

Bimonthly Bible Reading
Stark Road Gospel Hall
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Future Events: The Millennium, Great White Throne, and Eternal State

1. The Millennium, the Final Dispensation

“I have set My King upon My holy hill of Zion” (Ps 2:6).

Overview. After the Rapture of the church, the world will enter a seven-year period called the Tribulation. The Rapture concludes the dispensation of Grace, while the Tribulation resumes the dispensation of Law for its final seven years. The Second Coming of Christ to earth ends “the time of Jacob’s distress,” and ushers in the Millennial Kingdom promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Lord Jesus Christ will reign as King, occupying the throne of David for 1,000 years (Mt 25:31; Lk 1:32-3; Ac 1:10-1; 2:29-30; Rv 20:1-7). He will fulfill all of the terms of the Abrahamic, Davidic, and New Covenants.

Synonyms for the Millennial Kingdom. The kingdom of Christ (Rv 11:15). The regeneration (Mt 19:28). The times of refreshing (Ac 3:19). The world to come (Hb 2:5).

Rv 20:1-3. Satan Bound 1000 Years. Christ’s reign will be preceded by the removal of Satan from the world (Dn 7:17-27; Rv 20:1-6). Satan’s rebel angels will apparently also be bound (Is 24:21-2), just as they were cast out of heaven to the earth with him (Rv 12:9).

Rv 20:4. Resurrected Saints Reign with Christ 1000 Years. Believers from all ages, including OT believers, the church, and the Tribulation martyrs, will reign with Christ over Israel and all the nations of the earth, serving as priests of God and of Christ (Ez 37:21-8; Dn 7:17-22; Rv 19:11-6). “Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will sit down in the Kingdom of God.” OT and Tribulation believers will be raised at the outset of this period, and will rule with Christ and His Bride.

1. The remnant of Israel surviving at the end of the Tribulation will be converted to Christ when He appears. They will “look on Me whom they have pierced” and “mourn for Him,” and be cleansed in the “fountain opened for sin and uncleanness” (Zc 11, 12). So “all Israel shall be saved,” and enter into the Kingdom. Along with them, the converted Gentiles who survive the Tribulation and are exonerated at the judgment of the living nations (the “sheep” of Mt 25) will enter the kingdom.
2. Christ will take His place as Head of the Nations and reign in Jerusalem (Is 2:3). His reign will bring peace, equity, justice, prosperity, and glory (Is 11:2-5). The capital will be Jerusalem (Is 2:3). Instruments of war will be broken or dismantled (Is 2:4; Ps 46:9).
3. It is possible that Christ’s reign will not require His continuous presence on earth. Ez 46-8 suggests that the Prince of the House of David—perhaps David himself (Ez 34:24; 37:25)—will stand in for Christ when He is not in Jerusalem. If so, this explains the full meaning of Jacob’s ladder—seamless travel and communication between heaven and earth, “the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.” He will be the center and glory of everything in heaven and earth, and exercise universal sway.
4. Israel will be the head of the nations (Zc 14:9; Dt 28:13). The Kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God’s promise to Israel (Is 65:17-25; Ez 37:21-8; Zc 8:1-17) to restore them to the land which they forfeited through their disobedience (Dt 28:15-68). At the end of the Tribulation, God will regather Israel to their land (Ez 34:12; Is 11:12) and reunite the northern 10 tribes with Judah and Benjamin (Ez 37:19-22; Is 11:13).
5. A new temple will be built in Jerusalem according to the pattern shown to Ezekiel (40-48), and become the center of worship for the world (Zc 14:16). Sacrifices commemorating Calvary will be reinstated. Israel will be a kingdom of priests (Ex 19:6; Is 61:6), and become God’s witnesses to a renovated earth (Is 11:10; 66:19).

6. The curse of nature will be removed and man will enjoy a perfect environment once more (Is 11; 65:17-25; Am 9:8-15; Mc 4:1-8; Zc 14:16-21). People will live long lives—few if any will die of natural causes.
7. Immanuel’s land, a great triangle about the size of India bordered by the river of Egypt and the Euphrates, is currently full of desert. In that Day it will blossom like the rose (Is 35:1). Inflow from the Mediterranean will sweeten the Dead Sea
8. Man will be expected to live out the standards of the Messiah. Only believers in Christ will enter the Kingdom, but their children will need to be saved. Sadly, even in the ideal conditions set by the benevolent reign of Christ Himself, many will refuse to believe. Evidence of unbelief will show up early in the Millennium (e.g. Zc 14:17-19), although no public lawlessness will be tolerated (Ps 101:5,7,8; Zc 14:17-8), for Christ will rule with a rod of iron. However, rebellion will fester in the hearts of the unconverted until the Satan rallies them against Christ at the end of the thousand years.

Rv 20:7-10. Final Rebellion Incited by Satan Crushed. After spending nearly 1,000 years in the Abyss, Satan will be loosed in order to deceive the nations and lead one final revolt against Christ. This rebellion gives the final proof that Satan and men are intractably and incurably evil. Fire from heaven devours the Devil’s armies, and he (with his rebel angels) is cast into the lake of fire.

2. The Great White Throne, the Final Judgment

“God hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained” (Ac 17:31).

Rv 20:5-6. The Two Resurrections.

1. The Resurrection of the Just (Lk 14:14; Jh 5:28-9).
 - Begins with the resurrection of Christ Himself (1 Cr 15).
 - Includes the dead in Christ who are raised at the rapture of the church (1 Th 4:16).
 - Includes OT saints (Dn 12:2).
 - Includes those saved during the Tribulation period (Rv 20:4).
2. The Resurrection of the Unjust.
 - All of the unsaved dead from Cain to the rebels devoured by the fire from heaven at the close of Millennium will be raised to stand before the Great White Throne. All will experience the “second death,” an eternal conscious punishment in the lake of fire (Mt 25:41; Rv 20:11-5).

Rv 20:11. The Great White Throne Set Up. Eternity begins as the Cosmos flees and dissolves. The Judge is unquestionably the Lord Jesus, as the Father has committed all judgment to the Son (Jh 5:22-7).

- This subject evokes mixed feelings within us, because it assumes a depth of insight into divine holiness and human and demonic sinfulness that we do not have. Modern sentimental secularism with its exalted optimism about human nature, its shrunken idea of God, and its skepticism as to whether personal morality really matters—in other words, its loss of conscience—makes it hard for people to accept the reality of hell.
- The fact that the Son of Man is Judge is itself a proof of God’s kindness. The Father has committed the judgment to Him precisely because He is man. He knows what it is to be flesh and blood. He has suffered in temptation. He wept standing by the grave of Lazarus, and again when overlooking Jerusalem and contemplating the terrible judgment about to descend on that city. And He Himself has known the wrath greater than the lake of fire. Loving, feeling...but now at last Judge.

Rv 20:12-3. The Dead Stand Before God for a Review of their Works. Soul and body are reunited, and the dead—without respect of persons—individually face the evidence found in the books, as well as the absence of their names in the Book of Life.

1. Evidence to convict every sinner will be adduced from various sources, e.g. the witness of creation and conscience (Rm 1,2), the law (Rm 2:12), the NT (Jh 12:48). However, “the books” probably refer specifically to the record of men’s deeds.
2. The basis of the final judgment will be “according to their works.” Since good works are impossible for fallen people, these works are all evil works, and thus everyone judged by works here will be cast into the lake of fire.
3. Here is the final vindication of the perfect justice of God against the accusation that He has ceased to care about righteousness (Ps 50:18-21; Rv 6:10; 16:5-7; 19:1-5).
4. Eternal punishment also exalts the love of God—the greatest exhibition of God’s love has been in the price that He was willing to pay to make it possible for men to avoid this horrible destiny. We cannot understand the lovely opening words of Jh 3:16 unless we grasp the whole object for the giving of that Son—He loved and He gave His Son that we might not *perish*.

Rv 20:14. Death and Hell Cast into the Lake of Fire.

Rv 20:15. A Final Poignant Search for Their Names in the Book of Life. They are all cast into the lake of fire. The lack of lurid details is remarkable—it would serve no point, for repentance is not possible.

1. No annihilation. Annihilation would be a great wickedness. If men are annihilated at death, then this world is nothing but a crazy lunatic asylum, a savage jungle in which the most terrible monsters of men can work their destructive will, bringing misery to millions upon millions of people, and then themselves die painlessly and peacefully upon feather beds, completely unaccountable.
2. No purification. Human suffering cannot atone for human guilt. If it could, then Calvary was completely unnecessary. Christ died because there was *no other way* for men to be saved.
3. No second chance. The issue is settled either way in *this* life.
 - Those who believe have *already* passed from death unto life (Jh 5:24; Rm 8:1)
 - Those who do not believe are *already* condemned (Jh 3:18,36).
 - Thank God we can be sure today that our names are *already* written in heaven! (Lk 10:20; Ph 4:3; Hb 12:23)

3. The Day of God, the Eternal State

1 Cr 15:24-8. Christ Delivers up the Kingdom to God the Father. The Millennium ends with Christ’s complete and final victory over all His enemies, angelic and human. After the Great White Throne, all enemies will be permanently under His feet, and the “last enemy” death will be destroyed. Christ restores a perfect Kingdom to God the Father, delivered from every foe. With redemption fully accomplished, the Triune God will reign forever and ever in all spheres. In no sense does this “delivering up” mean that Christ Himself will cease to reign—“Thy throne O God is forever and ever” (Ps 45; Hb 1). The Eternal Throne is called “the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rv 22).

Rv 21:1. A New Heaven and a New Earth. The elements of this present Cosmos have now been dissolved (2 Pt 3:10-3) and replaced with a new heaven and a new earth wherein only righteousness dwells (Ep 5:5).

Rv 21:2. The New Jerusalem Descends from Heaven. This will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy forever fellowship with God and one another (Jh 17:3; Rv 21-2).

Rv 21:3. The Tabernacle of God is with Men. Heaven, God’s dwelling place (Ps 33:13-4; Mt 6:9), will be our eternal home. It is “My Father’s House” (Jh 14:2), a city (Hb 11:10), and a country (Hb 11:16). All who partook of the first resurrection are there:

- The church is there (Hb 12:22; 13:14; Rv 3:12). The foundations are linked with the church (21:14).
- OT saints are there (Hb 11:10,16). The gates are linked with Israel (Rv 21:21).

Rv 21:4-5. The Former Things Have Passed Away; All Things are Made New. The saints will be fully blessed:

1. Perfect enjoyment of seeing and being with the Father and the Son. Increasing knowledge of God: “This is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent” (Jh 17:3).
2. Perfect worship and service of God out of a perfectly integrated nature and a heart set perfectly free for love and obedience (Rv 7:15).
3. As “the fullness of Him that filleth all in all” (Ep 3:21), we shall share His throne, His interests, and His inheritance.
4. “Those He justified, He also glorified” (Rm 8:30)—glorification is so called because it is a manifesting of God in our lives (2 Cr 3:18). We will then be like Him in body, soul and spirit—perfectly conformed perfectly to “the image of His Son” (1 Jh 3:2; Ph 3:21).
5. Perfect rest for the people of God, a rest in Christ (Hb 4:9), and a rest from sin, Satan, temptation, sorrow, weakness, frustration (Rv 14:13). All traces of the past ages of tears, sorrow, and pain will be wiped away, and be succeeded by comfort, joy, and life forever.
6. Perfect knowledge of grace, through limitless extension of our powers of understanding (1 Cr 13:12). “In the ages to come [He will] show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Ep 2:7).
7. Perfect communion with each other.
8. Endless personal growth, enrichment of abilities, and enlargement of powers that God has in store for us.

Rv 21:6-7. The Exaltation of Christ will be fully consummated.

1. He will have universal headship (Ep 1:9-10), and be Head over all things to the church (Ep 1:22).
2. His personal and official glories will be fully displayed and adored
3. He will rejoice, as He presents us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.
4. As the eternal Servant of Jehovah, we will continue to minister to us (Rv 7:17), even as we worship Him (Rv 7:9-10; 19:1-5).

Rv 21:22-3. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its Temple and Its Light. Rv 20 presented the earthly viewpoint of the Eternal State, and now Rv 21 will present the heavenly.

1. Pure river of water of life. The Spirit of God bearing inexhaustible supplies of spiritual blessing to the universe of elect angels and redeemed men.
2. The Tree of Life: Christ will yield the precious fruits of His person for the sustenance and joy of all His redeemed.
3. Note the preview of the eternal Temple offered by the Holy of Holies in the OT tabernacle:
 - The Ark—the person of Christ, the Word who became flesh
 - Cherubim—the holiness and righteousness of Christ
 - Mercy seat with sprinkled blood—the atonement of Christ
 - Shekinah—the divine glory in the face of Jesus Christ
 - Incense—the fragrance of Christ
4. There shall be no more curse—a fresh outbreak of rebellion is impossible