

Focus on Prophecy GUIDE 19



Is God Fair?

- **Little Stevey couldn't believe it when his dad told him they were going to the Astrodome. The boy had never seen a professional baseball game in person. And he was going to, what was then, the only domed stadium in the world! Stevey's anticipation was so intense he could hardly stand it.**
- **The week before the game dragged by so slowly. One morning Stevey saw his dad in the garage bent over the hood of the car.**
- **This must be it! They were going! No, his dad told him, he was just making sure the station wagon was ready for the trip to Houston. The boy felt keenly disappointed.**
- **The next morning he saw dad packing. This must be the day! No, his dad said again, they just had to make certain preparations to stay overnight. Disappointment again.**

Is God Fair?

- **But finally the day came when they really did drive down to the city and walk into this incredible stadium with a dome towering above them.**
- **Stevey quickly forgot all about his earlier disappointments.**
- **He was right in the middle of the main event.
Batter up!**
- **The thing he'd dreamed about was right before his eyes.**

Is God Fair?

- **The book of Revelation actually takes us through an experience similar to Stevey's. Several times it seems to take us to the brink of the second coming of Jesus. But then it detours back through history.**
- **Or it takes an excursion to fill in certain prophetic details. We feel a little disappointed. Where's the main event? But now that great spectacle that lies at the center of the book of Revelation is here.**
- **In the excitement of Christ's return to planet Earth, we will soon forget all about our earlier disappointments.**
- **The long trail of human tragedy, deceit, and death, which Revelation has unfolded, will pale into nothingness as eternity with our forever friend Jesus becomes a reality—right before our eyes.**

The Second Coming of Jesus

- **READ REVELATION 19:11-16.**
- **During his vision of the seven seals, John looked through an open door into heaven (Revelation 4:1, 2). In Revelation 11:19 he looked deeper into heaven and saw the chest (ark) that contains the Ten Commandments.**
- **Then the innermost part of heaven is unveiled to him. John sees Jesus as a celestial General seated on a powerful, perfectly-groomed, white horse. Jesus gallops down a star-filled galactic passage, followed by the armies of heaven.**
- **What a cavalry charge! The soldiers are dressed in pure, white uniforms made from the finest linen. Each is riding a horse the color of newly-fallen snow.**
- **What an imposing sight they make! Where are they heading? To planet Earth—your doorstep and mine. They are headed here because we are headed home!**

The Second Coming of Jesus

- **Here is how John described this glorious scene: “I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.**
- **His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.**
- **And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron” (Revelation 19:11-15).**

The Second Coming of Jesus

- **We have discovered in previous lessons that the pure, white robe represents Jesus' righteousness which He offers to all as a free gift. To emphasize the significance of His sacrifice and the purity of heaven, the riders and horses all appear in white.**
- **It's common for soldiers from various countries to wear "dog tags" around their necks, which state their name and rank. The heavenly soldiers and their General are similarly identified. In this triumphant vision, Jesus bears four distinct names:**
- **"Faithful and True" (vs. 11).**
- **"The Word of God" (vs. 13).**
- **"KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (vs. 16).**
- **"A name . . . that no one knew except himself" (vs. 12).**
- **These names of Jesus are really fantastic promises for you and me! Think about it.**
- **Faithful and True: Jesus is your best Friend, completely dependable. He is totally genuine, One who always keeps His word.**
- **The Word of God: Jesus lived out what God is like. He makes God understandable for us. That is why we need to contemplate and study the life of Jesus each day.**

The Second Coming of Jesus

- **King of kings and Lord of lords:** This is Jesus' royal title. There is to be no doubt who really is sovereign in the universe. Jesus has won complete victory over Satan.
- **NOTE: Symbols in this scene:**
- **Sword:** The Bible or Word of God (Hebrews 4:12).
- **Armies of heaven:** angels.
- **Blood on Jesus' robe:** His blood He shed for our sins (1 Peter 1:17-21).
- **White robe of Jesus:** His righteousness with which He covers sinners.
- **Rod of iron:** Symbolizes authority. Also, the shepherd used a rod to protect his sheep (John 10:7-18; Psalm 23:4).
- **THOUGHT QUESTION:** The horses and their riders in Revelation 19 are all in white to represent the purity and righteousness of Jesus. (False or True)

The Destruction of Sinners at Christ's Coming

- **READ REVELATION 19:17-21.**
- **These verses portray again the battle of Armageddon, which we read about in chapters 16 and 17. As Jesus and His angels are pictured descending from the heavens like an army on horseback, the results of the battle are announced. And John gives us another image. He describes the coming of Jesus to unrepentant sinners as an invitation to the “supper of the great God” (Revelation 19:17).**
- **This is very different from the “marriage supper of the Lamb” in verse 9. When Jesus comes, all human beings will have chosen between two dinner parties. We can be present at one, but not both. Every individual is invited to the first, the marriage feast of the Lamb. Those who refuse to attend automatically become part of the second, the “supper of the great God.” We must choose one or the other. The first supper represents eternal life with Jesus. The second represents eternal death.**

The Destruction of Sinners at Christ's Coming

- John writes,
- **I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.**
- **Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.**
- **These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh (vss. 19-21).**

The Destruction of Sinners at Christ's Coming

- **brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh (vss. 19-21).**
- **In this final battle between good and evil, the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies are fighting against Jesus who sits on the white horse and His armies (vs. 19).**
- **Notice in vss. 20, 21 the full and complete destruction of those who've joined the political and religious regimes which oppose God and His truth. The beast and the false prophet are captured and thrown into the lake of fire; the rest of their supporters are killed with the sword.**

The Destruction of Sinners at Christ's Coming

- **They were all cast into the “lake of fire” or killed by the “sword of God” (His Word). NONE are left alive.**
- **There is complete annihilation of sinners—not by God’s choice, but by their choice.**
- **Jesus did not want this to happen. The Bible calls Him the “Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).**
- **He does not like war. He did not start this battle; Satan did, thousands of years before in heaven.**

The Destruction of Sinners at Christ's Coming

- **For thousands of years Jesus has been patient. He has grieved deeply over starving families, raped women, abused children, the butchery of war, bodies racked with disease and pain.**
- **Sin has been allowed to run its natural course so that we humans and the heavenly creation could observe how dreadful sin really is.**
- **We will never want it to surface again for eternity. Every created being will understand sin for what it really is.**
- **The issues in the great controversy will be clear.**

The Destruction of Sinners at Christ's Coming

- **For thousands of years, God has been working to draw human beings to Himself. He came into this world to be born as a man, to live a perfect life, to die sacrificially on the cross in order to save us.**
- **He demonstrated clearly what God's character is really like. But in spite of all this, many people still turn their backs on God's offer of salvation.**
- **In His mercy, Jesus says it is time to end the pain and suffering of sin. Jesus has been consistently loving and kind, "not willing for any to perish" (2 Peter 3:9).**
- **But the time to make all things right has come.**
- **Mercy and justice must be meted out.**

The Destruction of Sinners at Christ's Coming

- **The time period in the Bible that describes how sin will end on this earth is a one-thousand-year period called the millennium. Interestingly enough, despite its wide use, the word “millennium” is not found in the Bible.**
- **The word “millennium” is adapted from ancient Latin translations of the Bible. It is formed from two Latin words: “mille,” which means “a thousand,” and “annum,” which means “year.” Revelation 20 will help us to understand what takes place during these 1000 years.**
- **THOUGHT QUESTION: Jesus is the "Prince of Peace." He did not start controversy and war; Satan did. (False or True)**

The Millennium

- **READ REVELATION 20:1-15.**
- **As previously mentioned, Revelation 20 centers on a thousand-year period that follows the second coming of Jesus.**
- **The events surrounding this thousand-year period mark the final act in the conflict between God and Satan that has been taking place since sin entered the universe (we studied about this in earlier lessons in this series).**
- **The drama reaches its climax at the end of the thousand years when our sinful world is cleansed forever from sin.**
- **To assist in understanding what we are going to study in the next few verses, the following list summarizes the events that take place during the millennium.**
- **The sections that follow this summary will give the details and supporting Bible texts.**

The Millennium

- **BEGINNING EVENTS OF THE THOUSAND YEARS**
- **Jesus returns to this earth.**
- **Righteous dead are resurrected.**
- **Living righteous taken to heaven.**
- **Bodies of righteous changed.**
- **Living wicked killed.**
- **Wicked who have died remain in their graves.**
- **Satan bound on the earth.**

The Millennium

- **EVENTS DURING THE THOUSAND YEARS**

- **Earth desolate—a “bottomless pit.”**
- **Wicked are all dead.**
- **Satan confined to the earth.**
- **Righteous are in heaven with God.**
- **A judgment time is taking place in heaven.**

The Millennium

- **ENDING EVENTS OF THE THOUSAND YEARS**
- **Wicked dead on the earth are resurrected.**
- **Satan is loosed.**
- **Satan deceives the wicked who are resurrected.**
- **Holy City descends from heaven.**
- **Wicked surround the Holy City.**
- **Wicked are destroyed.**
- **New heavens and new earth.**
- **Revelation 20 shows us that two resurrections serve as boundaries of the thousand-year period. Keep this in mind as we look at specific texts in Revelation 20.**
- **THOUGHT QUESTION: The “millennium” refers to a period of one million years following the second coming of Jesus. (False or True)**

The Beginning of the Millennium

- **The second coming of Jesus takes place (Revelation 19).**
- **Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection.**
- **Over 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 20:6).**
- **Those who have accepted Jesus (the righteous dead) are resurrected and join the righteous living to meet Jesus in the sky.**
- **This is the first resurrection, and it marks the beginning of the millennium.**
- **We read additional information about this resurrection in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17:**

The Beginning of the Millennium

- **For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will 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 thus we shall always be with the Lord.**
- **Then the bodies of all the righteous are changed.**
- **For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself (Philippians 3:20, 21).**

The Beginning of the Millennium

- **At the second coming of Jesus, when the righteous are taken to heaven, all sinful human beings who are alive are destroyed. 2 Thessalonians 2:8 refers to this event:**
- **And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.**
- **The sinful dead remain in their graves. (In addition to the following texts, see Revelation 6:15-17).**
- **The rest of the dead—the wicked—are raised a thousand years later. The Bible says,**

The Beginning of the Millennium

- **But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished (Revelation 20:5.)**
- **THOUGHT QUESTION**
- **During the millennium, all the righteous people who have ever lived are alive in heaven; all the wicked people who have ever lived are dead on earth. (False or True)**

During the Millennium

- Satan is bound on the earth; he cannot leave this planet.
- **READ VERSES 1-3:**
- **Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.**
- **He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished.**
- **But after these things he must be released for a little while.**

During the Millennium

- **What will Satan be doing on Earth during this time? Absolutely nothing, except bitterly regretting his loss of heavenly stature and bemoaning the fact that he lost the battle with God.**
- **Satan will be unable to deceive anyone because the wicked are scattered in death across the face of the Earth and Christians are in heaven. Satan is chained or “bound” by circumstances to this Earth.**
- **Those who have accepted Jesus live with Him in heaven during the thousand-year period.**

During the Millennium

- **READ REVELATION 20:4:**
- **And I saw thrones and they [God's people] sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. . . . And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.**
- **During the thousand years, the righteous will review the cases of wicked human beings and fallen angels, including their leader, Satan.**
- **God wants to assure us that all His judgments have been fair.**
- **It is also fitting that the martyrs of the faith and other battle-scarred followers of Christ who have suffered for Him will be able to understand God's dealings with the wicked.**

During the Millennium

- **God gives Christians the opportunity to evaluate His judgment on those who stubbornly rejected Him. We know what it is like to struggle in a sinful world. Some of those left behind may be relatives, friends, and work associates. We may have questions, like: “Where is Aunt Mary?”**
- **She donated money to the homeless every year.”**
- **“Where is Fred? He was such a good neighbor.” When we go over all the records and judge the dead “according to their works, by the things which were written in the books” (Revelation 20:12), we will see for ourselves that God has been fair and just in His dealings with everyone.**
- **We will see how every individual ultimately has decided his or her own fate, choosing God’s side or Satan’s.**

The Close of the Millennium

- **At the close of the thousand years the curtain lifts on the final events of the millennium.**
- **Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying,**
- **‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God’ (Revelation 21:2, 3).**
- **The city that has been the home of God’s people for a thousand years descends from heaven to our world.**

The Close of the Millennium

- **At the end of the thousand years the wicked are all raised to life. John writes, “The rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished” (Revelation 20:5).**
- **The “rest of the dead” must refer to the wicked dead, because the righteous dead came to life in the first resurrection at the beginning of the thousand years.**
- **So it is the wicked who are resurrected in the second resurrection at the close of the thousand years.**
- **Satan, who has been bound on Earth for the thousand years, is set free.**
- **When the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea.**
- **They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city (vss. 7-9).**

The Close of the Millennium

- **Satan is seizing his last opportunity. He thinks he's back in business. He has the righteous to attack—they've descended from heaven. He has the wicked to lead—they've been resurrected.**
- **It's just like old times.**
- **Satan will be able to plot strategy with military geniuses from all periods of Earth's history. Generals who have conquered empires and ruled the world can organize and lead Satan's armies. It's a perfect setup.**
- **The city is not fortified; the Christians have no guns or ammunition.**

The Close of the Millennium

- **Satan gives the command to march against the city. His armies converge from every corner of the globe, marching in precision.**
- **They approach the Holy City, which hovers just above the earth. From it God's glory floods the world with His majesty and grandeur.**
- **The wicked of all the ages stand under its transparent golden walls. They are poised to attack and seize this magnificent city.**
- **But suddenly silence grips the multitude. No one can speak. No one can move. They realize they are standing in the presence of God.**
- **And it dawns on them what this means. They are lost! They've given up eternal life! This glimpse of the horror of being lost forever is overwhelming.**

The Final Judgement Scene

- **Here for the first and last time, every person ever born on this earth stands in one place at the same moment. What an event! The two sides of humanity are face-to-face. Read verses 11-13 for a further description of this momentous occasion.**
- **The Bible does not fill in all the details, but it appears from these verses that as the wicked stand before God, their entire life opens before them. Jesus unfolds before watching humanity what appears to be an enormous movie. It fills the sky with the full story of His dealings with fallen angels and fallen men and women. God is concerned that everyone understand His fairness.**
- **He even wants the lost to see how much He longed to save them. It's their own decision that has placed them outside the walls of that glorious city. Christ's plan to save sinners is displayed in living color. The wicked realize that Jesus loves them with unshakable love. But it's too late! They are compelled to bow before Him as King of kings and Lord of lords, recognizing His justice and mercy.**

The Final Judgement Scene

- **Romans 14:10, 11 declares, “For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: ‘As I live, says the Lord, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.’ ”**
- **Revelation 5:13 says, “And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: ‘Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!’ ”**

The Final Judgement Scene

- **For centuries Satan has been slandering God's character, accusing Him of being cruel and unfair. But now all those accusations have been answered.**
- **There are no questions left. Even Satan is silent. He has run out of lies.**
- **The saved and those who are lost both acknowledge that Jesus, the Lamb of God, is worthy of our love and worship.**
- **The largest choir ever assembled, consisting of every human being ever born, declares with one voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain" (Revelation 5:12).**

The Final Judgement Scene

- **What ultimately happens to Satan and sinners at the end of the thousand years? The Bible says, “Fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.**
- **The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are” (vss. 9, 10).**
- **When sin and death themselves are destroyed, this is called the second death.**
- **“Then Death and Hades [Hell] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire” (vs. 14).**

The Final Judgement Scene

- **Although Satan and the vast throng of wicked people have to admit that God's way is best, their hearts are not changed.**
- **Their characters remain sinful. God's holy fire must destroy sin. That's the final judgment.**
- **Satan and the wicked who gathered to seize the Holy City are destroyed forever. That is what is called the "second death," or eternal death.**
- **The fire cleanses the earth thoroughly; no trace of sin will be left.**
- **THOUGHT QUESTION: At the close of the millennium, Satan and his angels, along with every wicked person who has refused to accept God's way, are destroyed by fire. This is called the "second death." (False or True)**

Conclusion

- **On June 9, 1939 England's King George the Sixth received an enthusiastic American welcome from crowds lining the streets of Washington, D.C. He then proceeded to the British Embassy to review a special honor guard.**
- **Among them was Thomas J. Michael, a man who had a very special reason for wanting to meet the monarch of the British Empire. As a boy growing up in one of Wales' poor mining towns, he'd missed the chance of a lifetime.**
- **The king was going to pay a rare visit to a neighbouring community. Thomas went with his dad to stand by the road and catch a glimpse of the monarch they regarded with great awe.**
- **But some boys wanted to play soccer. So Thomas went off to a nearby field for a few minutes—and just missed the king's carriage as it drove through.**

Conclusion

- **He'd always regretted missing the king. But now, decades later, he was standing in his uniform outside the British Embassy, as a veteran of World War I.**
- **There were fifty men in two rows. As King George began shaking hands, Thomas wondered if he'd actually be able to speak to the monarch face-to-face. His excitement and nervousness was almost unbearable.**
- **Suddenly there he was, in front of him. King George asked, "Captain Michael, where did you serve?"**
- **Thomas answered, "Your Majesty, I served in the Gallipoli campaign, in Mesopotamia, and in India." The king reached out his hand and said, "Thank you for all that you did for us."**

Conclusion

- **Thomas J. Michael would never forget those words.**
- **They made all the terrors he'd endured in war meaningful.**
- **They made him feel that someone understood what he'd been through. But above all they were spoken by his king, face-to-face.**
- ***Where will you be standing?***

Conclusion

- **God longs to speak to us face-to-face. He longs to say those words, “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21).**
- ***Where will you be standing when God gives His final verdict? Whose side will you be on?***
- **No matter what you’ve done in your life, no matter what you’ve gone through, God can make everything meaningful.**
- **He can give you a place inside the city with Jesus and the redeemed. So please make a response to Him right now, face-to-face. What would you like to say?**