

WHY SATAN IS RELEASED after the 1,000 YEARS

by Jeffery W. Niccum

hosted courtesy of www.LightontheRock.org

Date: Posted April 2011

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Summary: Passover season is all about our total victory through Christ over Satan, sin and its consequences. Satan is gone during the Millennium, so why would God release Satan at the end of the thousand years? Have you ever heard a reason that makes sense? Jeffery Niccum reviews the blueprint Yahweh has consistently required from the beginning of his angels, Adam and Eve, God's own son Jesus Christ and all His firstfruits. See how Satan fits into God's incredible plan. Some of your cherished assumptions about the Millennium, the resurrections and the timing of various events may be challenged. This sermon will make you think.

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Comment from Philip Shields, host of LightontheRock.org

I believe **Jeff Niccum, an elder in the Spokane, WA area**, presents some interesting points about our arch enemy Satan and his role. This message assumes a basic working knowledge of scripture. Some of it is speculation, but his speculation is backed by the patterns from the beginning. I think from time to time it is good for those of you who come to this site to be exposed to other speakers and viewpoints. What follows are Jeff's notes. Once in a while I insert an editorial note preceded by something like this: [PWS...]
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After 4,000 years of human history, God sent fresh information about the future to mankind. He did so through revealing this information to John, who witnessed it and wrote it down.

Revelation 1:1-3 (NLT)

¹This is a revelation from^o Jesus Christ, which God gave him concerning the events that will happen soon. An angel was sent to God's servant John so that John could share the revelation with God's other servants. ²John faithfully reported the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ—everything he saw.

³God blesses the one who reads this prophecy to the church, and he blesses all who listen to it and obey what it says. For the time is near when these things will happen.

We are having uprisings of the people in nations with oppressive and corrupt leadership. We are having more and more severe weather events. We seem to be having more and more severe natural disasters – most recently the massive earthquake and tsunami in Japan. The world's financial system is completely sick and broken and will soon collapse. The earth and its natural resources are straining under the abuse and greed of 6 billion people. It surely feels like we are on the precipice of the beginning of the events of the first four seals.

Just look at the things happening or could be happening. (The audio then discusses.... Interruption of oil. Food shortages. Severe weather upheavals. Mass starvation.) These are attributes of the first four seals.

When Christ returns, Satan is put away – temporarily followed by the Millennium.

Strange event then is mentioned in Revelation 20.

Revelation 20:7-8 (NKJV)

⁷Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸**and will go out to deceive the nations** which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number *is* as the sand of the sea.

Why does God release Satan and allow him to go out and deceive the nations? Is there a clear answer to this question?

- **Who are “the nations?”**
- Are they merely the people alive at the end of the millennium? Doesn’t this seem like a strange thing to do?

Perhaps on the surface – yes. Many have tried to attribute reasons – none of which have satisfied me. However, God does not do things frivolously or for the fun of it. He has a plan and a purpose, and all that is done by God is an important step in the accomplishment of His plan and purpose.

Why is the answer to this question important? Why do we need to understand this? Because it reveals a critical element of God’s plan for mankind! Because it shows us more about who and what God is! Because it makes clear the purpose of God’s master plan! When one understands this plan, it also makes very clear what it is that God wants from us as Christians, His children. It makes very clear why Jesus Christ had to die!

The purpose of my message today is to answer the question of why Satan is released to deceive all nations at the end of the thousand years, which gives clarity to the ultimate objective of God’s perfect master plan!

There is only one way scripture can remain consistent and contradiction-free. The clearly understood passages of scripture must be the source for answering the unclear passages. Any other approach to interpreting the Bible will result in scriptural contradictions.

Using this key unlocks the simple and plain answer to this question! We must first sweep our minds clean of preconceived ideas and look to what scripture says. Doing so reveals a surprisingly simple scenario that is consistent throughout all of scripture – which adequately and logically answers the questions, “at the end of the thousand years, why does God release Satan and allow him to go out and deceive the nations?” and, “who are the nations that Satan goes out to deceive?”

2 Peter 3:10-13 (NKJV)

¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the *heavens 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.***

¹¹Therefore, since all these things will be *dissolved*, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

¹²looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the ***heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt*** with fervent heat?

¹³Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for *new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells*.

This is a prophecy of the new spirit heavens and new spirit earth that come into existence once God burns up and dissolves the millennial earth and physical universe. [PWS: listen to Jeff's prior sermon titled "the Big Picture" for explanation of this.] This prophecy also reveals that righteousness will dwell there. Verse 13 is a depiction of the new spiritual order once the purpose for the physical is complete. At one time, long ago, prior to the angelic creation, we can surly safely surmise that only righteousness dwelled. Once again in the future, only righteousness will dwell according to 2 Pet. 3:13. God's plan has two objectives:

1. To create billions of spirit beings– all with unique, independent character and personality. The only way to do this is to create the capacity for free moral agency.
2. To eliminate even be the *possibility of sin* for all eternity, or else we couldn't say "in which righteousness dwells."

There has not been a time since the devil's first sin that only righteousness dwelt in the universe. Until the physical disappears, this cannot once again be the condition of the universe. *This is the purpose of the physical – a means to the end that there will never again be the possibility for sin!* The physical is God's "Succoth" (temporary dwelling). After this only the spiritual dimension without the possibility of sin will exist. This is the true and ultimate "restoration of all things!" A spiritual family having free moral agency without having possibility of sin is the purpose of God's plan! Intolerance of sin forever is the reason Christ had to die for us! [PWS: these conclusions are based on 2 Pet. 3:13 and other passages.]

To build a case for answering the question of why Satan is released and allowed to deceive all nations, we must start by going back to a time before the creation of the angelic realm. We are going to lay a historical foundation to a precedent that will give us the answer. When God created the angelic realm, they were equipped with ***free moral agency***.

Angelic Realm and Origin of Satan

At one time, the angelic realm did not exist. When God created the angelic realm, He created cherubs, one of which was Lucifer [his actual Hebrew name was Heylel, meaning morning star"] (**Isa. 14:12; Ezekiel 28:14**). God created these angelic beings perfect in all their ways, and included *the freedom of choice*. Sin had never been in existence in the universe until Satan introduced it for the very first time as is clearly stated or implied in Ezekiel 28:12-13. It is talking about a being who was in Eden and who was guiding the king of Tyre at the time this was written:

Ezekiel 28:12-13 (NKJV)

¹²"Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: 'You *were* the seal of **perfection, Full of wisdom** and **perfect** in beauty. ¹³You were in Eden, the garden of God;'

Lucifer (Heylel) became Satan [meaning “Adversary”] when he exercised his free moral agency, and chose to sin. He knew what God’s way was. He was “full of wisdom!” Wisdom is “God’s Way.” Lucifer was in God’s spiritual Garden of Eden. The physical creation is a copy of the spiritual creation (**Heb 9:23-24**). One could reasonably *speculate* that God’s spiritual Garden of Eden had a tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and that Lucifer partook of it contrary to God’s instructions.

Whether literal or metaphoric, Lucifer’s choice to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil establishes an important point: an otherwise *perfect angelic being* – with free moral agency - could not be relied on to live a sinless existence! *This point is essential.*

When Satan sinned, he was the originator of it (John 8:44).

John 8:44 (NLT)

⁴⁴For you are the children of your father the Devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning and has always hated the truth. There is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Sin came into existence for the first time. It has caused turmoil, problems, and grief ever since. This proves that if true independent free moral agency is going to be an objective of God’s plan, the possibility for sin will be there. Accordingly, God must make provision for this in order to accomplish a sin-free universe forever! How is God making provision to accomplish this?

Note that God could have *destroyed or isolated* Satan after his sin. Then perhaps another million years could go by, then another of His angelic creation could sin, and God would do the same, never knowing when another of His creation would sin. But this isn’t what God did! *Why?* Instead, *God chose to test his angelic creation by exposing them all to the influence of Satan!*

Scripture does not reveal how long Satan lived a perfect existence prior to his sin. However, what we do know is that because Satan was the originator of sin, *none of the multiple millions of other angelic beings had sinned up to this point!* Interestingly, once Satan influenced the angelic realm, it appears that fully one-third of them succumbed to Satan’s spirit of deception (**Rev. 12:4**)!

From this, we can reasonably infer that God purposefully exposed the angelic creation to the influence of Satan to test them. Had this test not taken place, those angels that became demons probably *would have continued their existence with the potential for sin in the future.* Until this test took place, all of the angelic creation had continued to obey God! Until such time that this test took place, the true character of the angelic creation had not been exposed! This test defined which spirit beings would remain forever obedient and which ones would not. Through this test, God now knew which ones were which!

The bottom line is *Satan’s influence worked to deceive millions of perfectly created angels that were up to then living a sinless existence!* It wasn’t until these angels were put to the test of overcoming Satan that God found out which angels would succumb to sin. It wasn’t until the

angelic realm was subjected to this test that it became apparent which angels would choose God OVER Satan and demonstrate the ability to recognize deception and reject it!

What happened with the angelic realm is consistent with the following two prerequisites:

1. Knowledge of God's Way.
2. Exposure to and the rejection or overcoming of Satan's deception.

If Satan's deception worked with the perfect angelic creation, composed of spirit and seeing God as He is, wouldn't we expect it to work on human beings? Isn't the purpose of the physical creation to first determine who will and who will not overcome Satan's way of sin *prior to becoming a spirit being in God's Family*?

Adam and Eve

Let's look at the example of the first human beings created – Adam and Eve. God created them as perfect humans. At first, they only had the knowledge of the spirit of love – God's way. God could have isolated them from Satan as long as they continued in obedience to God. However, God did not do this! *Just like the angelic realm, even prior to having sinned, God tested Adam and Eve by exposing them to the influence of Satan!*

Genesis 3:1-6, 13 (NKJV)

¹Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And **he said to the woman**, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" ²And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; ³but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'" ⁴**Then the serpent said to the woman**, "You will not surely die. ⁵For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing **good and evil**." ⁶So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. ¹³And the LORD God said to the woman, "What *is* this you have done?" The woman said, "***The serpent deceived me***, and I ate."

God could have prohibited Satan from having access to Adam and Eve. God could have warned Eve that Satan was going to tempt her to eat of the tree. Because He did neither, one perhaps can infer that ***God's plan required Adam and Eve to experience Satan's deception***. Just like the angelic creation, the first humans succumbed to Satan's deception. This set the precedent for all human beings – ***which is they must be exposed to the deception of Satan!*** Clearly, God had taught Adam and Eve all about wisdom and His Way prior to exposing them to the influence of Satan (v. 2-3).

Mankind

God's requires man to "rule over" (overcome) sin. Look what God said to Cain before he killed his brother Abel.

Genesis 4:6-7 (NKJV)

⁶So the LORD said to Cain, ... sin lies at the door. And its desire *is* for you, *but you should rule over it.*"

Revelation 21:7 (NKJV)

⁷*He who overcomes* shall inherit all things,

Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ became human, and God subjected Him also to the influence of Satan. The Devil tried to deceive Him to no avail.

Matthew 4:1 (NKJV)

¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness *to be tempted by the devil.*

Hebrews 4:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in *all points tempted as we are*, yet without sin.

Revelation 3:21 (NKJV)

²¹To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, *as I also overcame* and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Apostles

Prior to God giving the Holy Spirit, He subjected the apostles to Satan's influence:

Luke 22:3 (NKJV)

³Then Satan entered Judas,

Luke 22:31 (NKJV)

³¹ And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. ³²But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren."

New Testament Church

God has subjected those making up the New Testament Church to the influence of Satan.

1 Peter 5:8 (NKJV)

⁸Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. ⁹Resist him, steadfast in the faith,

Revelation 3:21 (NKJV)

²¹To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, *as I also overcame* and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Note that Christ says, “as I also overcame.” He overcame the world. He overcame the direct influence of Satan.

In every example given above, those subjected to the influence of Satan *had the knowledge of the way of God*. In other words, overcoming Satan’s influence *must be simultaneous with knowing God’s way*. The building of Godly character involves knowing what is right, being influenced by wrong, and overcoming the wrong by choosing the right! This is what overcoming is!

Revelation 21:7 (NKJV)

⁷He who *overcomes* shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

So, this leads us to two key questions:

1. Does God’s plan entail Him giving ALL human beings the knowledge of His way?
2. Does God’s plan then test ALL human beings with the influence of Satan and then grants eternal life only to those that choose God’s way over Satan’s way?

If one applies the scriptural precedent of the angelic realm, Adam & Eve, Jesus Christ, and the New Testament Church, then there are two prerequisites in God’s plan that apply to all human beings prior to being made a spirit being! Would it make sense that God would apply a different set of prerequisites to some human beings and not others? Why would God even have these two prerequisites if they weren’t important for EVERYBODY?

Prerequisite #1

God will give all human beings the opportunity to come to know God’s Way and His plan!

Mark 16:16 (NLT)

¹⁶*Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned.*

Christ spoke these words after His resurrection and after telling his disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel!

God conditionally saves only the one who “believes.” Those who don’t believe are “condemned” Therefore, by inference, one must have knowledge of God in order to “believe!” Preaching the gospel is for the purpose of furthering God’s first prerequisite that all human beings will be given the opportunity to come to understand His Way and His plan!

Scripture reveals that God will save humanity in two overall stages as depicted by the harvesting of crops – the few in the early spring harvest and the many in the late fall harvest. The early spring harvest is analogous to the 1st resurrection of the firstfruits (**1 Cor. 15: 22-23**). All human beings that have been given the holy spirit prior to the 1st resurrection will be part of the early harvest. Clearly, all who are a part of the 1st resurrection will have had the understanding of the way of God!

We know that one of the main purposes of the 2nd resurrection, which takes place after the thousand year millennium, is to give all of mankind the opportunity to come to know God's way (**Rev. 20:5**). So, between those that are called to the 1st resurrection, and those that will be in the 2nd resurrection, *100% of human beings will be given the opportunity to understand God's plan and His way*. Doesn't this include everybody that ever lived? Yes!

Prerequisite #2

The second prerequisite is that 100% of those given the knowledge of God's Way will be required to overcome the influence of Satan – *after meeting prerequisite #1!* What is a prerequisite? (Example of college classes).

If we are to use the Bible to interpret the Bible:

Angelic creation

Adam and Eve

Jesus Christ

Those in the 1st resurrection

Why should we think it is going to be any different for the remainder of human beings?

Now let's make another observation. After the 2nd resurrection takes place, all those resurrected will be assimilated into the world amongst those billions that will be alive at the end of the millennium. The entire population of the earth at that time will consist of two classes of people:

1. Those that have not been through prerequisite #1 – i.e. do not have the knowledge of God and His way. After the first few months of the little season, mankind will **all** graduate from prerequisite #1 – coming to the understanding of God's Way and plan.
2. Those that have already graduated from prerequisite #1, yet have not gone through prerequisite #2 – being subjected to the influence of Satan's deception!

After the first few months, all human beings alive after the 2nd resurrection will have graduated from prerequisite #1, which will lead into all human beings going through prerequisite #2!

Now, like all the angelic creation and those in the 1st resurrection, ***they too will be subjected to the influence of Satan, and will have to overcome!*** They too will have to fulfill prerequisite #2!

This is the reason Satan is released!! All remaining human beings will now go through the 2nd prerequisite to being given eternal life in God's Family! How much plainer and simpler can this be?

- How else will all human beings come to understand God's plan and way - but for the 2nd resurrection – which is HOW all will fulfill prerequisite #1?
- How else will all human beings then come to be influenced by Satan's deception - but for Satan's release at this time – which is HOW all will fulfill prerequisite #2?

The purpose of releasing Satan is so that he can be God's tool to test all human beings in the same way as the angelic realm, Adam & Eve, Jesus Christ, and the Firstfruits! This cannot be

accomplished WITHOUT Satan! That's why Satan is "preserved" for 1,000 years. The irony is that Satan himself is the means by which God will enable His plan of reproducing Himself! God could not accomplish the dual objective of free moral agency and a future eternity without sin without Satan ferreting out those that would ultimately choose to sin rather than overcome!

"The NATIONS"

Revelation 20:7-8 (NKJV)

⁷Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number *is* as the sand of the sea.

What people make up "the nations?"

Matthew 25:32-34, 41, 46 (NKJV)

³²All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats.

³³And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

³⁴Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

⁴¹"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:

⁴⁶And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

These verses describe all those who will be judged at the great white throne judgment as "all nations." The people who make up "all nations" must be all human beings whom God has not yet resurrected! There are only two primary mass resurrections: one occurring prior to the millennium and one occurring after the millennium. (We're not counting resurrections of single individuals over the millennia who were brought back to life, but the mass resurrections.)

[PWS: traditional COG teaching has been three resurrections, but Scriptures clearly speak of a "first" resurrection, implying at least a "second". Carefully consider what Jeff is saying here.)

As we have covered, at the end of the millennium, when God resurrects the remaining humans who have lived and died back to physical life, a utopian world populated by those still alive at the end of the millennium will be in place. This world will be full of the knowledge of God. Those resurrected will come up from the dead, and those still alive will be there to assimilate them into an awesome world prepared ahead of time for their arrival.

For some reason, the 2nd resurrection has been depicted by traditional Church of God teaching as taking place AFTER Satan's release and AFTER the Gog/Magog war are completed. Does this make any sense? Why would Satan's influence be restricted only to those alive at the end of the millennium? What about those who come up in the 2nd resurrection? What about those who died during the millennium? Under this theory, these classifications of people would NOT be subjected to the influence and deception of Satan at the same time their minds are being opened

to God's way – unlike all others in history. Why a different plan for them? This would be against all scriptural precedent.

Some say that they have already been subjected to Satan's influence back in the world prior to the millennium. However, this means nothing if not in the context of first knowing God's Way, and then having to choose to overcome the influence of Satan!

SECOND RESURRECTION

Let's analyze what scripture says regarding the timing of the second resurrection in conjunction with the timing of Satan's release:

Revelation 20:5 (NKJV)

⁵But the *rest of the dead* did not live again until the *thousand years were finished*.

Revelation 20:7 (NKJV)

⁷Now when the *thousand years have expired*, *Satan will be released* from his prison

The two phrases “thousand years have finished/expired” in verses 5 and 7 of Revelation 20 are the same identical Greek words: (χηιλιοι [κηιλῶ-εε-οψ] ετοσ τελεο |).

If we read scripture for what it says, and let the Bible interpret the Bible, *then Satan is released at the same time – or in close proximity to when - the 2nd resurrection takes place!* They are events that happen virtually simultaneously. It very well could be that Satan will witness the 2nd resurrection take place and see the billions of potential members of God's family. It seems plausible that for the first few months, while the entire world is undergoing prerequisite #1, that Satan will have limited influence. Those resurrected will assimilate into the millennial world and observe everyone on the earth keeping the Sabbath and Holy Days! They will all observe the utopian environment, and hear the history of how God recreated the earth and enforced the keeping of His law. They will witness the results of God's way. They will acquire the knowledge of God's plan and His way.

Then Satan will have his final opportunity to deceive all that he can. The main point is that *Satan is released for the express purpose of prerequisite #2 - being allowed to deceive all remaining human beings, which will have acquired the understanding of God's plan and His way – prerequisite #1!*

There is no basis for being dogmatic to insist Satan's release takes place in conjunction with when the 2nd resurrection takes place. But both events are described by the exact same Greek words!

Satan's time of influence will be for a “little season” (**Rev. 20:3**). Scripture does not reveal how long this will be, but it will obviously have to be long enough to stir up attitudes and allow for the development of the capability of manufacturing basic weapons of war. It will also have to be long enough for resurrected infants to mature into adults. Perhaps it is for a jubilee period – i.e. 50 years.

Some have attributed Isaiah 65:20 to the length of the “little season”. So various ones have taught “the Hundred Year period” – but is there really a strong basis for teaching a dogmatic 100 year period?

Isaiah 65:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ “No more shall an infant from there *live but a few* days,
Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days;
For the child shall die one hundred years old,
But the sinner *being* one hundred years old shall be accursed.

However, reading the context through verse 25 shows this verse is referring to a time during the millennium.

Isaiah 65:25 (NKJV)

²⁵ The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,
The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust *shall be* the serpent’s food.
They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,” Says the LORD.

Note that the famous depiction of the millennium in Isaiah 65:25 follows only five verses later. This is the context of verse 20.

Scripture does not give us the length of the “little season.”

Because humanity must meet these two prerequisites prior to God changing them to spirit, I speculate that no reproduction will take place during “the little season” because *there must be a cutoff. Otherwise, the scenario would arise in which there would be infants who would have to perish at the time God changes the physical back to spirit.* Infants cannot come to know God – prerequisite #1.

Great White Throne Judgment

There seems to be confusion regarding what the “great white throne judgment” is. I believe “The great white throne judgment” is an event – not a period of time!

Revelation 20:13 (NKJV)

¹³ The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

The first part of verse 13 is describing the second resurrection. The sea, Death, and Hades all deliver up the dead. Then God will judge them. When does God judge them – at the time of the second resurrection? No - the purpose of the “little season” is to give all humanity the opportunity to come to know God’s plan and His way, then to subject them to the influence and deception of Satan! Everyone will go through the two prerequisites, then be judged!

Once the “little season” is complete – God will judge humanity from a white throne! If humanity is going to be judged “each one according to his or her works” then they must have

time to produce new works – after prerequisites 1 and 2! It will be the same for all remaining humanity at the time of the little season as it is for us today, and as it was for the angelic creation, Adam and Eve, and Jesus Christ. Why do we over-think this? These same two prerequisites for all before will be the same two prerequisites for all remaining! It appears to be that simple.

Once the little season is complete, then the great white throne judgment will take place. God will then know those that He will resurrect to eternal life, and those He will not. This is the time described in (**Matt. 25:22-23** NKJV).

Those Who Die During the Millennium

As stated previously, I firmly believe those who live and die during the millennium will merely be resurrected back to human life at the time of the second resurrection. The millennium is the final 1,000 years of the 7,000-year plan of God for humanity. There is no scriptural indication that humanity will not continue to be born, live, and die – just as in the previous 6,000 years. The only difference will be that God's government will be ruling the earth after it is restored to a utopian state. The knowledge of God will fill the earth, and all will fulfill prerequisite #1! As the millennium progresses, people will undoubtedly begin living longer and longer lives. The environment will be pollution free. The creation will be genetically restored and the foods will be fresh and full of nutrition. As a result, all should have an opportunity to live long and full lives. It will be in a different world, ruled by the Messiah and the saints, and *without the influence of Satan*.

Some have suggested that human beings during the Millennium will not die and all live until the end of the millennium.

Isaiah 65:22 (NKJV)

²² They shall not build and another inhabit;
They shall not plant and another eat;
For as the days of a tree, *so shall be* the days of My people,
And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

Again, I find nothing in scripture to support this. Even in the pre-flood world when the longest life was 969 years, not all people lived 1,000 years. Many died 100, 200, 500, 600 years old, but they died. Lots of trees also die less than 1,000 years old. I believe the meaning of this verse is that people will tend to live to be old- probably much older than today, because of the pure foods, pollution-free and stress-free environment.

Others have suggested that God will resurrect to spirit all those that live and overcome their human nature during the millennium. The theory being that there will be a constant wave of newly resurrected spirit beings throughout the millennial period. Where does this theory come from?

Acts 3:20-21 (NKJV)

²⁰ and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,

²¹whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

As the theory goes, Satan will be gone and the world will once again be like the garden of Eden. In the garden of Eden, the tree of life was available, as it is in the Paradise of God (Rev. 22:2, 14)

Where does scripture say the tree of life will once again be available *on earth during the Millennium* itself? It is a leap to go from “restoration of all things” to waves of people being changed to spirit during the millennium.

[PWS: some have inferred a millennial Tree of Life from Rev. 22:2, 14 and Ezekiel 47:8-12. Rev. 22 speaks of a tree of life in heaven, which will come to earth eventually, but not during the millennium. Ezekiel 47:8-12 speaks of multiple trees on earth with healing leaves used for medicine, probably during the millennium. But the leaves and the living water are for healing, not for eternal life.]

Unfortunately, this is nothing more than a private interpretation of scripture used as a basis to formulate a theory about what happens to those who live and die during the millennium. There is not one single scripture that even suggests this! This would be a major resurrection apart from the first and second resurrections clearly referred to in scripture.

What does the “restoration of all things” mean? If it involves a supernatural miracle of any kind, then does not Elijah have to be Jesus Christ? What does He restore? His perfect re-creation of the earth for the millennium – just as it was at the time of the creation of Adam and Eve.

The theory speculates that one does not need to be subjected to Satan’s influence – having to overcome their human nature was sufficient. This is the antithesis of what God’s plan requires as a means of preventing sin forever into the future! A person will live in a utopian environment without Satan’s influence. Will God make them a spirit being without being tested by Satan? If so, then why didn’t He do this with the angelic creation and Adam & Eve? This misses the point that Satan’s influence otherwise WORKED!! How would God be assured that a person would not sin in the future if not having proven it first through overcoming Satan’s influence? This is the whole purpose of the physical creation – to prove ones character PRIOR to being given eternal life as a member of the God Family!

The varying explanations involving what happens to human beings during the millennium evolve as a result of trying to *change* the simple precedent established in scripture. I personally believe it is clear that God changes human beings into spirit only after meeting the two prerequisites. Keeping this simple dual prerequisite in mind allows consistent interpretation of otherwise seemingly unclear scriptures. This is the only way God can be assured that everyone’s character will be tested, which apparently will be sufficient to prove trustworthy for all eternity!

If we believe that God is not a respecter of persons, then we must conclude that what God requires for one, God will require for all.

Acts 10:34 (NKJV)

³⁴Then Peter opened *his* mouth and said: “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.

God is going to require overcoming from all human beings prior to giving them eternal life. This is the only way He can be assured that sin can never again arise for all eternity!

Christ overcame the world, which was Satan's world, not God's world.

John 16:33 (NKJV)

³³These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you ^owill have tribulation; but be of good cheer, *I have overcome **the world**.*"

Christians also must overcome the world:

1 John 5:4 (NKJV)

⁴For whatever is born of God *overcomes **the world***.

The central theme that God wanted delivered to the Churches of Revelation 2 and 3 was the necessity to overcome. To develop the mind-set that God's way was to be preferred over Satan's way. As human beings, overcoming this could never be 100% successful. **However, the spiritual effort to do so is what God knows will carry over into the permanent character of a spirit being.** This is what necessitated the reason Christ had to die for us! *Christ's righteousness is what covers our sin.* Our effort is what establishes our character.

Man must be subjected to and endure temptation.

James 1:12 (NKJV)

¹²***Blessed is the man who endures temptation;** for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*

[PWS comments: I recommend you all also listen to the 2 part sermons on the Righteousness of God, and how we become righteous in Him, by His righteousness, as His gift. We indeed must overcome sin fully. We do this "in Him" and by His spirit. His righteousness is imputed to us, as is explained in those 2 sermons. It is when we are changed to spirit that our corruption puts on incorruption – 1 Cor. 15:53-54 and at that time we shall be like Him – 1 John 3:2.

Let that sink in: we shall be LIKE HIM. At that time, by that time, the Messiah will have been fully formed in us, and we will be in His exact image, as He is the exact image of His Father. At *that* time we shall be exactly like Him, perfect, conquerors through Him – which is what the Passover and last day of unleavened Bread picture: total victory over sin, pictured by the Egyptian army buried in the baptism of the Red Sea. The old way – Egypt – is buried in the Red Sea in baptism, and the new way has come out alive on the other side, risen with Christ. You see that parallel in Rom 6:1-6 and 1 Cor. 10:1-4. When we are changed to spirit we are then perfect, sinless, and as Jeff has explained -- unable to sin. We've been exposed to God's way and Satan's way – and have chosen God's way. The resurrection locks in that choice for the rest of eternity and we will never ever again sin or even be tempted to sin. God is not tempted by evil (James 1:13), and we shall be like Him (1 John 3:2). Remember 1 John 3:9 says "he who is born of God does not sin..."

1 John 3:9 ASB

9 Everyone who has been born of God does not sin, because His seed remains in him; he is not able to sin, because he has been born of God.

CONCLUSION

What is Satan's fate and how does the physical plan of God end? Again, we can only go as far as indications and hints from scripture. This naturally leaves considerable speculation.

Let's review some final scriptures:

Is Satan banished for eternity in some spiritual prison forever, or destroyed?

Revelation 20:10-11 (NKJV)

¹⁰The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are [were cast]*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

What about those that are killed by fire when they advance on the camp of the saints and the beloved city?

Revelation 20:7-9 (NKJV)

⁷Now when the thousand years have expired, *Satan will be released from his prison ⁸and will go out to deceive the nations* which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number *is* as the sand of the sea. ⁹They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.

And what about those that are the "goats" that God is going to subject to the lake of fire? The ones that don't overcome during the little season?

Well, when we analyze what appears to be Peter's prophecy about the end of the physical, we can certainly speculate

2 Peter 3:10-13 (NKJV)

¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the *heavens 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*.

¹¹Therefore, since all these things will be *dissolved*, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

¹²looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the *heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt* with fervent heat?

¹³Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for *new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells*.

Those that marched on the camp of the saints will have been burned up. Is this not their "lake of fire?" And those not changed into spirit after the great white throne judgment will continue to

stand as physical human beings when the earth and the works in it are burned up as the physical reverts back to the spirit.

God's temporary dwelling will be gone. The physical will be gone. Details of this are covered in the previous sermon entitled, The Big Picture.

This prophecy from Peter is of the new spirit heavens and new spirit earth that come into existence once God burns up and dissolves the millennial earth and physical universe.

Then, there will finally be new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. And God will have accomplished his will – a family of God-beings, along with an angelic creation with unique, individual personalities as free moral agents, without the capability of ever sinning. There will never again be sin for all of eternity.

This is why Satan is released to deceive the nations at the end of the thousand years.

