

Prophecy 16

The Earth Purified

Revelation 20:11-21:1

Beginning Point in Time: When the 1,000 Years Are Over and New Jerusalem Rests on Earth

Ending Point in Time: Soon after the Creation of a New Heaven and Earth

Summary

This prophecy describes the end of sin and sinners. God will resurrect the wicked at the end of the 1,000 years to hear the reason why they are doomed and then destroy them. After sinners and the curse of sin are consumed by fire, Jesus will create a new Heaven and a new Earth and the saints will inherit the new Earth.

Introduction

Through the centuries, many people have been puzzled by the contents of Revelation 20. Consider these issues:

1. Many Christians believe that a person goes immediately to Heaven or hell at death.¹ What is God's purpose for resurrecting the righteous dead at the Second Coming² if they already exist in Heaven? Even more, why would God resurrect the wicked a thousand years later if they are already burning in hell?
2. Other people have wondered why God would even want to resurrect the wicked at the end of the 1,000 years. Why not leave the wicked to rot in their graves and move on with the creation of a new Heaven and a new Earth?
3. Some Christians are frustrated with Revelation 20 because this chapter contradicts the idea that a New Testament God would punish people with hell fire, and annihilate people that He loves.

These three issues can be resolved. Many people have not taken the time to examine and absorb *all* that the Bible has to say about various aspects of God's ways and plans so they often reach a

conclusion based on an inadequate number of data samples. For example, if a person's view of God is limited to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, his view of God will be incomplete. If a person thinks the God of the Old Testament is unlike the God of the New Testament, his conclusions about God are incorrect because the God of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament and He is changeless.³ Consider this:

The God who created Adam and Eve and put them in the Garden of Eden is the same God who drove them out of the Garden of Eden. In fact, consider these events recorded in Bible history. He is:

- the God who caused the whole world to drown in Noah's day
- the God who burned up Sodom and Gomorrah
- the God who killed the first born, both man and beast in every Egyptian family, and drowned Pharaoh's army
- the God who destroyed the wicked city of Jericho
- the God who sent Nebuchadnezzar to utterly destroy Jerusalem in 586 B.C
- the God who sent the Romans to utterly destroy Jerusalem in A.D. 70
- the God who will kill 25% of Earth's population during the first four trumpets
- the God who will destroy all of the wicked at the Second Coming
- the God who will burn the Earth with fire at the end of the 1,000 years
- the God who will create a new Earth and hand it over to His children!

God has given mankind sixty-six books (the Bible) to study. When properly aligned, these books describe God's actions over a period of approximately 7,000 years. Because God is eternal, a thousand years might go by before He decides to do something new or unusual. A thousand years contains many human generations, so it may *appear* that God has changed from one generation to another. For example, Noah's flood occurred approximately 1,656 years after Creation week. Noah's flood was not out of character for a God of love. God did not suddenly change in Noah's generation. God is so huge in terms of timing that large samples of time are required to

properly understand Him and His actions. The Bible declares that God is love.⁴ This means that God defines and demonstrates what love is and is not. If we are willing to examine all that the Bible has to reveal about God over a large span of time, many questions will disappear because there is One Constant in this dynamic universe. He is the Creator of the Universe, Almighty God.⁵

The Big Picture

Please consider the following questions for a moment. Why has God told us *in advance* about the 1,000 years that will occur *after* the Second Coming? Why has God told us in advance about the resurrection of the wicked and their annihilation at the end of the 1,000 years? Why has God told us in advance about the great white throne and the judgment process that goes with it? Why has God told us in advance about the destruction of the wicked by fire at the end of the 1,000 years? Why has God told us in advance about the creation of a new Heaven and a new Earth? Why has God told us in advance about the devil leading the wicked against New Jerusalem?

The simple answer to all these questions is that God has given us this information so we can understand His plans. He wants us to know where the drama with sin is going. *God wants His children to align Bible history with Bible prophecy so that we can see and understand His love for us.*” Understanding principles of divine love is not as simple as you might think! (Ask a child if he understands the principles involved when his parent’s discipline him.) God’s love is larger and more inclusive than we can fathom and this makes God’s behavior seem mysterious at times. God’s love for oncoming generations is no less than His love for the current generation. This simple fact explains, in part, why He destroyed the world in Noah’s day. He destroyed the world to protect oncoming generations from the decadence and degeneracy of the previous generations. God’s actions are always consistent with principles of love, therefore, consider the following statements:

1. According to infinite wisdom and unfailing love for mankind, long ago God predetermined that the saints would judge the wicked during the 1,000 years. The golden rule is a fundamental building block in the law of love. The golden rule demonstrates a perfect balance between mercy and justice. “Extend mercy and kindness to others as you would have them extend mercy and kindness to you because God

will ensure that every kindness and injustice is fully repaid.”⁶ God knows that no one is better suited to determine how much suffering occurred during the commission of a crime than the victim. Therefore, at the appointed time, God will allow the redeemed to determine (to judge) the amount of suffering which predators must suffer by fire.⁷ Love functions in a perfect balance and God loves mercy and justice equally. With God, there is no statute of limitations and this is one reason why the wicked must be resurrected at the end of the 1,000 years. God cannot conclude the drama of sin without justice being served. Bruise for bruise, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, and life for life.

2. According to infinite wisdom and love for all mankind, the Father predetermined that Jesus should speak to all of the wicked at the same time at the end of the 1,000 years. Therefore, all of the wicked will be resurrected at the end of sin’s drama. First, they will see the glory of the city, New Jerusalem, whose builder and maker is God, filled with an innumerable multitude of saints. The wicked will also observe the brilliant white throne of Jesus Christ, the Creator and Honorable Judge of all mankind. He will meet face to face with each wicked person and show them a complete record of their lives; as recorded by angels.⁸ Jesus will explain to each wicked person why he could not be saved and why he is not allowed to enter the New Jerusalem. The Father predetermined that each wicked person must understand that Jesus was righteous and more than fair in His judgment. This meeting with Jesus will silence every argument that God is or has been unfair.⁹ Of course, God could easily ignore His enemies by leaving them in their graves, but this is not the way of love. God will confront the enemies of love so that rebellion and selfishness can be fully exposed.
3. According to infinite wisdom and love, the Father predetermined that each saint should see for himself why wicked people could not be saved. Therefore, God will give the saints 1,000 years to examine the record of any wicked person they wish to investigate. This is extremely important because God does not want one saint to question His judgment throughout eternity. For example, suppose you are taken to Heaven, but a loved one is not there. You begin

to wonder why your loved one could not be saved, so you examine the record of their life. This openness will silence and resolve any notion that Jesus judged unfairly; all this occurs *before* a single person is destroyed in the fire.

4. According to infinite wisdom and love, the Father predetermined that fire is the best tool to accomplish two purposes at the end of the 1,000 years. First, fire produces suffering and it will be used to extract the suffering which predators must repay. The suffering of the wicked will not cease until justice is satisfied. Once justice is achieved, each wicked person will die the second death (a death from which there is no recovery). Second, fire is useful in that it sterilizes as it purifies. After Jesus has destroyed Lucifer and his angels, the wicked who rebelled against the laws of love, and the curse of sin itself (death and the grave), Jesus will reuse this sterilized orb called Earth as the foundation for a new Earth.
5. According to infinite wisdom and unfailing love for new worlds that will be created millions of years later, the Father wants to prove a point at the end of sin's drama that is very important. The Father wants everyone to see what He foreknew before the creation of life. Therefore, He will break the seventh seal and display the contents of The Book of Life at the end of the 1,000 years. The universe will see that The Book of Life is a perfect mirror of the record books which angels recorded in real time. This amazing revelation will prove two points. First, the Father has perfect foreknowledge. He knows the end from the beginning. Before any life was created, He foreknew who would choose salvation and who would not, both in Heaven and on Earth, and He wrote it down. Second, God can be trusted to separate His foreknowledge from His love. In other words, the Father will not use His perfect foreknowledge to protect the Godhead from harm and He will not manipulate the choices of His children to satisfy His objectives. He will prove to the universe that He will not violate the will of His children even though He foreknows the outcome. God can be trusted completely! His commitment to the principles of love prevents Him from using His foreknowledge to manipulate His subjects.

Rev. 20:11

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

6. According to infinite wisdom and love, God predetermined that Lucifer and his demons should remain alive until the end of the 1,000 years. By allowing them to live, the fruits of sin will be allowed to mature. Eventually, God will address each argument that Lucifer used to lead one-third of the angels into rebellion. (Remember, the drama with sin is far more encompassing than events on Earth.) The demons that followed Lucifer will clearly see that Lucifer lied to them. Even when they were confronted with the truth, they willfully chose to believe Lucifer's lies rather than surrender to God's authority and truth. Going forward through eternity, it will be necessary and important to review this confrontation so that sin's ugly pall never rises again. Pure, sinless, holy beings can fall and have fallen twice because rebellion falsely promised short term gains. Submission to God's infinite wisdom is not always easy for intelligent beings, but finite beings must remember who is infinite and who is not.

When these six issues are considered, we find that God wants His people to understand His love, plans, and actions. There is no hint of evil in God. To know God is to love God. He has generously provided a thousand answers about Himself and His plans if we are willing to search for them.

The Sequence

{11} At the end of the 1,000 years, the Holy City will descend from Heaven. Shortly afterwards, every wicked person that once lived on Earth will be resurrected and restored to life. I saw a great white throne and Jesus was seated on it. His glory was so great that Earth and sky were not visible. {12} The wicked were speechless. They stood before Jesus and His throne, both great and small, and a record of each life was opened for review and the wicked were informed of their sentence. Each was sentenced according to what he had done.

During the 1,000 years, the saints will sit in judgment with Jesus. They will review the records of the wicked and determine the amount of suffering that each will have to suffer. Please notice that the saints do not determine who will be saved and lost. Jesus, according to the authority given to Him, made this determination prior to the Second Coming. Therefore, the judgment conducted by the saints during the 1,000 years has nothing to

do with salvation. The judgment is limited to the matter of restitution. When the wicked are raised from their graves, they will be given the sentences which the saints determined. Later, another book will be opened. The seventh seal will be broken on The Book of Life and the contents will be made known to everyone. Amazingly, The Book of Life (written by the Father before life was created) will perfectly mirror the books of record (written by the angels in real time).

This great day will never be duplicated again. Everyone who lived on Earth during its 6,000 year history will be alive and present. *Sin's drama will come to a close with every sinner in attendance.* The saints (those who overcame sin through faith in Jesus) will observe the Great White Throne event from the walls of the Holy City. Down below and surrounding the Holy City, there will be a numberless multitude of wicked people. The wicked surrounding the city will include those who were thrown alive into the lake of fire (a sea of fire) at the Second Coming,¹⁰ and everyone else whom God could not save.

{13} Hades (the grave) gave up every person who had died. Thus, everyone who lived on Earth during the 6,000 years of sin was present and accounted for. After Jesus explained why he could not save each wicked person, each of the wicked was sentenced according to what he had done to others. {14} Then, all of the wicked (including Lucifer and his demons) were thrown into the lake of fire and the lake of fire burns them up. The wicked die the second death, a death from which there is no hope of resurrection. {15} If anyone's name was not found written in The Book of Life, he was thrown alive into the lake of fire – by a God of love!

At this point, we should briefly review four concepts: First, the Bible says that the penalty for sin is death, not living in hell forever.¹¹ Death is a state of silence, where there is no thought, action or awareness.¹² Second, a God of love is always just and fair. He will not punish someone with infinite torture because no crime merits infinite torment. His law of love limits punishment to a life for a life, a bruise for a bruise, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. God will not exceed them. Third, the fires of hell cannot burn forever!¹³ After restitution has been extracted from the wicked, they must die. Mercifully, it is the second death that will last forever because, never again, will there be a place for sin and sinners in God's universe. Finally, it is important to understand that the saints will not see their loved ones writhing around in the flames of hell for eternity because

Rev. 20:13-15

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Rev. 21:1

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

the wicked will perish and become “ashes.” The fires of hell will come to an end and Jesus will create a new Heaven and Earth. The former things will pass away and Jesus will establish a new world order. He will wipe away all tears. All attachments with the wicked will end. The meek will inherit the Earth and live happily ever after, yes forever and ever!

{21:1} Then I saw Jesus create a new Heaven and a new Earth, for the first Heaven and the first Earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea (or lake of fire).¹⁴

The Rules of Interpretation

Consider how the Rules of Interpretation (discussed in the Introduction of this book) are observed in this prophecy:

Rule One says an apocalyptic prophecy has a beginning point and ending point in time and the events within the prophecy occur in the order given. This prophecy conforms to Rule One because Revelation 20:11 starts a new prophecy. Chronologically speaking, verse 11 does not follow verse 10, so a new prophecy begins. The chronological order in this prophecy is self evident.

1. A great white throne becomes visible
2. The wicked of all ages stand before Jesus
3. The wicked are burned up
4. God creates a new Heaven and a new Earth

Rule Two says a fulfillment only occurs when all of the specifications are met, and this includes the order stated in the prophecy. There is a profound point in this prophecy that many people overlook. A lake of fire will be created at the Second Coming.¹⁵ This lake of fire will burn during the 1,000 years.¹⁶ At the end of the 1,000 years, God will cast the wicked of all ages alive into this fire.¹⁷ No one is in hell today. The wicked are not punished before the saints pass judgment on them and they are resurrected to face their Creator!¹⁸

Rule Three says that apocalyptic language can be literal, analogous, or symbolic. To reach the intended meaning of a prophecy, the reader must consider (a) the context, (b) the use of parallel language in the Bible, and (c) if an element is thought to be symbolic, the Bible must interpret the symbol with a *relevant* text. The language used in this prophecy is not symbolic because there

are no relevant texts defining a symbol. On the other hand, we find liberal use of analogous and literal language. For example, death and Hades (the grave) will be thrown into the lake of fire.¹⁹ Personification is used to describe the end of sin's curse. Paul says, "The last enemy to be destroyed is death."²⁰ Of course, when death is no more, the grave will not be necessary. Thus, death and the grave will be destroyed in the lake of fire.

Rule Four is not used in this prophecy.

References:

1. Without realizing it, many Christians treat Luke 16:19-31 as a fact instead of a parable. This puts the Bible in a state of internal conflict because the Bible does not teach opposing concepts.
2. 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17
3. Deuteronomy 6:4; Malachi 3:6; 1 Timothy 2:5,6
4. 1 John 4:8,16; John 3:16
5. Malachi 1:14; 3:6; Hebrews 13:8
6. Luke 6:30; Obadiah 1:15; Romans 12:19
7. 1 Corinthians 6:1-3; Revelation 20:6
8. Ecclesiastes 12:14; 2 Corinthians 5:10 The Bible indicates that angels in Heaven record every aspect of human behavior. (Daniel 7:9,10; Malachi 3:16; Revelation 20:12.) This explains why books of record are used to judge the dead prior to the Second Coming. Jesus will also use these same books to silence any discrepancy a wicked person might have when he receives his sentence at the end of the 1,000 years. In other words, if a wicked person claims that God's judgment of him is unfair, Jesus will present the evidence that He used when making His determination. Since these records exist, God has evidently enabled certain angels to be impartial observers and chroniclers of human conduct. Their job is to record the words, thoughts, and actions of every person (including Lucifer and the angels that were cast out of Heaven) and their work is represented in the Bible as books of record. (I am sure Heaven uses a technology that is far greater than books or video duplication, but I am sure you understand the concept.) If such angels do not exist and God Himself is the recorder of human conduct, a conflict of interest occurs, because the Judge uses records that He wrote as the basis for His judgment. Therefore, it seems fair and reasonable to conclude that God has assigned intelligent angels to serve as third-party observers of human conduct. If so, these angels have nothing to gain or lose. Their job is to simply record the facts. This

arrangement aligns with a generous God of light who exalts principles of love, who does nothing shady, who has nothing to hide, and has done everything possible to save each sinner.

9. Isaiah 45:18-24
10. Revelation 19:20; 20:10
11. Romans 6:23
12. Ecclesiastes 9:5-6; Psalm 115:17
13. Malachi 4:3
14. John says “there was no more sea” after the first Heaven and first Earth passed away. John uses two different Greek words *thalassa* (sea) and *limne* (lake) in two consecutive verses and this has caused some confusion. (Revelation 20:15; Revelation 21:1) Evidently, John uses the word *thalassas* (sea) in Revelation 21:1 instead of *limne* (lake) because the lake of fire engulfs the whole world at the very end. Thus, the first Earth passes away and is totally destroyed by fire. John’s use of two different words can be seen as progressive, that is, the lake (of fire) becomes a sea (of fire). This fire destroys the elements of the first Heaven and the first Earth. (2 Peter 3:12) Compare the use of *thalassas* and *limne* in Matthew 4:18, Mark 1:16 and John 6:17 with Luke 5:1 and 8:22,23.
15. Revelation 19:20
16. Revelation 20:10
17. Revelation 20:15
18. For more information on what happens when a person dies, please see Chapter 13 in my book, *Jesus: The Alpha and The Omega* or download this chapter at: <http://www.wake-up.org/Alpha/Chapter13.htm>.
19. Revelation 20:14
20. 1 Corinthians 15:26