

Ellen G. White Estate

MY JOURNEY TO LIFE

THE MILLENNIUM

What is the millennium?

STEP 27 OF 28



Journey to Life, Step 27

Foreword

My Journey to Life will give you the keys for finding peace of mind, harmony of body, and success in relationships. Every step will transform your outlook as you unpack each lesson. We pray they will help you to fall in love with the greatest Teacher this world has ever known. So together, let's walk the pathway step-by-step to a new life in Jesus.

Preface

The concept of the millennium has been largely misunderstood by most of today's Christians. What does the Bible really say about this 1,000-year period? Will there be a millennium of peace on our planet? What happens at the end of this period? Join us as we discuss the millennium and the end of sin and suffering.

Step Twenty-Seven—The Millennium and the Eradication of Evil

Question: What is the millennium? “The millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in heaven between the first and second resurrections. During this time the wicked dead will be judged; the earth will be utterly desolate, without living human inhabitants, but occupied by Satan and his angels. At its close, Christ with His saints and the Holy City will descend from heaven to earth. The unrighteous dead will then be resurrected and, with Satan and his angels, will surround the city—but fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth. The universe will thus be freed of sin and sinners forever.”—*Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, p. 407

Bible Discovery: Jeremiah 4:23-26; Ezekiel 28:18, 19; Malachi 4:1; 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3; Revelation 20; 21:1-5

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 658.2

1. When does the millennium begin? The millennium, or thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in heaven, begins when Jesus returns to take the redeemed to heaven (see Step #6, The Second Coming). The millennium is bounded by two resurrections—the righteous are raised at the first resurrection and live and reign with Christ for a thousand years of peace, followed by the resurrection and final destruction of the wicked.

Contrary to some teachings, the Bible says nothing about establishing a kingdom on earth for a thousand years. John 14:1-3 states that Jesus is preparing a place for us and will return to take us where He is— “in His Father's house.”

Bible Discovery: Revelation 20:1-14

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 102.2

2. Who will be destroyed at the beginning of the millennium? Just as the wicked were destroyed at the Flood and in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Matthew 13:38-40; 24:37-39; Luke 17:28-30), so will the wicked who are alive when Jesus comes be destroyed, this time by the brightness of His coming (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

Revelation describes the three powers that gather the nations of the world to oppose Christ's work and His people immediately before the Second Advent as the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet (Revelation 16:13). (See Step #22, The Remnant) When "the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies" gather to make war against Christ and His followers, the beast and the false prophet are destroyed (Revelation 19:19, 20). In questions #5 and #10 we will discover the fate of "the dragon."

Bible Discovery: Isaiah 26:21; Jeremiah 25:33; Zechariah 14:12, 13; 2 Thessalonians 2:7, 8; Revelation 19:21

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 657.1

3. What is the first resurrection? What the Bible describes as "the first resurrection" (Revelation 20:6) is the literal bodily resurrection of the righteous when Jesus returns at the end of time. This glorious resurrection will include all of God's loyal people who have died with their faith in God since the beginning of earth's history. The first resurrection, or resurrection of life, contrasts with the second resurrection, the resurrection of judgment, that is described later in Question #7 of this lesson.

If we place our trust in the Lord Jesus, death will have no power over us! What wonderful, good news! Those who have been faithful to Christ, who are resurrected, are ransomed together with the faithful who are still living. All of us who trust in Jesus' perfect sacrifice on Calvary in our behalf can have the hope of life in heaven with God forever.

Bible Discovery: Job 19: 25, 26; John 5:28; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18; Revelation 22:12

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 259.3; *The Great Controversy*, p. 549.3

4. Where will the righteous be during the millennium and what will they be doing? After the resurrection of the righteous dead, they and the living righteous are "caught up to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Then they will live and reign with Christ for a thousand years in heaven, not on earth. This reign is in the heavenly New Jerusalem, since the earthly city of Jerusalem does not play a significant role in the book of Revelation.

During the thousand years, the redeemed saints of God will participate with Christ in judgment of the wicked (see Question #5).

Bible Discovery: John 14:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3; Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 7:15; 20:4-6

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 660.4

5. What is involved in the millennial judgment of the wicked? We could say that there are at least three phases of the judgment against the wicked. 1. The Investigative Judgment that occurs before the Second Coming of Jesus (Revelation 22:11). (See Step #5 The Sanctuary.) 2. The Millennial Judgment that occurs during the thousand years (Revelation 20:11, 12). 3. The Executive Judgment that occurs after the 1,000 years when sin and sinners are destroyed by fire (Revelation 20:11-15).

In the millennial judgment, the saved examine every record of those who were not saved to be assured that God was fair and just in excluding them from heaven. The millennial judgment does not decide who is to be saved or lost. God will have already made that decision before the second advent. It is instead to give the saints full confidence in God's reign of justice, love, and mercy. They will understand that God made every effort possible to save each person, and it will quench any doubt about God's fairness.

Bible Discovery: Nahum 1:9; 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6; Revelation 20:4

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 52.2

6. What does Revelation 20:1-3 mean when it states Satan will be bound a thousand years?

During the millennium, Satan, the third member of the demonic trio of Revelation 16:13, is bound, in the sense that he has no one to tempt and harass for one thousand years. The wicked who were alive at Jesus' coming were destroyed by His brightness, the righteous have been transported to heaven, and the earth is in a state of chaos and desolation (Revelation 16:18, 20; Isaiah 24:19, 20). Thus, Satan and his angels are bound by a chain of circumstances to the bottomless pit, a symbol of the uninhabited planet or *abyss*.

After Jesus has finished His heavenly ministry in the Most Holy Place (see Step #5, The Sanctuary) He places the sins of His people upon Satan, who instigated all evil. In no way does Satan atone for the sins of the believers—Christ has already fully done that on the cross of Calvary. But Satan must bear the responsibility for all the sin he has caused the saved to commit. As the scapegoat was banished into an uninhabited land in ancient Israel, so God will banish Satan, the dragon of the apocalypse, into the desolated earth for one thousand years. There he can contemplate the results of his deceptions and look ahead to the dreadful penalty he must suffer because of all the evil for which he is responsible.

Bible Discovery: Leviticus 16:8-10, 21, 22; Isaiah 24:19-22; John 12:31; Revelation 12:7-9; 19:19-21; 20:1-4

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 485.3

7. What is the second resurrection? The second resurrection is the resurrection of condemnation, or judgment, after the thousand-year millennium in heaven. At the close of the millennium, Christ and the righteous descend to this earth, accompanied by the New Jerusalem. Jesus raises the wicked, giving Satan a new opportunity to deceive. This is described in Revelation as loosing Satan from his prison for a little while (Revelation 20: 3, 7).

The number of the wicked from all of history are described as the sands of the sea. Satan attempts to rally this vast host to take the beloved city by force. In a final act of hostility toward God, the wicked, with Satan as their general, march up to the New Jerusalem and surround it.

Bible Discovery: John 5:29; Revelation 20:5, 8, 13; 21:2

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 663.1; 664.1-2

8. What is the “Great White Throne Judgment”? When God’s enemies have surrounded the New Jerusalem and are ready to attack it, God sets up His great white throne. As the entire human race meets around this throne, some secure inside the city, some terrified outside, God carries out His last phase of judgment. At this juncture, God’s record books will be opened. Everyone, including Satan and his angels, will confirm the justice of God’s ways. All will bow their knees and confess that Jesus is Lord. The question of God’s justice will have been forever resolved.

After this final judgment before the great white throne, the wicked are destroyed. Revelation 20:9 states, “Fire came down from heaven and consumed them.” This annihilating judgment is repeated in verses 14 and 15: “Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire; and if any one’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

None of us need to experience the second death and the annihilation of the last judgment (Romans 6:23). Jesus offers us eternal life through His substitutionary death on the cross. All we must do is accept His redeeming grace and perfect righteousness, allowing His great love to transform us!

Bible Discovery: Malachi 4:1; Matthew 13:40-42; Luke 13:28; Romans 14:10; Philippians 2:10, 11; Revelation 20:11-15

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *General Conference Bulletin*, April 1, 1897, par. 2

9. Will the hell fire and punishment of the wicked last “forever and ever” (Revelation 14:11)? The Bible makes clear the “second death” (Revelation 21:8) that the wicked suffer means their total annihilation (Malachi 4:1-3). “The wages of sin is death,” (Romans 6:23) not eternal torment in hell. To be tormented forever, the wicked would have to possess immortality, this belongs only to God and upon those to whom He bestows it (1 Corinthians 15:51-54).

Let’s consider some biblical uses of the word “forever:”

- Jonah 2:6 “forever” meant three days and nights
- Exodus 21:6 “forever” meant until death
- Jude 1:7 “forever” meant until the fire went out
- Isaiah 34:9, 10 “forever” meant until its destruction was complete

- Philemon 1:15 “forever” means as long as the person lives

When “forever” is associated with God, its meaning is absolute—for God is immortal; when associated with mortal humans, the meaning of “forever” is limited. When the Bible speaks of eternal judgment, or forever burning, it refers to the eternal results of the judgment, not to eternal flames. Thus, those who are consumed by the second death will never rise again. The result of the judgment fire is death, which is final and eternal. Its consequences last forever.

Bible Discovery: Psalm 37:20; 104:35; 145:20; 1 Timothy 6:16; 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 20:10

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 545.1; 548.3-549.1

10. What would an unquenchable hell that literally burns forever say about the character of God? The theme of Scripture is “God is love.” The adversary of God and humanity says the opposite—that God is vindictive, cruel, and unjust. If God were to arbitrarily extend the lives of the wicked so they could suffer eternally in the fires of hell, Satan’s accusations would be justified.

God has shown us in myriad ways the depths of His love for us. Again, and again the Spirit appeals to those who have not accepted His substitutionary death on the cross to “Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die?” (Ezekiel 33:11). The twin attributes of justice and mercy are part of God’s character. Though “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23), God longs for each person to accept the gift of eternal life He offers them through Christ’s sacrifice, making them safe for eternity.

Bible Discovery: Psalm 86:15; Ephesians 2:4; 1 John 3:16; 4:8

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 536.2

11. What is the battle of Armageddon? The names *Gog and Magog* were associated with the enemies of Israel, who were to attack God’s people and Jerusalem after the exile. Because of the people’s response, several Old Testament prophecies regarding Israel were not fulfilled (see Jeremiah 18:7-10). These prophecies will meet their fulfillment in spiritual Israel, those who keep God’s commandments because of their faith in Jesus. The mighty enemy confederation of which Ezekiel spoke, will find its fulfillment when God allows Satan and his armies of the damned, to rise up against His people and His beloved city for the last battle in the Great Controversy.

Armageddon is the climax of the great battle of the ages between Christ and His angels, and Satan and His angels—between good and evil, truth and deception. One could suggest that the first phase of Armageddon is the attack by the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet against the commandment-keeping people of God just before their rescue at His Second Coming (see Step #22, The Remnant). The culminating phase of Armageddon is at the end of the millennium when Satan marshals his forces against the inhabitants of the Holy City.

Bible Discovery: Galatians 3:28, 29; Ezekiel 38:2, 14-16; Titus 2:11-13; Revelation 2:10

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 982.5; 983.2; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 175.3

12. When is sin eradicated? At the end of the millennium, Christ descends to earth again, with the saints and the New Jerusalem. He will end the great controversy and eradicate sin by executing the decisions of the millennial judgment. Satan, his angels, and his human followers, including the beast and the false prophet, receive their punishment—eternal death. The very surface of the earth outside the city appears to melt, becoming a vast lake of fire for the “judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (2 Peter 3:7). The fire that destroys the wicked purifies the earth from the pollution of sin. The watching universe is satisfied that God is both merciful and just (see Ephesians 3:9, 10; 1 Corinthians 4:9).

Out of the purified and renewed earth, Christ will create a New Earth and establish on it His eternal kingdom, which the saints will enjoy for eternity. Satan, the root, and his followers, the branches, will be no more. Sin will never rise again. The great controversy between good and evil is forever ended.

The Bible describes this final act of cleansing the earth of sin and sinners as God’s “strange act” (Isaiah 28:21), for He “is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9 NKJV). “We are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him” (2 Peter 3:13, 14 NIV).

Bible Discovery: Nahum 1:9; Zechariah 14:9; 2 Peter 3:10, 20; Revelation 19:20; 20:9, 10, 15

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 673.1-2

Reflection...

During the thousand years of the millennium, the righteous will reign with Christ and judge the wicked, who will be forever destroyed along with Satan at the millennium’s close. After this final event, Christ recreates the earth, making it anew.

Next Step...

Imagine—a beautiful, fresh, peaceful new world. No taint of sin, sadness, or disease will mar its perfection, and it will be the home of the redeemed for eternity! Scripture says, “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). Don’t you want to see and experience it for yourself?

Discussion Questions

1. What is the biblical millennium?
2. What is the difference between the 1st and 2nd resurrection?
3. How does total annihilation" of the wicked (versus eternally burning hellfire) demonstrate God's character of love?

Further Reading

Official Adventist Website: <https://adventist.org/millennium-and-the-end-of-sin>

Contact Information

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Request a personal Bible study: <https://www.bibleschools.com/en/personal-studies>

Visit your local Seventh-day Adventist Church: <https://www.adventistlocator.org>

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