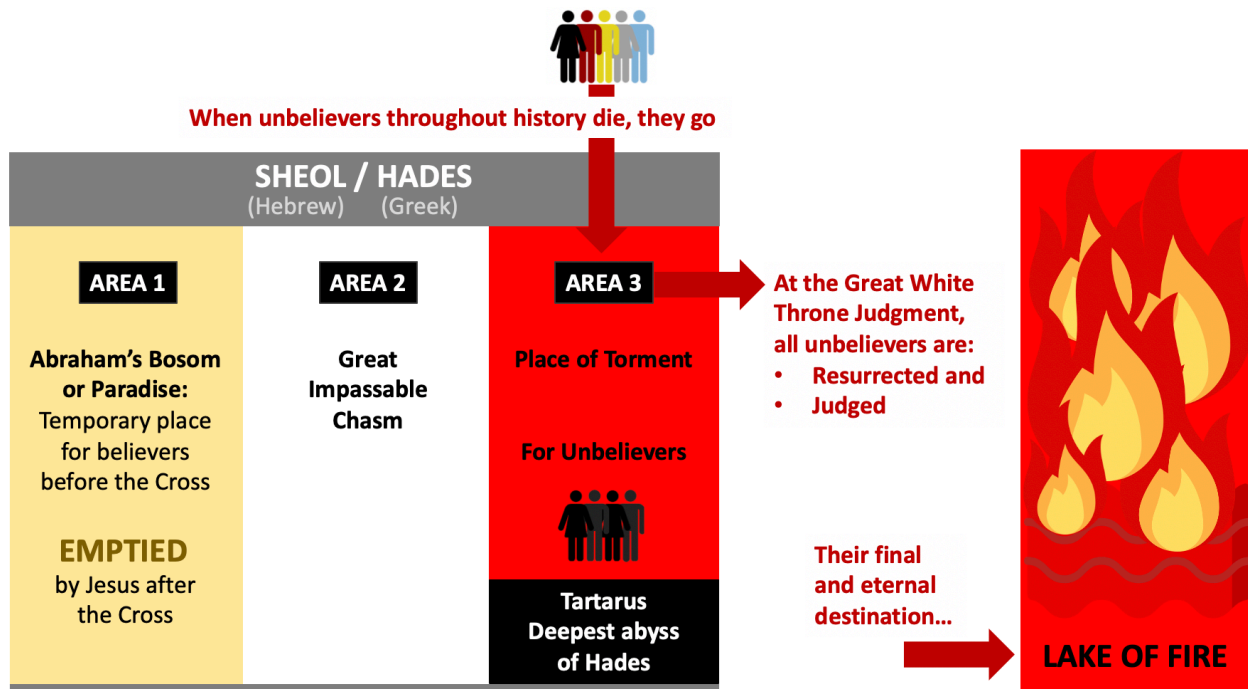
This is what Jesus told his disciples.

Matthew 10:14–15

¹⁴ If any household or town refuses to welcome you or listen to your message, shake its dust from your feet as you leave. ¹⁵ I tell you the truth, the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah will be better off than such a town on the judgment day.

Here, Jesus is talking about unbelievers. Since unbelieving Sodom and Gomorrah can be “better off” on the day of judgment than other evil cities, it seems to indicate there will be different levels or degrees of punishment.

However, regardless of the levels of punishment, all unbelievers will go to the lake of fire.



4. Then Yahweh will throw death and the grave into the lake of fire

After the Great White Throne judgment, Yahweh will have no more use for death and the place of the dead. So He will throw them into the lake of fire as well.



The lake of fire is the final destination for Satan, his demons, the Antichrist, the false prophet and all unbelievers. They will remain there alive and in punishment for eternity.

Note: In the New Testament, this place of eternal punishment is called by different names.

New Testament names for the place of eternal punishment			
“Gehenna” (Greek)	“limnē ho pyr” (Greek) Meaning: lake of fire	“second death” (Revelation 20:14, 21:8)	“the outer darkness” (Matthew 8:12, 22:13, 25:30)

However, “Gehenna” is often also translated into English as “hell”. This can cause confusion in English!

So when we come across the word “hell” in an English Bible, and we are unsure of the context of the passage, it is helpful to look up the original Greek word in that verse to see if it is:

- “Hades” (temporary place of the dead) or
- “Gehenna” (eternal place for those separated from Yahweh forever)

After this final judgment, John sees something else.

The New Heaven and the New Earth—The Eternal State



In Revelation 4–5, John described the current heaven. But now in Revelation 21–22, John sees the new heaven and the new earth!

Revelation 21:1

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone.



During the Kingdom period, Jesus reigns from Jerusalem. But in the new universe, Yahweh will introduce the New Jerusalem, which will descend to earth from heaven. And He will live with man forever!

Revelation 21:2–3

² And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, “Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them.



An angel then shows John what New Jerusalem is like.

1. Filled with the glory of God

Revelation 21:9–11, 22–26, 22:3b–5

⁹ Then one of the seven angels who held the seven bowls containing the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come with me! I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

¹⁰ So he took me in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and he showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.

¹¹ It shone with the glory of God and sparkled like a precious stone—like jasper as clear as crystal.

²² I saw no temple in the city, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon, for the glory of God illuminates the city, and the Lamb is its light.

²⁴ The nations will walk in its light, and the kings of the world will enter the city in all their glory. ²⁵ Its gates will never be closed at the end of day because there is no night there.

²⁶ And all the nations will bring their glory and honor into the city.

³ For the throne of God and of the Lamb will be there, and his servants will worship him.

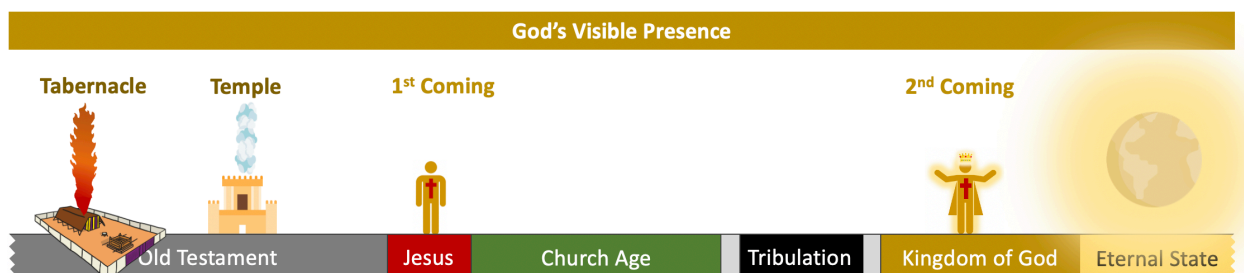
⁴ And they will see his face, and his name will be written on their foreheads. ⁵ And there will be no night there—no need for lamps or sun—for the Lord God will shine on them. And they will reign forever and ever.

The angel showed John the New Jerusalem, arriving in all its splendour like a bride and filled with the glory of God!

In the past, Israel had experienced God’s Shekinah glory.

- In many of those years, Yahweh’s glory dwelt in the tabernacle and then in the temple. Then God withdrew it when Israel rebelled.
- The Jews experienced God’s glory again when Jesus came to earth at His first coming.
- And then in the thousand-year Kingdom, Jesus’ full glory is clearly seen.

But now on the new earth, Jesus’ glory lights the entire world. There is no need for the sun or moon!

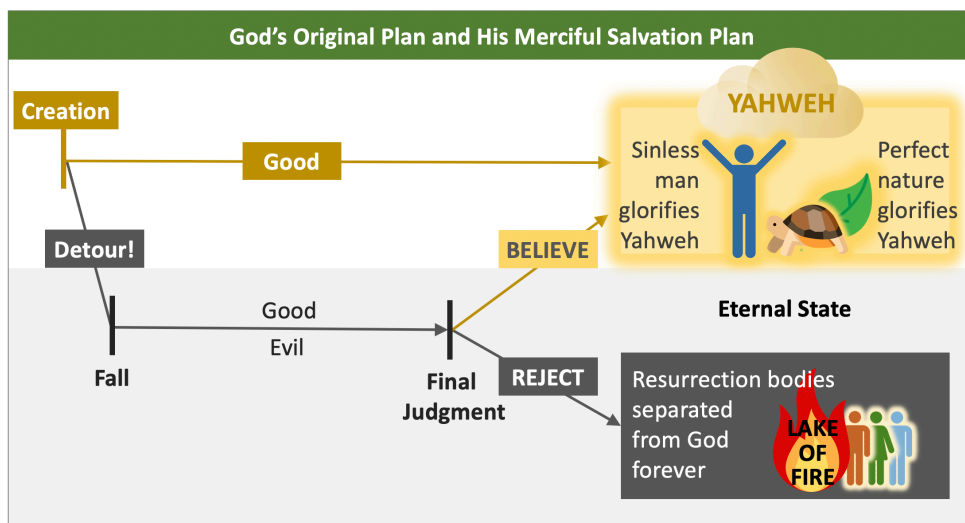
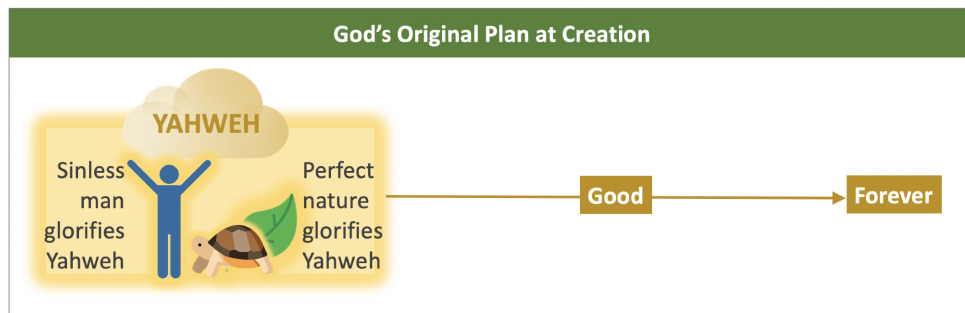


There isn't even a need for the temple because God's glory is everywhere!

And the nations will "bring their glory and honor" into the New Jerusalem.

- In the Millennium, only glorified people reflect God's glory.
- But in the Eternal State, all nations and all peoples will worship Yahweh face to face! His glory will shine on us and we will all perfectly reflect Yahweh's own glory and honour!

God's original plan for man is fully and absolutely fulfilled!

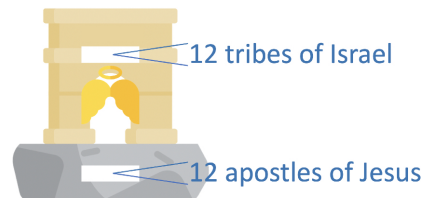


2. The church and Israel united with Yahweh

Revelation 21:12–14

¹² The city wall was broad and high, with twelve gates guarded by twelve angels. And the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were written on the gates. ¹³ There were three gates on each side—east, north, south, and west.

¹⁴ The wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were written the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.



Previously we saw how God’s plans for Israel and the church were different.

But in the Eternal State, it seems like these two groups of God’s people may be merged into one. Why do we think this?

The name of Israel (represented by the 12 tribes) and the name of the church (represented by the 12 apostles) are inscribed or written into the gates and foundation stones of the city. On the new earth, Israel and the church are now combined into one people—God’s people!

3. A place of perfection

Revelation 21:4, 8, 27, 22:3a

⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.”

⁸ “But cowards, unbelievers, the corrupt, murderers, the immoral, those who practice witchcraft, idol worshipers, and all liars—their fate is in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”

²⁷ Nothing evil will be allowed to enter, nor anyone who practices shameful idolatry and dishonesty—but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

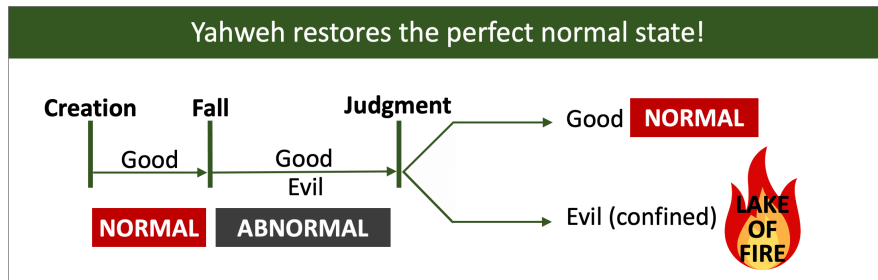
³ No longer will there be a curse upon anything.

In Genesis, we saw that when Yahweh completed creation, it was all good. There was no evil in it. That was God’s “normal”.

Evil, death and suffering were introduced by the Fall of mankind. Since that time, the world has been in a temporary “abnormal” state where good and evil are mixed.



















But God promised to restore the perfect state, the “normal”.

In the Eternal State, God does just that!



As we read through the description of the new earth in Revelation, we can't help but notice the similarities and the differences with the beginning of the world.

Current Universe vs the New Universe

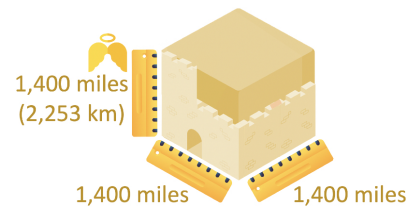
Genesis 1–3	Revelation 21–22
Paradise lost 	Paradise regained 
Heaven and earth created 	New Heaven and earth 
Sun created 	No more sun 
Night established 	No more night 
Seas created 	No more seas 
Curse announced 	No more curse 
Death enters the world 	No more death 
Mankind driven from the tree of life 	Mankind has access to the tree of life 
Sorrow and pain begin 	No more tears and pain 

4. The city will be absolutely stunning

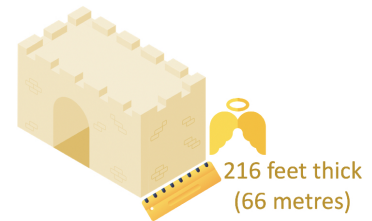
Revelation 21:15–21

¹⁵ The angel who talked to me held in his hand a gold measuring stick to measure the city, its gates, and its wall.

¹⁶ When he measured it, he found it was a square, as wide as it was long. In fact, its length and width and height were each 1,400 miles. ¹⁷ Then he measured the walls and found them to be 216 feet thick (according to the human standard used by the angel).



¹⁸ The wall was made of jasper, and the city was pure gold, as clear as glass. ¹⁹ The wall of the city was built on foundation stones inlaid with twelve precious stones: the first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, ²⁰ the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.



²¹ The twelve gates were made of pearls—each gate from a single pearl! And the main street was pure gold, as clear as glass.

Revelation 22:1–2 (NIV)

¹ Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

- The ratio of the length, breadth and height of the city is similar to the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle—both are cubes. The New Jerusalem is a massive Holy of Holies!
- The city is a 2,200 km (1,400 mile) cube.
- The walls are made of jasper and are 65m (216 feet) thick.
- The foundation has many precious stones of all kinds of colours.
- Each of the twelve gates into the city is made of a single pearl.
- The city is like pure gold, like clear glass.
- The main street is made of pure gold.
- A river flows from the throne of God and down main street.
- Just as it was in Eden, there is the tree of life in the Eternal State. And it bears a different fruit each month! Its leaves are for the healing of the nations. Some wonder what this healing is about since there is no more curse, sickness and pain in the Eternal State. The Greek word for “healing” has the idea of “therapy”. Perhaps it has something to do with the overall wellness of the nations. We don’t really know, but we will find out when we are there!

Precious  stones



Actually, we can barely begin to imagine what the overall city looks like. And John's short descriptions leave us with even more questions! But for now, that's what the Bible tells us about the New Jerusalem.

Yahweh has proven Himself to be absolutely faithful and good. Although we don't know many details about the Eternal State, we know:

- We will not be bored. God created man to reflect Him and He is an immensely creative Person. He will have good things for us to do (Ephesians 2:10).
- We will enjoy the Eternal State very much because God gives us all we need for our enjoyment (1 Timothy 6:17b).

Yahweh can be trusted. Eternity future will be good even if we don't yet know how it'll be like. We have nothing to fear.

This is all true

A lot of what the end of Revelation describes is so out of this world. We might be tempted to think that it cannot or it must not be literally true. That is why Yahweh says this to John before He shows him the New Jerusalem.

Revelation 21:5

And the one sitting on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new!"

And then he said to me, "Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true."



Yahweh Himself says that what He is telling and showing John is trustworthy and true. God is asking us to believe what He says about the "new".

And as an encouragement to believers to continue having hope, Jesus continues by saying:

Revelation 21:6–7

⁶ And he also said, "It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End.

To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life. ⁷ All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children.

These blessings are meant for all believers! The New Jerusalem is meant for believers. The Eternal State is meant for believers!

Meant for believers!



This is John's definition of who is the one who is "victorious" or who "overcomes":

1 John 5:5 (NIV)

Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

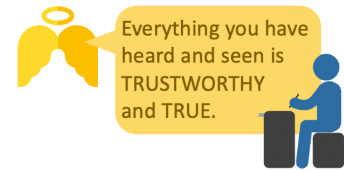
Final Words

1. This is true!

After John is shown all this, the interpreting angel once again affirms that all he has seen and heard are true.

Revelation 22:6

Then the angel said to me, "Everything you have heard and seen is trustworthy and true. The Lord God, who inspires his prophets, has sent his angel to tell his servants what will happen soon."



Jesus Himself then says this:

Revelation 22:7

"Look, I am coming soon! Blessed are those who obey the words of prophecy written in this book."

How did John respond to all the revelation he had been given?



Revelation 22:8–9

⁸ I, John, am the one who heard and saw all these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me. ⁹ But he said, "No, don't worship me. I am a servant of God, just like you and your brothers the prophets, as well as all who obey what is written in this book. Worship only God!"

2. Unseal the Prophecy

When God first gave Daniel information about the end times, He instructed Daniel to seal up the prophecy because the things he recorded were about events in the far future.

But when John records the revelation that Jesus is giving him, he is told not to seal up the prophecy because the time is near.

Seal up the Prophecy (Daniel 12:4)	Do Not Seal the Prophecy (Revelation 22:10)
<p>But you, Daniel, keep this prophecy a secret; <u>seal up the book until the time of the end</u>, when many will rush here and there, and knowledge will increase.”</p> 	<p>Then he instructed me, “<u>Do not seal up the prophetic words in this book, for the time is near.</u>”</p> 

The angel is saying to John that these events can occur at any time. Jesus wants people to know and be ready.

Note: In the ancient world, it was common practice to make two copies of important documents like land transactions. One copy of the deed was an unsealed, public copy and the other was a sealed copy kept in a safe place. (For example, see Jeremiah 32:1–12.) Yahweh was treating Daniel’s book in a similar manner. Daniel’s book was “sealed” as proof of what God promised to fulfil for Israel.

Sealing it did not mean hiding it, because God’s message was given so His people would know the future. But the book was to be “sealed” in this way: the full meaning of what Daniel wrote would not be understood “until the time of the end”. Even Daniel himself didn’t fully understand all that he had seen, heard and recorded!

When John completes the book of Revelation, he is told to keep the book unsealed because now is the time of the end.

The books of Daniel and Revelation work together so we can understand God’s plan for the end of history. In this way, “knowledge will increase”.

3. Watch out!

Jesus then continues with His final warning:

Revelation 22:11–15

¹¹ Let the one who is doing harm continue to do harm; let the one who is vile continue to be vile; let the one who is righteous continue to live righteously; let the one who is holy continue to be holy.”

¹² “Look, I am coming soon, bringing my reward with me to repay all people according to their deeds. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.”



¹⁴ **Blessed** are those who wash their robes. They will be permitted to enter through the gates of the city and eat the fruit from the tree of life. ¹⁵ Outside the city are the dogs—the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idol worshipers, and all who love to live a lie.

Jesus is saying His return is at any moment. If people continue to live the way they live, they will be caught in what they are doing and their fate will be sealed.

But people still have time to repent. So Jesus is leaving this revelation unsealed, so all mankind can have access to it.

4. All this revelation is for the church

Jesus then says who the message of Revelation is meant for.

Revelation 22:16–17

¹⁶ “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this message for the churches. I am both the source of David and the heir to his throne. I am the bright morning star.”

¹⁷ The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” Let anyone who hears this say, “Come.” Let anyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who desires drink freely from the water of life.

Here is the first mention of the church since chapter 3!

Jesus wants the book of Revelation to be shared with the churches so believers:

- can have hope for the future
- will be warned of what is to come and
- can invite others to “come” and believe in Jesus.



Why should we trust Jesus’ words? Because He is the long-promised King of the returning Kingdom and Eternal State. He has proven the trustworthiness of His many prophetic words spoken over the centuries of the Old Testament.

5. Don't meddle with the Bible!

God then warns people not to add or take away from the prophecies.

Revelation 22:18–19

¹⁸ And I solemnly declare to everyone who hears the words of prophecy written in this book:

If anyone adds anything to what is written here, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book.

¹⁹ And if anyone removes any of the words from this book of prophecy, God will remove that person's share in the tree of life and in the holy city that are described in this book.

God closed the canon of the whole Bible with a blessing and a curse on two levels.

- **Revelation:** No one is allowed to add or take away from the prophecies of Revelation. Only prophets chosen by God can write and edit the Bible. The apostle John was the last one chosen.



- **Entire Bible:** No one is allowed to add or take away words from the entire Bible. When we understand that Revelation ends the entire canon of God's Scripture, we also understand that this warning applies to all that the prophets have recorded for us about God's revelation to mankind (that is, the entire Bible).



Jesus is saying He has given us what we need to know to take us all the way into the Eternal State.

Therefore, we must not do any of the following:

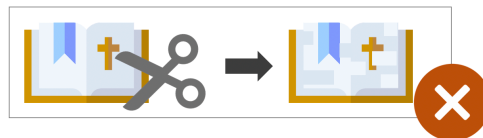
- a. **Add other writings:** Some people who tend towards the cults add to Scripture by placing other writings or teachings as equal to God's Word.



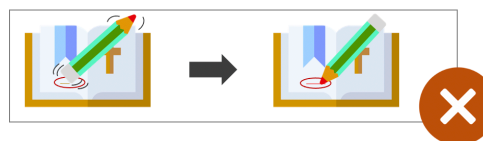
- b. **Expand God's Word:** Others claim to be "apostles" and "prophets" and expand on the prophecies and promises of God.



- c. **Take away from God's Word:** Still others take away what they don't like from the Bible. They have a "buffet approach" to the Word of God. They ignore sections of it. They decide what they view as Scripture or what is "important" and what they deem "unimportant", they throw out.



- d. **Take away the meaning from God's Word:** Some people, when faced with parts of the Bible they don't understand or don't like, use different interpretation methods to change the meaning of the Bible.



If we take God's Word as the authority and are confident in its accuracy, we must not do any of the above. All of this adding and taking away from God's Word is very dangerous. Jesus lays a heavy curse on anyone who does.

However, we need to remember what God said at the start of Revelation.

Revelation 1:3

God blesses the one who reads the words of this prophecy to the church, and he blesses all who listen to its message and obey what it says, for the time is near.

So Revelation contains both a blessing and a cursing based on how the reader reacts to its contents.

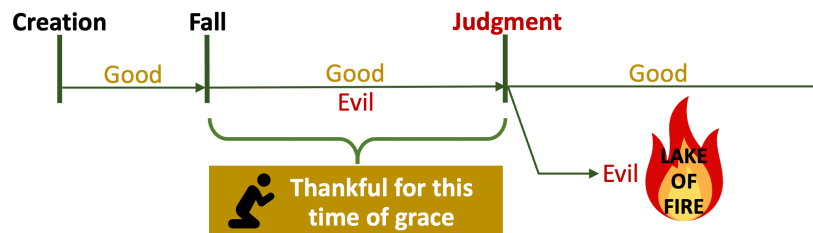
How should we react to the book of Revelation?

Some people fear Revelation because they think they can't understand it. Others feel it is not important.

Yet in the book of Revelation, we see that what we learn is not just something "good to add" to our knowledge about God. Instead, it is critical for successful daily Christian living. Why? Because we get a better idea about the answers to some of our questions. For example:

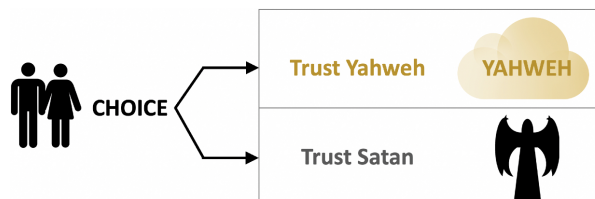
1. Why doesn't Yahweh get rid of evil man earlier?

Because of His grace and patience, He allows them the opportunity to repent.



2. Why has God allowed Satan to survive all these years instead of getting rid of him immediately after he rebelled?

It is to give mankind genuine choice: the opportunity to choose or reject Yahweh as their God. God uses Satan to reveal the evil in mankind's heart.

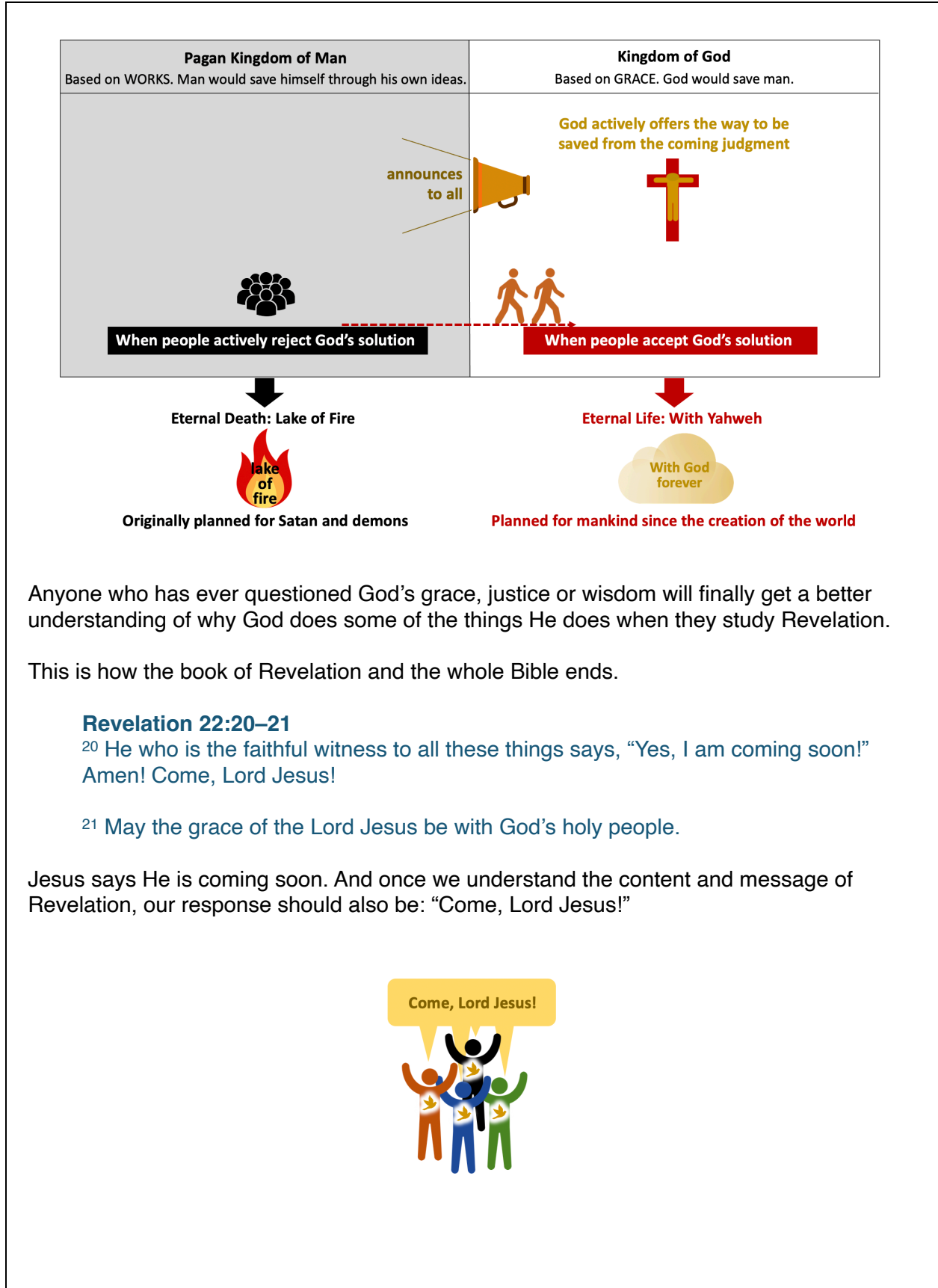


3. Isn't God mean to send people to the lake of fire?

No. Mankind's heart is so wicked and evil that even when they know God is sending the judgments during the Tribulation to cause them to repent, they refuse. They curse Him instead.

Even when Jesus is ruling the perfect Millennial Kingdom with a perfect government and environment, with peace and prosperity for everyone, uncountable numbers merely pretend to obey. The moment they are allowed to rebel, they join Satan to fight against Jesus.

These people do not want Yahweh and all that He stands for. So Yahweh justly and rightfully gives them what they want: an eternity without Him. An eternity away from all the goodness of God means an eternity of suffering away from Him.



Anyone who has ever questioned God's grace, justice or wisdom will finally get a better understanding of why God does some of the things He does when they study Revelation.

This is how the book of Revelation and the whole Bible ends.

Revelation 22:20–21

²⁰ He who is the faithful witness to all these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon!" Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

²¹ May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's holy people.

Jesus says He is coming soon. And once we understand the content and message of Revelation, our response should also be: "Come, Lord Jesus!"



If we do not share this same feeling, then we have not spent enough time to really understand Yahweh's wondrous plan of how He will permanently separate good and evil forever through an act of judgment and salvation. God says it should be our heart's desire that He complete His plan for mankind.

The apostle John closes the final book of Scripture by mentioning God's grace. This is only the second time the word "grace" appears in Revelation. (The first is Revelation 1:4.)

It is as if God's grace envelops or surrounds all the events of the end times. And it is a reminder of how we as believers live our lives:

- The believer's life begins with grace.
- The believer's life is sustained by grace.
- The believer's life should show God's grace.
- And Yahweh's grace will lead us back home to Him.

Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

Discussion Questions

Discuss the following questions as a group or use them for personal reflection.

1. Having gone through all of Revelation, what are your thoughts? How should the information in the last book of the Bible affect the way you live your life? In what areas do you need to rethink the way you live?
2. If you had a different understanding of Revelation, how has this approach of using a normal, everyday understanding of the text affected your view of Revelation? How has it affected your overall understanding of Scripture?
3. Only in studying Revelation do we see how God keeps all His covenant promises to Israel. God is not casual nor careless with His words and contracts. How should knowing God's absolute ability to fulfil His promises affect our lives with Him? How should we understand the many promises He makes to His beloved body, the church?



Pre-reading for next lesson: Do a quick review of Lessons 32–51. Also review Faith in Action Lessons: 8, 20 and 31. The final three lessons will be Faith in Action exercises.