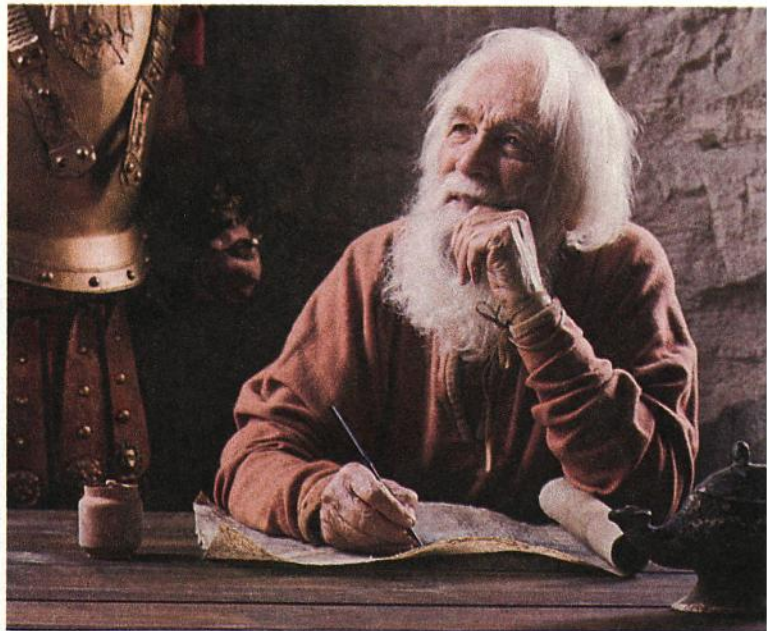
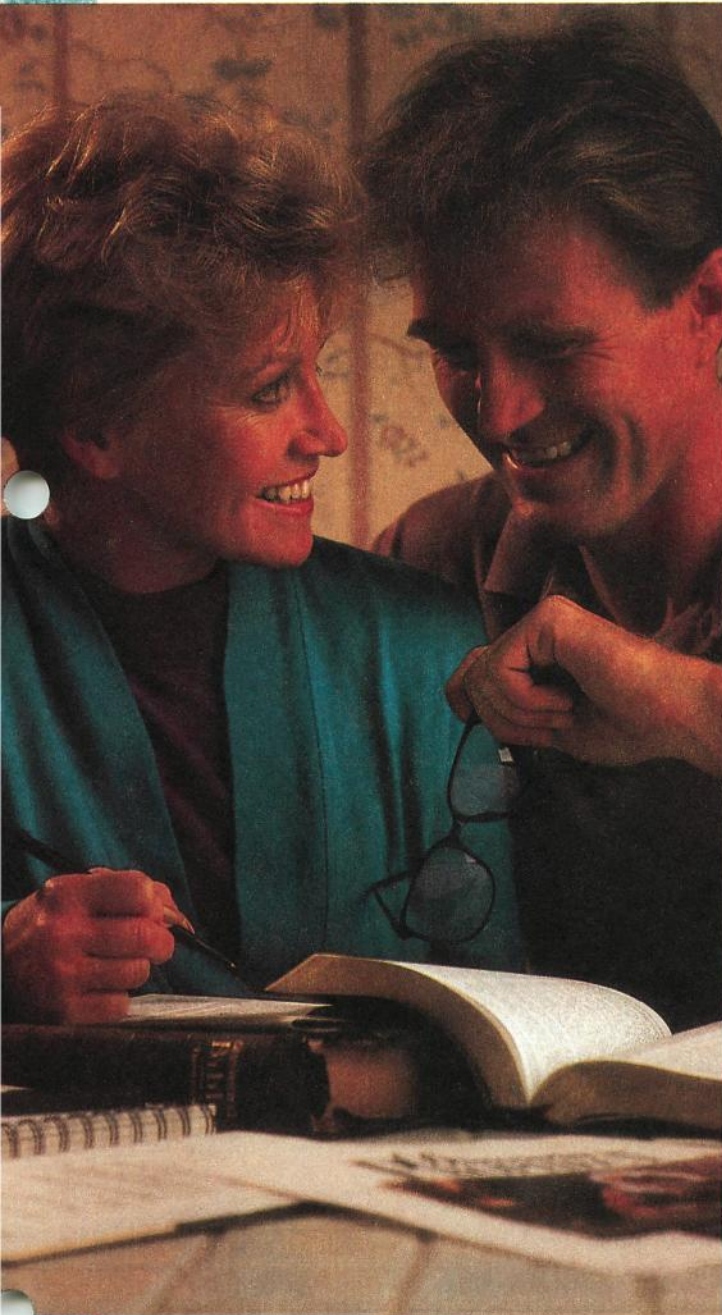


Discoveries in PROPHECY

WITH
MARK
FINLEY



The Coming Thousand Years:
The Golden Age—or World Disaster?

Discoveries in Prophecy

by Mark A. Finley
Speaker-Director, *The It Is Written* Telecast

Discoveries in Prophecy is a series of 26 evangelistic presentations in magazine format by Evangelist and *It Is Written* Speaker-Director Mark A. Finley. These presentations have been reproduced here just as delivered; therefore, the reader will encounter occasional references to slides shown during the actual delivery of the topic as originally preached, and other references characteristic of a live presentation.

See the inside back cover for a complete list of the *Discoveries in Prophecy* evangelistic magazines—keyed to chapter in Mark Finley's book entitled *Beyond Orion's Gates*—and information on how to order additional evangelistic magazines and other Hart Research Center outreach materials.

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Discoveries in Prophecy

The Coming Thousand Years: The Golden Age—or World Disaster?

The world was spellbound when Soviet astronaut Yuri Gagarin circled the planet in just over eighty-nine minutes on April 12, 1961. And that was just the beginning. Space technology had “lifted off.” On July 21, 1969, astronauts Neil Armstrong and “Buzz” Aldrin walked on the moon, as countless millions sat transfixed before their television sets.

Have you heard about the multimillion-dollar satellite dish that sends a variety of signals millions of miles into space and waits for a friendly response? A responsible group of scientists is hoping to contact “alien beings” from outer space, who could conceivably provide clues for living peacefully on Planet Earth.

Yet not all Americans respond to these space exploits with ecstatic wonder. Some are concerned about the billions spent on space exploration when so many problems on earth still cry out for attention. Others wonder where the new technology may lead. One man wistfully remarked, “Wouldn’t it be wonderful if our scientists would discover a beautiful, habitable, fertile planet somewhere out there in space where mankind could slip away and escape all the problems we have on earth?”

Not a bad idea! Wouldn’t it be a relief to escape the pollution, the crime, the sickness, sorrows, and heartaches we have here on this earth? That would be wonderful—even if it were just a long, long vacation!

When the routine of life begins to tire us out as if we were on a treadmill running faster and faster, we long for something different—a break from the expected and the exhausting. Vacations are a refreshing change of pace, but how would you feel about a vacation lasting a thousand years? This might be difficult for today’s classic workaholic to swallow! But the Bible tells us that the greatest workaholic of all time has a thousand-year enforced vacation ahead, from which he cannot escape:

“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.” Revelation 20:1, 2.

THE GREATEST WORKAHOLIC EVER

Bound for a thousand years! Talk about a change of pace! If ever there was a workaholic, Satan fits the description. He never punches a time clock. He has been on the job around the clock, seven days a week, month in and month out, for thousands and thousands of years.

No coffee breaks. No holidays. No sick time. And no vacations, ever!

And talk about production! Everywhere, every day, we see the diabolical accomplishments of this fallen angel.

We see it in hospitals and nursing homes. In prisons and refugee camps. In earthquake-shattered and tornado-devastated cities. In crime and war zones.

If anyone ever earned a vacation, Satan has. Yet strange as it may seem, he is

If ever there was a workaholic,
Satan fits the description . . .
He has been on the job around
the clock, seven days a week,
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thousands of years.

not anxious for one—he would have to be forced to sit down on the job!

Let’s briefly review the background of this once-beautiful angel. The Bible tells us that Satan was aspiring, arrogant, and anxious for heaven’s top position. He was not content to glorify his Lord. We find him eventually stirring up strife and contention among his heavenly companions. Revelation 12:7, 9 describes the outcome of his behavior: “And war broke out in heaven. . . . So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

Cast out! Guess where he landed? Planet Earth, fresh from the Creator’s hand, became Satan’s headquarters. By deceit, he gained control of this planet from Adam and Eve. Then began his mission of destroying human-

ity. With Satan as director, Earth became a theater in the universe, illustrating what happens when God's commands are ignored, when man chooses to do his own thing, to go his own way!

Yet before Satan rebelled, before sin and crime and pain and sorrow existed, our all-wise God had a plan to rescue mankind. It involved sending one member of the Godhead to earth to live the life of a human being, enduring all the liabilities every child of humanity must face, and eventually, at thirty-three years of age, offering Himself as a sacrifice on Calvary for all humanity.

In His life and death, our Lord Jesus faced Satan down and rescued this hijacked planet and its inhabitants from Satan's control. What a contrast! Ultimate love, face to face with ultimate rebellion and hate!

When Christ returned to heaven as the victor over death and sin, Satan knew his time was running out. That is why Peter cautioned men and women, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Peter 5:8.

A LONG, FORCED VACATION

For more than six thousand years now, Satan has been perfecting the art of perverting and destroying the lives of men and women. How long will this last? Will he ever quit?

The war begun in heaven will end on Earth only after Satan's forced vacation—a vacation lasting one thousand years—has come to an end. This time period is often re-

Imagine with me the scene: Graves opened! Families reunited! Babies put back into the arms of their mothers! Lovers together again, never to part!

ferred to as the "millennium" (a union of two Latin words, *milli* and *annum*, translated as "one thousand years").

"But," someone asks, "when will the millennium, or Satan's vacation, begin? Can we know?"

Indeed we can! Let's take a look at the events surrounding Christ's second coming. "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God." 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

And what will happen on that great day, when the Son of God descends to the Earth in all His glory with His

retinue of angels? Jesus Himself tells us: "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation." John 5:28, 29.

The Bible refers to two general resurrections: (1) The resurrection of life for those who have done good; and (2) the resurrection of condemnation for those who have done evil.

Further, the Bible reveals that one resurrection takes place at the beginning of the thousand years, and the other resurrection at the end of that time.

The apostle John describes those who will comprise the first resurrection: "Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection." Revelation 20:6.

Paul, too, points to this first resurrection (1 Thessalonians 4:16) when he tells us that the dead "in Christ" will rise first. Clearly, Jesus doesn't want His dear friends, the sleeping saints, to wait any longer than necessary! His promise to us is: "He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live." John 11:25.

DON'T MISS THIS!

Imagine with me the scene: Graves opened! Families reunited! Babies put back into the arms of their mothers! Lovers together again, never to part! And in the midst of all this excitement, another thrilling event takes place.

"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." 1 Thessalonians 4:17. The righteous living, the righteous resurrected—all are gathered into one exulting, ecstatic group in the swirling winds, rushing heavenward! And there's still more!

At that moment the redeemed will be changed! Bodies that once bore the marks of old age will surge forth with new life. These bodies once beaten down by disease or injury will once again be restored by the friendly Creator—who is very good at what He does! The Bible promises in 1 Corinthians 15 that we shall all be changed, that the dead will be raised incorruptible, that the mortal will put on immortality! Can anything be more exciting to think about?

I don't know about you, but I look forward to that day! The prognosis for all of us on Planet Earth isn't that good. As much as we try to avoid birthday celebrations (at least after we pass a certain age), the years do go by. Once-clear eyes become blurred. Joints ache. Knees and backs give out.

NEVER AGAIN!

But let's listen to the rest of the story! The Bible tells us that the redeemed will, one day soon, have perfect

bodies never again subject to disease or death. What a promise! Talk about something to anticipate! No more cancer, heart attacks, leukemia, AIDS. Lifting some words from a recent United States president: "Read my lips: No more suffering. No more pain!"

And isn't it just like Jesus to do all this first for those who have fallen asleep in Him? The first people to experience the exhilaration of renewed life surging through them are those who have been sleeping in their graves, waiting for His return:

"For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that

The Bible tells us that the
righteous will have a job to do.
While Satan is taking his forced
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be putting in overtime in heaven!

we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven. . . . And the dead in Christ will rise first." 1 Thessalonians 4:15, 16.

All the righteous—both the living and those resurrected at Christ's coming—will be taken to heaven at the same time, "And thus we shall always be with the Lord." 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

But before relaxing in the bliss of eternity, the Bible tells us that the righteous will have a job to do. While Satan is taking his forced vacation on Earth, the saints will be putting in overtime in heaven! Wrote John: "They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." Revelation 20:6.

What an experience! It's almost too much for our finite human minds to grasp. A thousand years with our Lord and loved ones in the New Jerusalem without fear of death or separation! A thousand years to accomplish a specific mission! John the Revelator describes this auspicious occasion as he viewed it in vision: "And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them." Revelation 20:4.

The all-wise, all-powerful God of the universe has included feeble men and women in the solemn task of judging fallen angels and the unsaved! As Paul asked, "Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? . . . Do you not know that we shall judge angels?" 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3.

What part will the righteous play in the judgment pro-

cess? How meaningful a role can anyone play when it appears that the judgment has already been completed at the return of Christ? Hasn't everyone's fate already been sealed before the millennium begins?

The Bible clearly states that the redeemed will be looking at the books and, as it were, "judging" for themselves during this one-thousand-year period. The realization will become clear—once and for all—that God is just and good and right. For thousands of years Satan has leveled the accusation that God is unfair, unloving, and unjust. The years of the millennium will put this notion to rest, vindicating God's character before the entire universe.

Have you ever wondered what your reaction might be if you looked for someone in heaven whom you expected to find there—only to discover they are lost forever? You might call the fairness of God's justice into question. During the millennium, the records of the lost will be opened. The most carefully guarded secrets and purposes harbored in each mind will be exposed. God's love and justice will be affirmed. Those inspecting the records will be left with only one response: "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments." Revelation 16:7.

But what are the lost doing while the redeemed are so busily engaged for a thousand years? Let's go back again to that dramatic picture of the Lord's return to Earth. While the righteous are being raised, reunited, and renewed, the wicked are involved in a totally different scenario. To them, the return of the Lord is a time of terror, not joy!

Desperately seeking shelter, they run for cover, crying to the rocks and mountains: "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!" Revelation 6:16, 17.

An awesome picture! The prophet Jeremiah adds these vivid details: "And at that day the slain of the LORD shall be from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth. They shall not be lamented, or gathered, or buried." Jeremiah 25:33.

What an overwhelmingly sad end—to be stricken down with none even to mourn one's passing! And what about the rest of the wicked—those in the grave at Christ's return?

The Bible clearly states that Christ's second coming does not disturb the wicked dead: "The rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished." Revelation 20:5.

UTTER DESOLATION

What then will Planet Earth look like during the millennium? Across the earth, everywhere, will be devastation and emptiness. Probably the sound of wind and storm, no more. While the redeemed are actively engaged in the judgment process in heaven, the wicked lie dead

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across a scarred, burnt Earth, with no one to grieve their passing. Even their fearless leader, now handcuffed by circumstances beyond his control, has abandoned them.

Wrote the prophet Jeremiah: "I beheld the earth, and indeed it was without form, and void; And the heavens, they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and indeed they trembled, And all the hills moved back and forth. I beheld, and indeed there was no man, And all the birds of the heavens had fled. I beheld, and indeed the fruitful land was a wilderness, And all its cities were broken down At the presence of the LORD, By His fierce anger." Jeremiah 4:23-26.

What chaos! The desolation and ruined condition of the Earth at that time is now unimaginable. John uses the metaphor of a "bottomless pit" to describe the emptiness of the planet at that time: "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." Revelation 20:1, 2.

The Greek word for bottomless pit is "abussos." This same Greek word is used in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament) to describe the chaotic condition that existed on the first day of creation, when the Earth was "without form and void."

So Satan spends a forced vacation on a devastated planet! Certainly a fitting place for Satan and his evil angels, wouldn't you say?

A DRAGON IN CHAINS

And what better symbolism could God use to describe Satan's condition than being "chained" or "bound" during that time? Think for a moment: The redeemed are in heaven. The wicked are dead. Everyone is gone. Ruin everywhere!

Evidently, the great chain with which Satan is bound is a chain of circumstances. No one is alive to deceive. No lives to twist or destroy. No human minds with which to toy. His hands, as it were, "are tied." He would love to continue his sinister work, but no one is around. He is "bound" to a lonely existence on a devastated planet.

Satan has nothing to do but wander to and fro reflecting on the results of his rebellion against God. No doubt he will also ponder with terror his eventual punishment—the bitter end to his self-promoting life.

But this thousand-year vacation does end, as the "the holy city, the new Jerusalem, come[s] down from God out of heaven." Revelation 21:2, KJV.

What a sight! A city perfectly square, 375 miles on a side, "floating" down from heaven in all its splendor and settling upon the Earth!

Almost simultaneously, as the city descends with Christ and His followers, another dramatic event takes place:

"The rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished." Revelation 20:5.

The wicked dead also have their resurrection, but oh, how different it is from the first resurrection! All those in the second resurrection have gone to Christless graves. From Adam's day to the second advent, the rebellious unsaved, "whose number is as the sand of the sea," (verse 8) will rise up with one mighty purpose.

Following their leader, who "will be released from his

The Bible does not picture an angry God tormenting sinners. It presents a righteous, holy, just God, cleansing the universe from the consequences of sin.

prison and will go out to deceive the nations" (verses 7, 8), this enormous army of rebels will plan their attack on the Holy City. Of all the ruthless armies this Earth has ever known, this final group of warriors will surpass them all in hate and their thirst for revenge. The greatest military strategists of all time will organize them; the most passionate leaders of hate and power this world has ever known will drive them into their last great frenzy. They will probably take as much time as they feel necessary to manufacture their assault weapons, whether nuclear, laser, or chemical.

Then the day arrives when all is ready. Bent on taking the New Jerusalem by force, the mighty army advances under the master rebel of all time: "They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city" (verse 9). Grasping his last opportunity to seize world dominion, the archenemy feels confident, with the vast army and their nuclear armament, that they are capable of capturing the city of God. Evil knows no limits to its self-deception.

However, John makes it clear that this desperate attempt will not succeed. In what is called His "strange act" (Isaiah 28:21, KJV), God will finish the battle. "And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them" (verse 9).

Notice that the fire comes down from God out of heaven. Hell is not a hot spot burning in the center of the earth. Hell is not some subterranean cavern imprisoning the lost who are tormented in the flames, shrieking in

horror. Hell is God's final judgment at the end of this world as we now know it. According to Hebrews 12:29, "Our God is a consuming fire." An all-righteous, holy God "consumes" or "devours" sin.

The fires of hell proceed from heaven. His righteousness, in harmony with all-embracing love, destroys all evil. It banishes all sin. It defeats all wickedness. The Bible does not picture an angry God tormenting sinners. It presents a righteous, holy, just God, cleansing the universe from the consequences of sin. The most loving act a gracious Lord could do!

REAPING THE CONSEQUENCES OF SELFISH CHOICES

From God's viewpoint, the destruction of sinners is a deeply sorrowful event. Yet He has no choice if He is to respect their freedom of choice. Sin is self-destruction. Every person is free to choose his or her future—and then to accept the consequences. The wages of rebellion is death, not because God is arbitrary, but because inherent in the rebel thought and act are the seeds of self-destruction. The seeds of sin are ultimately death. God allows sinners to reap the results of their choice. A loving, just, all-wise God with the best interests of the universe in mind could do no other.

Viewing this final fire in vision, Peter writes: "The heav-

God recreates a new world. A world where weeping is heard no more. A world where you will never again be misunderstood, hurt, abused, lonely, or confused.

ens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up." 2 Peter 3:10.

Although hell was prepared for Satan and his angels, those who have rejected Christ's salvation will also be destroyed in the final conflagration. The whole universe will understand then Christ's heart-rending words, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire." Matthew 25:41.

Does this verse mean that God will torture His victims unmercifully throughout all eternity? In another message, we'll seek a Bible answer to that question.

Out of the ashes of a charred world, cleansed from the

deadly virus of sin, God recreates a new world. A world where weeping is heard no more. A world where you will never again be misunderstood, hurt, abused, lonely, or confused. "For behold," our Lord promises us, "I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. . . . The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her . . . They shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. . . . And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." Isaiah 65:17, 19, 21, 22.

What a glorious eternity God promises the redeemed! The human mind cannot comprehend the glory and the beauty of the paradise God is preparing for those who love Him and are willing to follow Him wherever He leads. "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." 1 Corinthians 2:9.

The most glorious vacation spot on Earth will be nothing compared to the vacation land God has prepared for the saved in the Earth made new. And think—all of this the wicked could have enjoyed! But the price tag seemed too high. They were unwilling to choose Christ as their Saviour and Lord. They exchanged eternal life in paradise for "the passing pleasures of sin." Hebrews 11:25.

What an exchange! So much for so little! As John reminds us, "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matthew 16:26. o

The millennium is over. God prepares to move the capital of the universe from Heaven to Earth. Yet the war isn't over. Satan and his followers must finally reap to the fullest what they have sown.

But can it possibly be true—as multitudes today believe—that God will consign the devil and his followers to spend eternity in the agonies of an ever-burning fire?

Or is that just another of Satan's own lies? ▲

Discoveries in Prophecy Quick Quiz

Our heavenly Father has *so much* He longs to teach us! Think of each seminar session as one in a series of steps leading upward—a series of “lessons from heaven.” May we learn our lessons well, so we in turn can teach others. God’s Word, the Bible—our Textbook for this seminar—offers **Learning Unlimited!**

The Coming Thousand Years: The Golden Age—or World Disaster?

Numbers in parentheses below refer to *page numbers* in special-edition Seminar Bibles—the first number for the King James Version, the second for the New King James Version. For example: (709 / 681).

1. The word **millennium** comes from the pairing of two Latin words: **mille**, meaning “one thousand,” and **annum**, meaning “year”—resulting in “one thousand years.” Although the word **millennium** does not appear in the Bible, the term “a thousand years” does. Read the first seven verses of Revelation, chapter 20. Count how many times in these verses the Bible refers to this **thousand-year period**—and record the results here: _____.

2. Revelation 19:11-21 describes the second advent—or coming—of Jesus Christ to this earth. Then, as chapter 20 begins, we learn that immediately upon Christ’s return, Satan begins a thousand years in bondage. Fill in the blanks for the following verses:

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the _____
and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the **dragon**, that old **serpent**, which is
_____ and _____, and bound him a _____. And
cast him into the _____, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that
he should deceive the nations no more, till the _____ should be fulfilled:
and after that he must be _____ a little season.”

To check your answer, see Revelation 20:1-3 (/).

3. The Bible describes **two resurrections** of people from the dead—one that takes place at the **beginning** of the millennium, at the second coming of Christ—and the other at the **end** of the millennium. Which two words does the Bible use about those who are raised in the first resurrection? To check your answer, see Revelation 20:6 (/).

- A. Blessed
- B. Wicked
- C. Fearful
- D. Holy
- E. Rebellious

4. When Jesus comes to earth the second time, the wicked who have rejected Him and are alive to see Him as He returns **hide** in the **dens** and **rocks** of the **mountains** (see Revelation 6:15). What do they say to these mountains and rocks? (More than one answer possible.)

To check your answer, see Revelation 6:15, 16 (/).

- A. “Keep us safe.”
- B. “Fall on us.”
- C. “Hide us” from Jesus.
- D. The wicked say nothing.

Quick Quiz

5. The mountains don't protect the wicked. They are **slain** and lie unburied on the face of the earth (see Jeremiah 25:33). But notice what happens with the righteous—both the dead and the living. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; then indicate below what happens to these two groups at the Second Coming of Christ.

A. **The Righteous Dead:** "And the _____ in Christ shall _____ first."

B. **The Righteous Living:** "Then we which are alive and remain shall be _____

together with them in the clouds, to _____ the Lord in the air."

To *check* your answer, see 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17 (/).

6. While Satan is bound to this desolate earth for a thousand years, with no one else alive to tempt, the righteous are in heaven with Jesus. What do they do during this time?

To *check* your answer, see Revelation 20:4, 6. (/).

- A. They judge for themselves the fairness of God's decisions.
 B. They constantly visit other worlds.
 C. They "reign" with Christ.
 D. They sit on clouds and strum their harps.

7. At the beginning of the millennium, the righteous dead were raised to life. At the end of the millennium, the wicked dead of all ages will be raised ("the rest of the dead"—see Revelation 20:5). Christ, the saints, and the Holy City have descended to earth from heaven. Now what happens? (Check as many answers as are correct.)

- A. Satan is loosed out of his prison.
 B. Satan gathers the wicked to prepare for battle.
 C. The wicked repent and are saved.
 D. Satan and the wicked surround the Holy City with the saints inside.
 E. Satan and the wicked win the battle and take control of the universe.

To *check* your answer, see Revelation 20:7-9. (/).

8. What is the final end of Satan and the wicked?

"And _____ came down from God out of heaven, and _____ them."

To *check* your answer, see Revelation 20:9. (/).



Words to the Wise:

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."—Revelation 21:2. When the city descends, every one of us will either be inside looking out—or outside looking in. If Jesus is your Saviour, Lord, and Friend, have no fear—you will be on the inside!

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Discoveries in Prophecy

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to the book *Beyond Orion's Gates*, by Mark A. Finley

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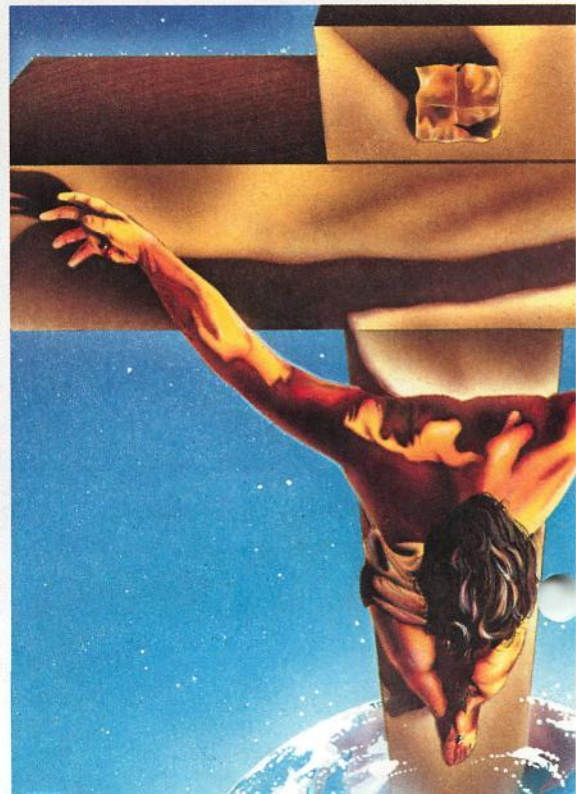
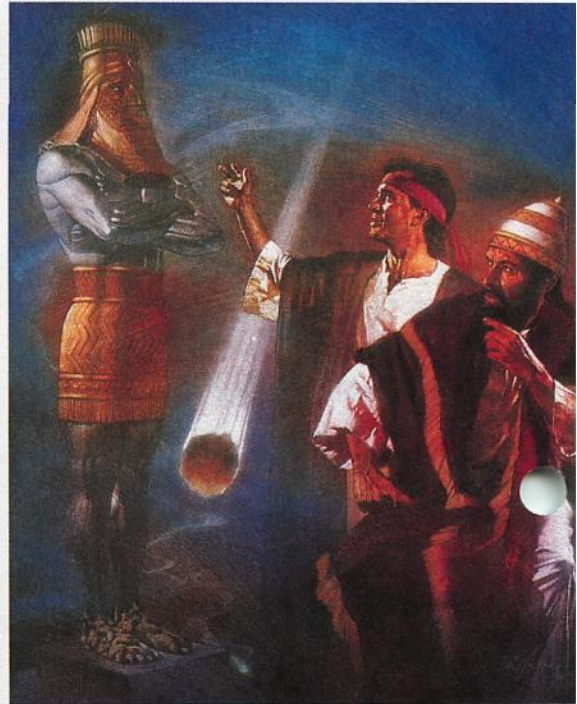
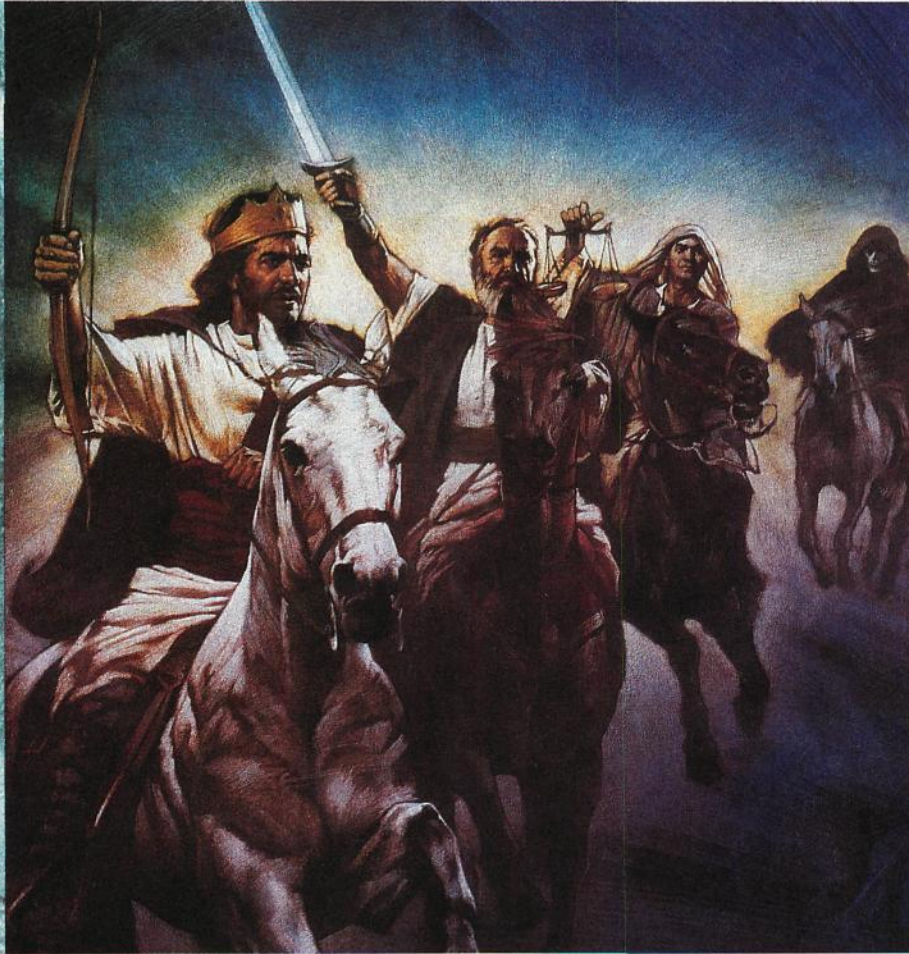
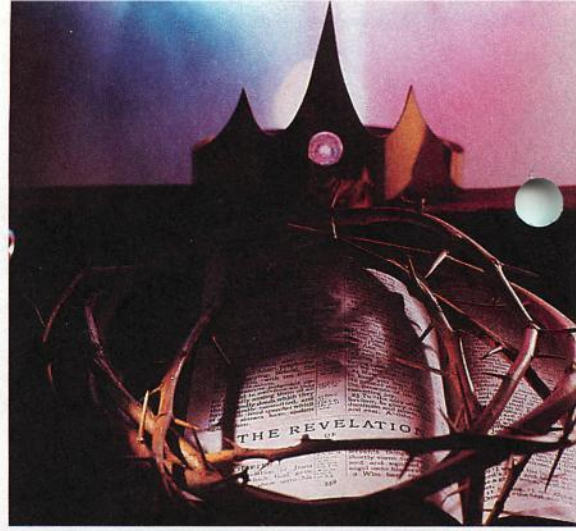
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