

THE GREATEST HOPE OF ALL 04: THE MILLENNIUM STUDY GUIDE.

So far, we have looked at the rapture, the reward days, the best seven years of our lives, then we looked at the new heaven and new earth. However, we skipped something and that is a thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ on the old earth before the new heavens and earth.

So, while we are having the seven best years of our lives after the rapture, the world below is having the worst seven years of their lives. That is the great tribulation. And it will be great.

Read Matthew 24.21-31. So, you can see it will be the worst seven years ever. I do not want to pause on that, because it will not get your hopes up, but the tribulation will be awful. A world without a church will be horrific. There will be a war in which one quarter of the world will be killed in (that is in Revelation 6), one third of the world will catch fire (that is in Revelation 8) and there will be constant murders, thieving and black magic (that is in Revelation 9). In fact, Jesus said if those days were not cut short then the whole world would be destroyed.

But those days will end, and they will end with the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. He will return and it will be obvious, and it will be sudden. The whole universe will be shaking because of the evil on the earth. And Jesus Christ will return with all His power and glory.

This second coming in Matthew is not the rapture. This is the glorious appearing. This is loud and noticeable – this is Jesus landing on planet earth. This is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords taking back the planet He purchased with His own blood.

It is shocking to think that people are going to mourn when this happens, they will be so wicked and hard hearted that they would prefer a war and crime rate that is literally killing everyone on the planet than Jesus returning!

Now Jesus Christ in this second coming is not coming back for us, He came back for us seven years before this in the rapture. Now in this event, He is coming back with us. And He will land on planet earth, specifically on the Mount of Olives.

Read Zech. 14.1-4. Jesus is going to land so forcefully on the mountain that he will split it in two. The antichrist will be attacking Israel at the time, and trying to wipe out all the Jews, and that is when Jesus will return, and will wipe out every army assembled against Israel. This is what is called the battle of Armageddon. He will throw satan into a pit for a thousand years, and the antichrist into a lake of fire.

Read Matthew 25.31-46. This is the return of Jesus Christ as well, and the entrance to the Millennium. Jesus Christ returns to earth, and the first thing He does is set up a thousand-year rule over the whole planet. Now notice that when Jesus lands, He immediately separates the sheep and the goats. That is the start of the millennium, the separation.

Now we need to realize that separation comes after Jesus returns and not before. Our job is not to separate, our job is to go into the fields and harvest! Our job is to make disciples and walk in victory. Our job is to go and love and serve and minister, not to separate. When Jesus comes again, He will then separate the wheat and the chaff, the good fish and

bad fish, the sheep and goats, the wise virgins, and foolish virgins. It is not our job to separate.

Back in Bible days, harvesting and separating were two different tasks. The men would go and harvest and bring everything back to the women. The women would find a cave where the wind would blow and use a massive shovel and throw the wheat and chaff into the air. The wheat is heavy and falls back down and the chaff is blown away. You did not harvest and separate at the same time. We are called to be the labourers in the harvest field. We are not called to be team separation. That is for Jesus to do when He returns. Our job is to share the gospel with the world.

We see a lot right now of Christians trying to do the separation – coming against this cause and that cause and political things, and it's not wrong to be salt and light, but you cannot root out evil through protest marches – our job is to harvest, preach the gospel, heal the sick, cast out demons, get people filled with the Holy Spirit.

At the second coming, all the wheat and chaff will be separated. The good fish and bad fish, the sheep and goats, the wise and unwise virgins, the good and wicked servants. Then we will enter the Millennium. The Millennium is found in Revelation 20.

Read Revelation 20.1. I love this verse so much. It is an angel that throws satan in jail. It is not Jesus Himself, not Michael the archangel, not Gabriel the great messenger angel. No, just an angel. Satan is not Jesus' peer, not His equal, not His level at all. Just an angel grabbed him and threw him in jail. The word in this verse for "bottomless pit" is abusos, where we get the word abyss from. It is a jail; it is not hell or the lake of fire.

This verse proves we are not in the millennium right now – satan is not bound, he is roaming around like a lion. He is utterly defeated, but he is roaming around deceiving people right now.

Read Revelation 20.2-3. Satan is put in jail for a thousand years. This is still in the future. It has not happened. It is in Revelation 20, so it's in the future. Some people tie this with when Jesus died, but it is still to happen. And it is literal – this is all literal. The battle is literal, the slaying of the kings is literal, and his binding is literal, and you cannot metaphor into it.

This is the 1000 years rule of Jesus on earth, called the MILLENNIUM by most people. And we are on earth for it. It's an unusual period of time, but it is going to take up 1000 years of your future, so it's probably good you are ready for it and know about it. It will be glorious because Jesus will be ruling and satan will not be deceiving. This cannot be the past; he is deceiving nations right now!

So, Jesus returns and ends the rule of satan, the antichrist, the false prophet. All the stuff we miss being in Heaven for a 7-year celebration and re-union. And He is coming back to rule over this planet and start an international reign of peace. It is going to be awesome. Get your hopes up! Whatever you are going through right now is not going to last a thousand years, but for a thousand years you are going to be on an earth with a bound up satan and a ruling Jesus in person! Get excited about those days!

Read Zech 14.9. This is the millennial kingdom, a planet earth with one king. Jesus! The millennium is a literal thousand years where Jesus will rule the earth with us! It is going to be magnificent. We will be there in our perfect resurrected bodies. It's a strange time, perfect people and imperfect people – immortals and mortals on the earth at the same

time. Those who are mortals will have longer lifetimes. The lion will lay down with the lamb, so the animals will be more peaceful. All the wars on the planet will be over. It's going to be an amazing 1000 years, and just being there is going to be great. It's going to be a great part of your future. The Bible tells us a ridiculous amount about the millennium, I could preach in it for four-five weeks easily. A lot of it in the Old Testament, something the Old Testament prophets were looking forward to.

As Christians one day, maybe today, we will be raptured, we will miss out on the great tribulation on earth, and we return to earth with Jesus. We will reign with Christ for a thousand years. We will be on earth, the old earth, not in Heaven, and part of the Millennium. The Catholic church, and the Presbyterians say we are in the millennium right now, but that does not make sense. Some charismatics are now teaching that we dominate the earth, we bring in a thousand years of peace and then Jesus will come back, but that also makes no sense.

I am not sure what our role in government will be, but I do know that there is a correlation between our faithfulness on earth and what we will be looking after in the Millennium because of the parable of the talents (see Matthew 25.14-30).

There millennium will be remarkable for many different reasons. There will be no war, we will beat our swords into ploughshares (Isaiah 2.4), we will be exceptionally healthy, disease will be abolished, death will be exceptionally rare. Israel will be in the centre of the world (see Isaiah 2.1-3). There will be a new temple in Jerusalem (see Ezekiel 40-48). The atmosphere of the world will be perfect. No satan, no demons. All believers. No opposition. Perfect weather, long life spans, children safe, a peaceful earth. And we will be there for a thousand years. That's going to be good.

Now a good question to ask is why we have a millennium. Why does Jesus not return and then go straight into the New Heavens and New Earth? Why have a thousand years before we do that?

- Because the Bible says there is a millennium. That is the bottom line, the Bible says it will be this way and I believe the Bible.
- It will demonstrate to all the nations in this earth that Jesus is Lord, that He is worthy to rule, that when He rules things will go so well!
- It will show how hopeless satan is. After a thousand years in jail, there has been no self-reflection, no repentance, no remorse, he will immediately re-offend.
- Spurgeon believed the whole reason for the millennium was just to honour Israel and say thank you for all they have done to ensure the world was ready for Christ. He said "There will be 1000 years when all the Jews will be restored to Israel, serving Jesus, Jerusalem the central city of the millennium, and the glory will be there. I look forward to it with joyful expectation". In other words, the millennium got Spurgeon's hopes up.
- Bob Yandian says the purpose of the millennium is to once and for all expose one of the greatest lies man has ever believed. The lie is "If you give me a nice enough environment, I will be fine". The truth is that a change of environment changes nothing, we must be born again. For years we have said if we can get someone to a better environment, they will be good people. No – your problem is not on the outside, it's on the inside. God is going to give man 1000 years of a perfect environment, and at the end they are going to try and attack Jesus! In a world with Jesus ruling, no satan, no demons, perfect in every respect, and PEOPLE WILL NOT

LIVE PERFECTLY BEFORE GOD. We will all have a BIBLE, we will all know in 1000 years there is going to be a stupid failed attack on JESUS, but they are still going to do it!

- It's a fulfilment of what God told Adam – go and be fruitful. This will be 1000 years of fruitfulness on the earth. It will be humanity dominating the earth in a godly way.

There are a number of reasons why this millennium is important. We will have a great time there. We will be able to see Jesus, we will be watching Old Testament prophetic words be fulfilled. We will visit Jerusalem and worship the Lord; we will go to the New Temple.

Now these thousand years will come to an end eventually.

So, remember two groups of people in the millennium – you and other Christians with your perfect resurrected body. But also the people who survived the tribulation will be there – still not resurrected, still like you are right now – but living a bit longer in the Millennium.

They will have children, some of which have never known the previous world, and never known the tribulation. Never known what we know. And somehow, because sin is deceitful, and people are dumb – these people will follow satan into a rebellion against God – it will be a repeat of the Garden of Eden – in the middle of a paradise, they will ignore the Word of God and listen to satan. There is no clearer demonstration of how powerful the allure of sin is in the Bible than this, except for the Garden of Eden itself.

Read Revelation 20.7-8.

- Satan is released from his prison. Not clear why – but the main reason seems to be people want him free. People who lived 1000 years in a perfect environment, no crime, no wars, no violence, but they still want to do selfish things. It's just human nature. And that's why we need a new heaven and new earth.
- People are going to decide to start a fight with Jesus. That's dumb, it's as dumb as listening to a talking snake over your creator, it's as dumb as trying to chase Israel and kill them after every first born is already dead, it's as foolish as denying Christ, it's as foolish as a lot of things you have done. It's as foolish as not tithing, it's as foolish as not trusting the Lord, it's as foolish as sexual immorality, it's as foolish as bitterness! They will be very foolish, and it will not go well for them.

Read Revelation 20.9-10

- They surrounded the camp of the saints. That is, you and me, we are raptured in our perfect bodies, immortal, and they decide to come after us. They are going to try and fight people with perfect bodies. They are also coming against Jerusalem.
- They still hate Jerusalem. That never seems to change.
- It is over in about ten seconds, some scholars call it the Final Battle, it's not a battle really is it! And satan is put in the lake of fire – you will never change, satan, you are going to hell, right next to the antichrist and his false prophet. They are still there after 1000 years.

Everyone who has ever lived will be judged based on their actions, and we will be forever in the New Earth in our resurrected bodies. We have already had our judgment and it was

a reward day. But in this judgment, earth and heaven are wiped out and we enter the New Earth forever and ever. Which is going to be glorious.

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- I. Put the following events in the correct order:
 - a. The Great Tribulation
 - b. The New Heaven
 - c. The Reward Day
 - d. The Rapture
 - e. The Millennium
2. Where will Jesus land when He returns to earth?
3. Why will some people mourn when Jesus returns?
4. When will the separation happen? What kind of things are happening today that are separating not harvesting?
5. Who throws satan in the abyss, and why is this important for us?
6. Why is there going to be a millennium?
7. Bob Yandian says that the main purpose of the millennium is to expose the lie that a good environment produces good character. How is that lie expressed today, and how can we stand against it in our minds and in society?
8. The millennium will end when some of the people decide to attack Jesus. That is a foolish action. Have you ever decided to attack Jesus and realized how foolish that is?
9. What about the millennium excites you the most and gets your hopes up the most?
10. What about this message inspired, encouraged and comforted you the most?