

PROPHETIC TRUTHS FOR TODAY

Unveiling the End-Time Events

by

John E. Dahlin

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

AFTER THE MILLENNIUM—WHAT?

“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan will be loosed out of his prison”
(Revelation 20:7).

IN A PREVIOUS message we discussed the Millennium or the Golden Age for this earth. It will be a warless world, and the inhabitants will learn righteousness. Jesus Christ will sit upon His throne as the descendant of David, and according to Isaiah 9:6, the government will be upon His shoulder. The whole world will be baptized with the glory of the Lord. Peace on earth and good will among men will characterize the entire millennial period. The Gospel of the kingdom will reach every nook and corner of the globe.

It may seem strange, yet the Scriptures point out that this period will have a definite boundary of time. From Revelation, chapter 20, verses 7-10, we learn that a fundamental change will come to the world with its inhabitants. Let us quote the entire passage:

“When the thousand years are expired Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. And he shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city, and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil which deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever” (Revelation 20:7-10).

These verses furnish us with a clear revelation relative to the events which will transpire beyond the millennial age.

SATAN IS LOOSED

First in the series of developments beyond the Millennium is the release of Satan from the bottomless pit. During the thousand-year period he will be isolated and completely restrained, and the inhabitants of the earth will be spared from satanic activity. The response to Christ's reign will be overwhelming and righteousness will be the order of the day.

Likely this is what will take place during the Millennium: Millions of people will simply fall in line with the prevailing spirit which characterizes the kingdom age. There is really no alternative unless men want to be eliminated altogether. This will happen in isolated cases to those who seek to challenge the universal rule of Christ.

Righteousness will be the law of the kingdom era, and obviously multitudes will yield to the principles which are dominant upon the earth. Even in our day, when a nationally known evangelist comes to a city, it is not uncommon to see business organizations, civic organizations, in fact, the whole city, more or less, go along with such a crusade. It is the popular thing to do.

Perhaps in the Millennium a large number will give only a nominal recognition to the spirit which prevails throughout the whole earth. It is correct to assume, I think, that millions of people in the millennial age will not have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, hence when the supreme test comes later, they will be ready to listen to the voice of Satan, and they will become victims of his delusions.

When Satan is loosed for a season, his old program will be resumed, and it appears his activity will take on intensified vigor and resourcefulness. This goes to demonstrate that unregenerate human nature is ever the same. Truly the prophet's description of the natural man is true in this period also. "**The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?**" (Jeremiah 17:9). Even a thousand years of righteousness does not change unregenerate human nature.

It might also be well to ascertain what may be God's purpose in allowing Satan to be loosed following the unprecedented period of glory and righteousness.

First of all, it appears to me God's *purpose of testing man must be carried through in every dispensation.*

Even in man's state of innocency in the garden the first parents were tested in order to demonstrate whether they would go God's way by choice as free moral agents, or take what appeared to be a road of expediency. The generations living during the Millennium will be sheltered, you see, and a test will be necessary to determine once and for all whether or not their acceptance of God is by personal choice and decision, regardless of pressures upon them to yield.

Then, too, I believe God must demonstrate by the release of Satan, *that the deceiver is incapable of reformation.*

In other words, his state is incorrigible, and a thousand years of confinement will not in the least produce a change in him. This does strike a real blow against universalism; *a teaching which holds out the hope that all created beings will be saved eventually*, including even the devil.

These unscriptural assumptions find here a passage not easily reconciled to such a theory.

THE WAR OF GOG AND MAGOG

This final conflict on earth seems to take place simultaneously with the release of Satan from his prison house, the bottomless pit. We find some superficial readers or students of the Bible who associate this coming war with the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel 38-39. This is a very serious error. The war involving Gog and Magog which Ezekiel presents is a premillennial conflict, while this one in Revelation, chapter 20, is a postmillennial war.

I think the reason it is identified as that of Gog and Magog is quite obvious. The term in Revelation “**Gog and Magog**” is used metaphorically because in the fury of that last struggle, it resembles the earlier conflict to which Ezekiel makes reference. I think the distinction between the two is fortunately very clear as we shall proceed to explain.

The war of Gog and Magog of Revelation, chapter 20, is one in which *an attempt will be made to destroy the saints on earth, and the world's capital, which is Jerusalem*. Moreover, this final invasion will not come from the North as the one does which is depicted in Ezekiel, but this one will come from *all quarters of the earth*.

In other words, it will be a *universally inspired rebellion against God* by the forces of Satan. No kings or confederacies are mentioned in connection with the Gog and Magog in the Book of Revelation. In Ezekiel, however, where the premillennial invasion is described, we have the distinct ruler from the North mentioned and the northern confederacy identified. These clear distinctions all careful students of prophecy will make since the two events are separate and cannot possibly involve the same conflict.

The final rebellion on earth will be one of fury, but the period is of a brief duration. All of these great forces, which are spearheaded by Satan, have one single mark of identification, namely, an unspeakable hatred of God and the saints. In vast numbers they will appear from all the areas of the earth and are determined to destroy the “beloved city.” But God is more than a match for them. In one master-stroke God will bring fire from heaven upon them. The last rebellion on earth will be quickly stamped out by the God of heaven. Here, then, we find depicted the last organized conflict on this earth. It will be overwhelmingly and utterly crushed by divine intervention. Immediately following this rebellion, Satan will be cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and false prophet are, and “**they shall be tormented day and night forever and ever**” (Revelation 20:10).

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT

Chronologically, after the Millennium, and subsequent to the doom of Satan's last rebellion, the judgment before the Great White Throne will take place. In conjunction with this final event referred to in prophecy, there will be the resurrection of the Christless dead of the ages. All those who will have no part in the first resurrection will be resurrected eventually, and will be summoned to appear before the Judge of all the earth. We read, “**The sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hades delivered up the dead which were in them, and they were judged every man according to their works**” (Revelation 20:13).

At long last the Supreme Court of the universe will be established. And from the verdict of this tribunal there can be no further appeal.

In the passage just quoted the writer sets forth clearly this great judgment with much solemnity. It is clear, I think, that before the Great White Throne will appear all the unsaved from the past dispensations in order that they may get their verdict individually. Everyone will be judged according to that which is written in the books. What a day this will be for all those who have lived throughout the ages, who died without Christ in their sins!

It appears as though there is a possibility that someone may challenge the verdict, for it says “**and the books were opened**”; in other words, the records are accessible. All whose names are not written in the Book of Life will find only one inevitable result, namely, being cast into the lake of fire. Remember Jesus told His disciples, “**Rejoice that your names are written in heaven**” (Luke 10:20).

Indeed, we need to ask,

Is our name written there,
On the page white and fair,

as the song-writer states it. This last judgment brings about what is known as the Second Death, and thus the chapter is closed for every human individual. Those who are doomed will become as wandering stars, never being able to return to the orbit of light. According to Revelation those who are condemned will stand speechless and acquiesce in the Rightness of God’s judgment. This harmonizes with the Biblical statement, “**Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?**”

A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH

The last two chapters in the Book of Revelation *point to the eternal state*.

A new heaven and a new earth will emerge and the eternal state will be ushered in, with ages tumbling upon ages without end. Peter also refers to this time in these words, “**The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the world that are therein shall be burned up . . . according to promise we look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness**” (II Peter 3:10, 13).

Out of this baptism of fire and atomic heat will come forth the new heavens and the new earth.

The capital city in the new eternal kingdom will be the New Jerusalem. This is the city to which Abraham looked by faith, “**a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God**” (Hebrews 11:10).

Even during the Millennium it will be visible, a city four square. It appears that the New Jerusalem will be the main base of the Church during the Millennium, for the Church will reign with Christ over the earth. Revelation describes it as a city four-square, or like a cube.

It will illuminate the earth as nations will walk in the light of that city, which is actually suspended over the earth. The description is given in considerable detail in Revelation, chapter 21. Who can grasp the full splendor of that eternal city? Jesus gave us some anticipatory thoughts regarding our eternal home: **“In my Father’s house are many mansions”** (John 14:2). And every one of these is within the Father’s house. The writer John continues his description in Revelation: **“The gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there”** (Revelation 21:25). The multitudes of the redeemed will have continuous access to the throne of God.

THE ETERNAL STATE

No human vocabulary can give an adequate description of the endless time we designate as eternity.

Paul gives us some interesting clues, however: **“And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him, that God may be all in all.”** Here the apostle points to a creation which is fully restored. All the footprints and stains of sin during the past ages will be obliterated. The whole universe will come into perfect, eternal harmony. Sin will have been banished forever, and the element we call time will no longer exist, for we read, **“There should be time no longer”** (Revelation 10:6).

This, then, is the eternal bliss to which the Bible refers again and again.

The eternal homeland, which is called heaven, with its fulness, remains without an end. Every need will be satisfied and every yearning or desire will be met. Doubtless the Psalmist had this in mind when he uttered, **“As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness”** (Psalm 17:15).

Are you, my friend, bound for this land of eternal sunshine and glory? We read, **“God himself shall be with them, and be their God, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes . . . the former things are passed away”** (Revelation 21:3, 4).

Dr. Hinson, the famous old Baptist preacher at Portland, Oregon, once expressed openly a wish to enter heaven’s shore land with a tear in his eye, in order to be able to feel the preciousness of having the last tear wiped away by God. One can’t help but appreciate his thought even if the experience will be higher than a physical one. At last all sorrows will be over, and joy will come in the morning.

In view of these fascinating word pictures of John concerning heaven, what are the chief lessons which stand out in this regard?

First of all, it is clear that the supreme necessity is *to have our names recorded in the Book of Life*. The Psalmist puts it very well in these words, **“The Lord shall count, when He writeth up the people, that this man was born there”** (Psalm 87:6). In other words, it is imperative that we are saved the Bible way, and that we have trusted in His blood atonement as our only hope for eternity.

Secondly, I think we should want to have recorded *that we are obedient Christians, and that His good and perfect will for our lives is accepted rather than His permissive will*; in other words, that Christ not only has a place of prominence, but rather that in all things He has the preeminence.

Thirdly, it should be written down in His record *that we are faithful to His Word, faithful to the church and in the Christian ministry, also fully committed to a continuous witnessing ministry*.

Fourthly, we should covet, I think, for *the record up there that we are soulwinners*. We read, **“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever”** (Daniel 12:3).

The latter days are here. If we are to establish a record which will merit approval, it must be achieved here, and these are the days when we need to **“do the work of an evangelist.”** We will face the record one day.

~ end of chapter 18 ~

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