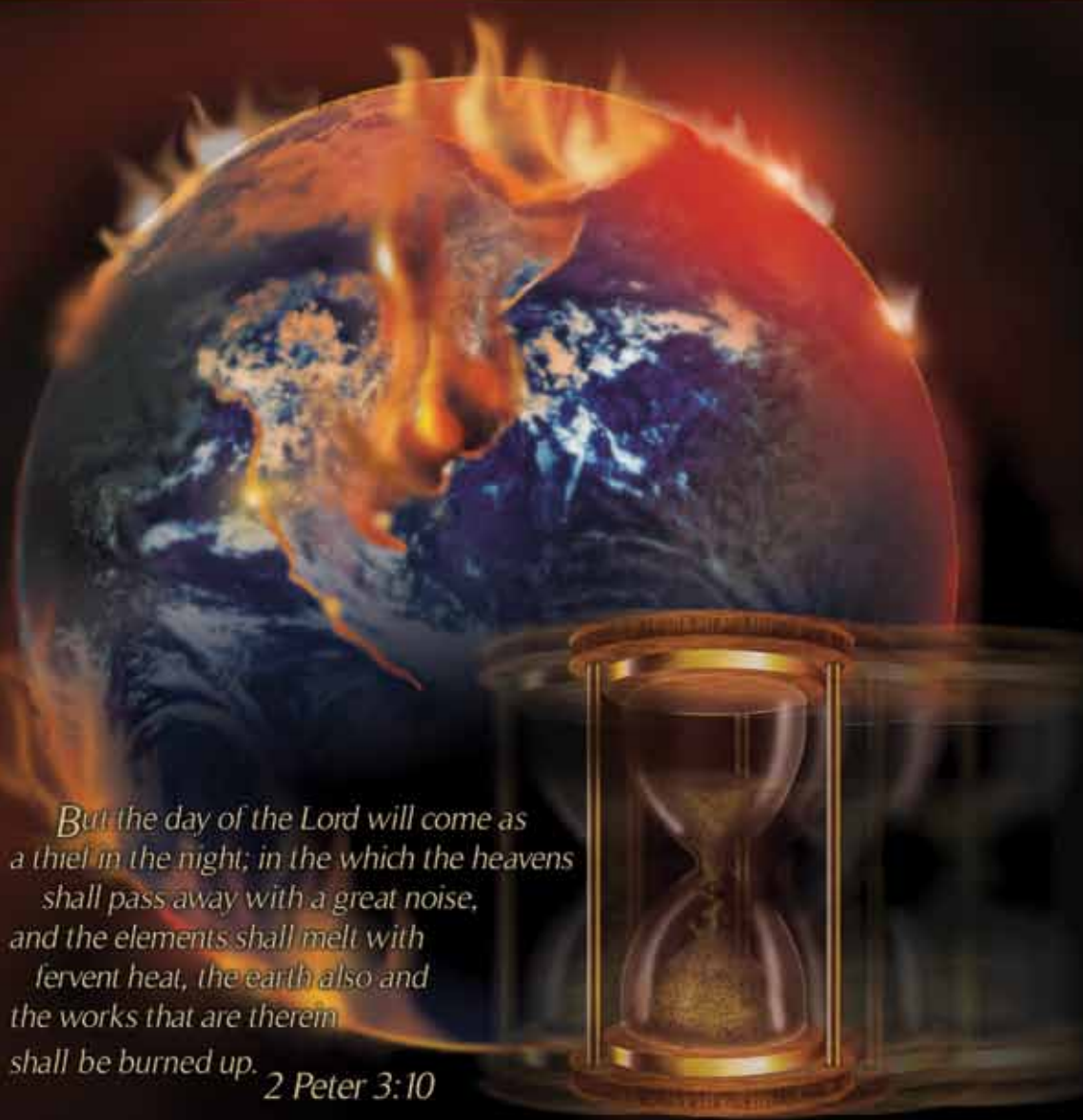


# Bible Witness

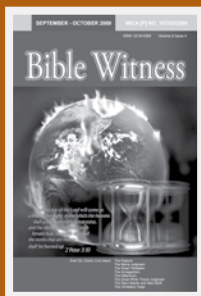


*But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*

*2 Peter 3:10*

Even So, Come, Lord Jesus:

- The Rapture
- The Bema Judgment
- The Great Tribulation
- The Armageddon
- The Millennium
- The Great White Throne Judgment
- The New Heaven and New Earth
- The Christians' Hope



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# THE RAPTURE

Jeffrey Khoo

All Christians will one day be either resurrected or raptured. This is clearly taught in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first [i.e. resurrection]: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up [i.e. rapture] together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

When the resurrection and rapture take place, all believers will receive their sinless and perfect bodies—no more sin, no more sickness, no more sufferings. "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:53-57).

The Bible says that this will happen when Jesus Christ returns to judge this sin-cursed world. This wicked world will one day go through 7 years of great tribulation (Daniel



9:27; Matthew 24:15-21). Will the church go through this period of great tribulation of God's wrath, or will she be delivered from it? If she will be delivered from the wrath to come, then at which point? This is where the rapture comes in, but there are five views:

### **1. Pre-tribulational rapture**

The pre-tribulational rapture view believes that the church will be caught up at the start of the 7-year great tribulation period. This tribulation period, also called Daniel's 70th week (Daniel 9:27), is described as a time of terrible judgment upon the earth by God (Matthew 24:21), a time of divine wrath. It will last for seven years.

In the book of Revelation, God pours out His wrath at the beginning of the great tribulation—Revelation 6:17, "For the great day of his wrath is come;" at the middle of the great tribulation—Revelation 11:18, "thy wrath is come;" and at the end of the great tribulation—Revelation 16:1, "the wrath of God [is] upon the earth."

Will Christians enter this period of wrath? The Apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 1:10 tells us that the Lord Jesus has "delivered us from the wrath to come". A second promise of deliverance is found in 1 Thessalonians 5:9, "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." To be raptured before this time is our blessed hope and comfort (1 Thessalonians 2:19; 4:18; 5:11).

### **2. Mid-tribulational rapture**

The mid-tribulational rapture view believes that the church will be caught up at the middle of the seven-year great tribulation period. This view was taken by J O Buswell. Buswell saw the seals, trumpets and vials

of Revelation to be chronological and sequential. He believed that the seals and trumpets occur prior to the resurrection of the saints at the middle of the 7 years. He believed the seals represent a picture of a stage in the history of the redemption of the church, and the 6th seal refers to the major cosmic disturbances Jesus spoke of in His Olivet discourse (Matthew 24:6-7; Mark 13:7-8; Luke 21:9-12). He also suggested that the 6 trumpets fall on the first half of the 7 years, and that the 7th will occur at the 3½ year point. He considered the vials to be the wrath of God poured out at the final half of the 7 years. Buswell thus identified the "last trump" of 1 Corinthians 15:52 to be the 7th and last trumpet of Revelation 11:15. The rapture will happen when the 2 special witnesses are caught up after prophesying for 1,260 days, i.e. 3½ years.

### **3. Three-quarter tribulational rapture**

This is popularly known as the pre-wrath rapture view first propounded by Marvin Rosenthal in his book—*The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church* (1990). According to Rosenthal, God will pour out His wrath sometime in the middle of the second half (i.e. 3rd quarter) of the 7-year great tribulation period. The rapture will thus occur at this three-quarter point at the beginning of the trumpet judgments (Revelation 8:1-2). He explains, "the Day of the Lord is the time of divine wrath. It will be recognized as about to begin by the cosmic disturbances associated with the sixth seal (Joel 2:10-11, 30-31; Revelation 6:12-17; cf. Matthew 24:29) and will begin with the opening of the seventh seal (Revelation 8:1). The rapture of the church will immediately precede the Day of the Lord. The Day of the Lord will begin sometime within the second half of Daniel's seventieth week."

#### **4. Post-tribulational rapture**

The post-tribulational view says that the rapture will only occur at the end of the 7 years of great tribulation. This view is generally held by anti-Israel millennialists who believe that the nation of Israel has been replaced by the church, and so it is the church that will go through the great tribulation since there is no more Israel. The main problem with this view is that Israel despite her unbelief is still very much a nation, very much in existence and very much kept by God according to the promises He made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Romans 11:1-32).

#### **5. Partial rapture**

The partial rapture view believes the rapture will take place at different points of the 7-year great tribulation period depending on the spirituality of the believers. Those who are holy will be raptured at the beginning, those not so holy, in the middle, and those really unholy, at the end. This position has some similarities to the Roman Catholic view of purgatory, and of salvation by works.

#### **Which?**

The Bible tells us that the great tribulation is a time of Jacob's (i.e. Israel's) trouble (Jeremiah 30:7). The nation of Israel will have to go through this time of great tribulation, and at the end of it, God will save Israel from her enemies, and make her a great nation (Romans 11:26).

The church is not Israel. The church is saved from the wrath of God to come (1 Thessalonians 5:9). In the light of this, the church will have to be raptured before the time of God's wrath. Scholars disagree over the time of God's wrath: Is it at the beginning of the great tribulation, in the middle, or at the end? If it is at the end, then how is the

rapture considered the church's blessed hope and comfort (1 Thessalonians 4:18)? As such, the post-tribulational rapture view ought to be dismissed. The partial rapture view is untenable since the rapture is not described as a multiple but single event at the last trump (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

As I see it, only views 1, 2 and 3 are tenable. Personally, I hold to the pre-tribulational rapture view since "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:9). As noted above, the whole 7-year great tribulation period is described as a time of God's wrath! (Revelation 6:17; 11:18; 15:1; 16:1).

At any rate, we should not be too caught up with the debate on which view (i.e. 1, 2 or 3) is the correct one. According to the Rev Dr Timothy Tow, the more vital question to answer is this: "When Jesus the Messiah descends from heaven to earth that soon coming Day, where will you be? Some argue that Christians will be caught up to meet Him in a Pre-Tribulation Rapture, others say no, it is a Mid-Tribulation or Pre-Wrath or even Post-Tribulation Rapture. But if you have no assurance of salvation, it is like a traveller studying three or four airline flight schedules from Singapore to New York, but has not bought his ticket. Whichever plane is leaving now, this very hour, how can you join the flight? Oh to be stranded when others in your family are gone above!"

Make peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, and make sure you are not left behind when the rapture happens!



# THE BEMA JUDGMENT

**Dennis Kablingue**

"Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:9-10).

The term "bema judgment" is derived from "the judgment seat of Christ" mentioned in 2 Corinthians 5:10 and Romans 14:10. The term "judgment seat" was translated from the Greek word *bema* which was the official seat designated for the judges of the Grecian games. In ancient Greece, the city called Olympia was where the Olympic Games began in 776 BC. During these games, there will always be a bema where emperors and kings would sit on to watch and enjoy the Olympic events. Later, as the winners were determined and proclaimed, the athletes would stand before the bema to receive their awards. The same tradition continues to be followed in our Olympic Games today.

## **Who is involved?**

Now, it is important to ask, "Who shall appear before the Lord Jesus Christ at His bema judgment seat?" The answer is the saved. Only believers will appear before Him at the bema judgment while the unbelievers at the great white throne judgment.

## **What is its purpose?**

The bema of the Olympics is not a tribunal to judge criminals, but an elevated platform to reward athletes according to their

achievements. Likewise, the bema of Christ is not for eternal condemnation (Romans 8:1), but for rewarding believers according to their works.

When the Corinthian Christians read 2 Corinthians 5:9-10, they understood that the Lord Jesus Christ will examine them at His judgment seat. They will be placed under scrutiny of His eyes which are "as a flame of fire" (Revelation 1:14). They shall then be rewarded accordingly as to how they fared in their life and service to Him. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

This was not the first time they heard of this doctrine. In his first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul emphasized that every believer will be judged by the Lord. "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Corinthians 3:13-15). Have you ensured that your service for God will stand His test and be accepted of Him?

This Pauline teaching is an affirmation of what the Lord Jesus taught about the rewarding of good works at "the resurrection

of the just" (Luke 14:12-14). With the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ echoed by His apostles, we can be very sure that believers will be rewarded at the award ceremony of the bema judgment!

### **When will it happen?**

The Lord Jesus' remark in Luke 14:12-14 is the best guide to help us ascertain the timing of this event. It will immediately follow after the resurrection of the just (also known as the first resurrection or the rapture of the church, cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53) and before the Lord reigns on earth for a thousand years (Revelation 5:10; Revelation 20).

### **Where will it happen?**

As to the venue of the bema judgment, our best guide is the statement of the Apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:17: "We which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." This concept that we will be meeting the Lord in the sphere of the clouds is sometimes strange to some modern Christians but not so during biblical times. In the Beatitudes, the Lord mentioned that those who will be persecuted will have great "reward in heaven" (Matthew 5:12). The term "in heaven" literally means "in the heavenlies" which covers the sphere of the clouds or the sphere in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17). So we know without any doubt that the judgment seat of Christ will be held "in the clouds" where all believers in their glorified bodies will meet the Lord Jesus Christ.

Dear reader, what is more important than knowing the timing and the venue of the bema judgment is that you ask yourself whether you will be there to appear before the Lord's bema judgment. Have you believed

in Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour? If so, have you examined your works whether they are acceptable to the Lord?

### **Preparing for the bema judgment**

Having learned the reality of the judgment seat of Christ, we ought to prepare ourselves. Though Christians have been absolved from condemnation, we are not exempted from His examination. From the teaching of the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:9-10, we learn three steps of preparation that will help us to give a good account of ourselves.

Firstly, we must always seek to please the Lord in our Christian life and service. "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him" (2 Corinthians 5:9). This is a principle that every Christian must remember and apply. To please God is our highest calling. This was the Apostle Paul's main purpose and passion in his life and ministry, and the guiding principle in all his endeavours. He wanted to make sure that what he was doing was acceptable to the Lord.

Do not belittle the judgment seat of Christ but be mindful of it lest your service, which you thought you were doing for the Lord, may not be accepted of Him. Imagine all your efforts, your sacrifices, your giving, your suffering all being burned up! How would you feel? Would you not suffer a great loss? So the Apostle Paul has a very important advice for all of us: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31; cf. Colossians 3:17).

Thus, we must always remember that the first principle in Christian life and service is to be accepted of Him. There is a way to

make sure that our works will be accepted of God. While we are still in this body, let the Word of God guide us in our service and let it examine what we have been doing. If the Holy Scriptures approve it, take comfort that at the judgment seat of Christ you will not suffer loss but gain – to the glory of God!

Secondly, we must always abound unto good works. “Wherefore we labour...” (2 Corinthians 5:9a). Once we are sure of the boundaries that God is pleased for us to labour, we must think, pray and strive to abound unto these good works. “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples” (John 15:8).

Thirdly, we must hasten to live for God and glorify Him, remembering that our time is very limited. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10). Labouring for the Lord is a great privilege. Yet, our life is short and we do not know when it will end. The moment you are taken home to be with the Lord your time is up. So do not waste your time on earth. Hasten your work for the Lord.



## Believers' Victory Crowns

The Bible specifically mentions 5 different crowns that will be given to God's people when they enter into heaven. These are special rewards given by our Lord to honour and reward all those who have faithfully served Him in this life.



**Crown of Righteousness:** This crown is for believers who are ready and waiting for the return of Christ - all those who love His appearing. (2 Timothy 4:8)



**Incorruptible Crown:** This is the victor's crown - for those who disciplined their bodies, and brought their bodies unto subjection, having self-control. (1 Corinthians 9:25-27)



**Crown of Life:** This is the sufferer's crown - for those who patiently endure trials - those who are faithful unto death. (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10)



**Crown of Glory:** The elder's crown - this crown is for those leaders - pastors, elders, etc. - who are godly examples to the flock of believers whom God has entrusted and assigned to their care. (1 Peter 5:2-4)



**Crown of Rejoicing:** This is the soul winner's crown - for believers who win souls by the preaching of the Gospel. (1 Thessalonians 2:19)



# THE GREAT TRIBULATION

**Quek Suan Yew**

The great tribulation is an event which the world has neither seen nor experienced before. Matthew 24:21 says, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."

The word "tribulation" comes from the Latin word "tribulum". It means a "threshing sledge". In ancient times, farmers would use the "tribulum" to beat the heads of the grain in order to separate the chaff from the wheat. Tribulation, therefore, is a type of trouble designed by God to separate the chaff from the wheat in our lives.

Tribulations are allowed by God to sanctify us that we might be more Christ-like. Jesus said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation" (John 16:33). This kind of tribulation is what we have to endure as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. We must not shun tribulations when they come. Tribulations are part and parcel of an obedient Christian's life in this sin-sick world. To suffer for Christ is part of our calling as a Christian (see Philippians 1:29).

## **The nature of the great tribulation**

The great tribulation is not like any kind of tribulation. It is a unique experience which the world has never had before. The great tribulation is also known as the wrath of God. The great tribulation will occur in the last days prior to the return of Jesus Christ to this earth to rule for a thousand years. It will

be an extremely catastrophic global event, which the world has never seen.

## **The period of the great tribulation**

It is known as Daniel's seventieth week. In a vision which the Lord granted Daniel, important information concerning events of the last days was revealed (Daniel 9). That vision speaks of "seventy weeks" (Daniel 9:24), with reference to Christ's first and second coming. Literally, the phrase means "seventy sevens". Seventy sevens means seventy times seven which is equal to 490. The question is: 490 what? The closest antecedent time reference is found in Daniel 9:1-2, which speaks of the return of the Jews after 70 years of captivity. Hence it is 490 years! The 490 years are meant for Daniel's people and the city of God, Jerusalem. The vision also revealed the fourfold purpose of the 490 years "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins"; "to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness"; "to seal up the vision and prophecy" and "to anoint the most Holy".

In Daniel 9:25, a period of 69 weeks (7 weeks + 62 weeks), which is 483 years, is mentioned. This period of time is mentioned as the time between the decree to restore and build Jerusalem, which was destroyed by the Babylonians, and the death of Christ, the Messiah. The first official decree for the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem and its walls was issued by Artaxerxes I in 445 BC (cf. Nehemiah 2:4-8). According to the Jewish

calendar, when we add 483 years to the year of Artaxerxes' decree, we will get to AD 33, which is the year of Christ's death. According to Daniel 9:26, Christ's death was for the sins of the people. The same verse also mentions a prince which is a reference to the Antichrist (cf. Daniel 7:20, 24-25).

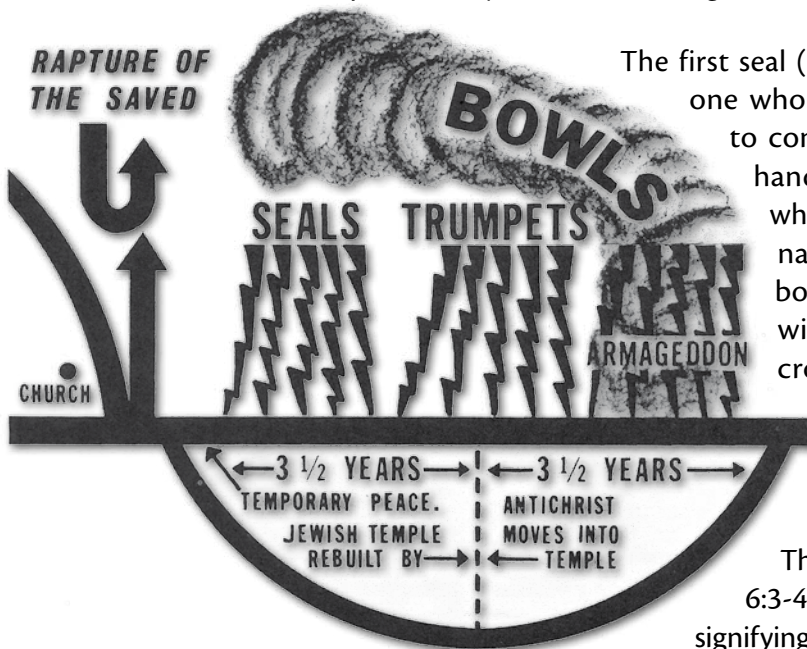
From Daniel 9:27, we see that there is a gap between the 69th week (seven) and the 70th week (seven). It also tells us that the Antichrist will make a covenant with the Israelites. This marks the beginning of the 70th week (seven). But in the middle of this 7-year period (i.e. after 3½ years), he will break the covenant. He will do this by placing an abomination of desolation into the sanctuary to desecrate it. This was also cited and explained by the Lord when He said in Matthew 24:15, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand)."

The 70th week begins with the revelation of the Antichrist. This will be preceded by the

rapture of the saints. 2 Thessalonians 2:6-8 says, "And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."

### **The content of the great tribulation**

The wrath of God in the great tribulation will begin with the opening of the seal judgments, mentioned in Revelation 6. The seal judgments are a summary of the wrath of God upon this earth. There are seven seal judgments. They provide an overview of the beginning and end of the seven years of great tribulation. It will begin with the Antichrist (first 4 seals) and end with the destruction of the heaven and the earth (the 6th seal). The fact that the trumpet judgments and the vial judgments are "contained" in the 7th seal seems to imply that they follow one another in that sequence even as they are found together inside the 7th seal.



The first seal (Revelation 6:2) describes one who sat on the white horse to conquer with a bow in his hand. This is the Antichrist who will conquer using the name of peace. Note the bow is without arrows. He will succeed as the world crowns him, and he will continue to win more and more people over to himself.

The second seal (Revelation 6:3-4) describes a red horse, signifying that much blood will be

shed. The Antichrist's vicious acts of killing anyone who stands against him are revealed here.

The third seal (Revelation 6:5-6) describes a black horse which prophesies of famine in the land. The Antichrist will own the world for a season. No man will be able to buy or sell without the sign of the beast (cf. Revelation 13:16-18) under exorbitant famine prices. A penny (or a denarius) will be equivalent to the daily wage of a labourer (cf. Matthew 20:1-16), which can only buy a measure (about 1 litre) of wheat.

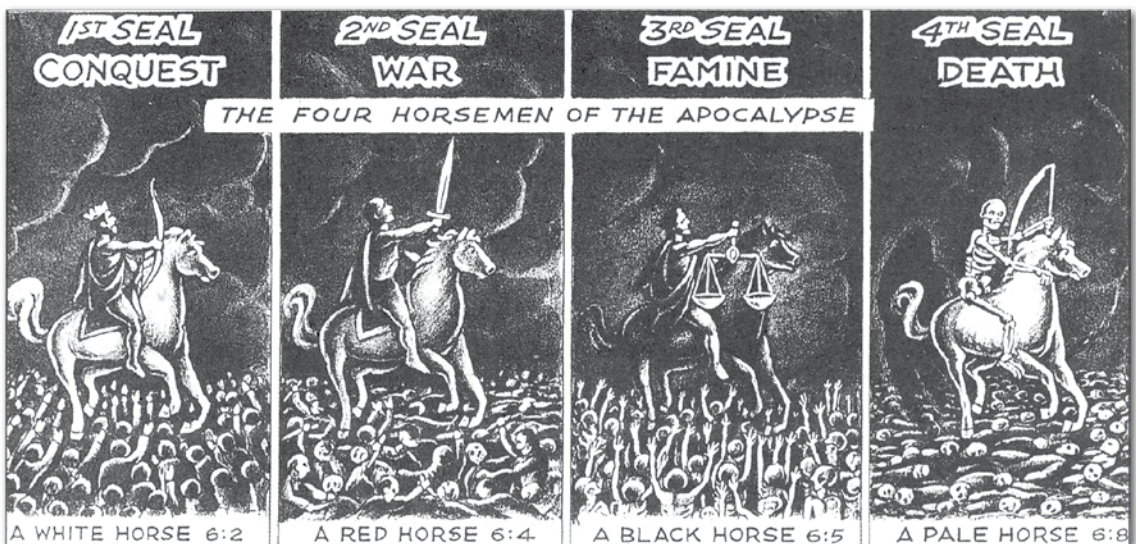
The fourth seal (Revelation 6:7-8) depicts a pale horse which will bring death and destruction over the fourth part of the earth. This beast with Death and Hell on it will kill with the sword, with hunger, with death and with the beasts of the earth.

The fifth seal (Revelation 6:9-11) describes the cry of the believers who are slain for their faith. They cry to the Lord for His just retribution. But they have to wait till the murder of all the believers before the judgment of God falls upon the evil one.

The sixth seal (Revelation 6:12-16) reveals an earthquake which will darken the sun and make the moon appear like blood. This catastrophe depicts the enormity of the earthquake which can darken the sun and the moon! Stars (e.g. shooting stars and falling asteroids) will fall like figs from fig trees. The clouds will be thick like a blanket and every mountain and island will be shaken to its very core, i.e. there will be volcanic activities worldwide. The reaction of the people from kings down to their subjects will be that of great fright. They will run and hide for their lives but to no avail.

The seventh seal is described in Revelation 8:1-2. When this is opened, there will be silence in the heavens for a space of 30 minutes - the calm before the storm of destruction. The opening of the seventh seal is the beginning of the blowing of the seven trumpets.

The blowing of the seven trumpets is the period which will occur in the middle of the 70th week. This is when the peace which the Antichrist made with Israel will be broken (cf. Daniel 9:27). The seven trumpets will be



## *Even So, Come, Lord Jesus*

the destruction performed entirely by God Himself.

The first trumpet (Revelation 8:7) will destroy vegetation, thus causing great famine, drought and foul poisonous air.

The second trumpet (Revelation 8:8-9) will destroy a third of the sea, including a third of the sea creatures. A third part of the ships will also be destroyed. This means that there will be a heightened global famine and countries will be unable to render help to one another.

The third trumpet (Revelation 8:10-11) will destroy a third of the world's water resources. For the first time, many men will be killed as drinking water becomes poisonous.

The fourth trumpet (Revelation 8:12) will sound and the sun, moon and stars will be smitten by God. One third of these heavenly bodies will be darkened. This might cause unimaginable tidal waves and typhoons which the world has never seen. No country will be spared!

The fifth trumpet (Revelation 9:4-6) will be the destruction of men by locusts which will come out of the bottomless pit. These locusts are grotesque in their appearance and most frightening in their attack (cf. Revelation 9:7-10). They will not touch vegetation but will sting only those who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. The pain will be so excruciating that the people will try to take their own lives. But God will remove death from them. They will be forced to endure the pain for 5 months. This trumpet is also known as the first woe (cf. Revelation 9:12).

The sixth trumpet (Revelation 9:13-19), which is the second woe, will see the deaths of one

third of men. If there are 6 billion people on the earth, then 2 billion will die by fire, by smoke and by brimstone. These will not be natural fire, smoke and brimstone but they will come from 200 million horsemen whose horses will shoot out of their mouths fire, smoke and brimstone.

During the great tribulation, many will believe in Jesus Christ but they will have to pay dearly with their lives because of their faith (Revelation 7:9-17). On the other hand, there will be many who will not repent and turn to God despite all these global destruction and deaths. They will persist in their hardened hearts and continue to worship their idols and indulge in their witchcraft and sin. This is total depravity in pictorial form! (Revelation 9:20-21).

Before the seventh trumpet sounds, two witnesses will be sent by God to prophesy for 1,260 days (or 42 months or 3½ years), and no man will be able to go against them (Revelation 11:1-6). The identity of one of them is Elijah (cf. Malachi 4:5-6). These two witnesses will be killed by the beast who is the Antichrist (Revelation 11:7-8). The world will see their dead bodies for three and a half days (Revelation 11:9-10). Then the bodies will be resurrected from the dead and God will bring them up to heaven (Revelation 11:11-13). This will be the end of the second woe (Revelation 11:14).

The seventh trumpet (Revelation 11:15) will sound with the declaration of the end of all human kingdoms and the ushering in of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Revelation 11:15 says, "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

The seven vial judgments after the seven trumpet judgments signal the end of this present world, as we know it.

The first vial (Revelation 16:2) poured forth will result in a noisome (painful, foul-smelling) and grievous sore upon all who have the mark of the beast and who worship his image.

The second vial (Revelation 16:3) will destroy every living soul that is in the sea. The foul smell which envelopes the whole earth will be most overwhelming, to say the least.

The third vial (Revelation 16:4) will turn all drinking water into blood.

The fourth vial (Revelation 16:8-9) will cause the sun to scorch men with fire.

The fifth vial (Revelation 16:10-11) will attack the very seat of the beast. Excruciating pain will be felt. There will be no cure for this disease. Instead of repenting, his whole kingdom will curse God. Truly, salvation is of the Lord.

The sixth vial (Revelation 16:12-14) will be poured over the River Euphrates to dry it so that the kings of the east can march across it. The unholy trinity (the dragon, the beast and false prophet) will perform miracles to deceive kings and the world. They will gather them together across the River Euphrates to battle. This is the beginning of the end of all mankind. The location of their gathering is a place called Armageddon (cf. Revelation 16:16).

The seventh vial is the last and final demonstration of God's wrath upon sinful men (cf. Revelation 18-19). It will begin with a great voice out of the temple of heaven

and from the throne itself. The voice will say, "It is done!" (cf. Revelation 16:17).

## Conclusion

Sinful man must repent today. The day of salvation is now. What awaits those who walk in their sins is something we would never wish upon any man, not even our worst enemy.

By the end of the wrath of God that will be poured upon the earth during the great tribulation, the world will not be habitable at all if God does not recreate it for the millennium.

Are we better off than the unbelievers of the last days who would have to face the wrath of God? Of course not! Jesus warns all of us in Luke 13:1-5: "There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."



*"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."*

*John 16:33*

# THE ARMAGEDDON

Lek Aik Wee

## History's final war

Armageddon is the place where the kings of the earth and of the whole world will gather to battle against God Almighty (Revelation 16:14-16). It is the culmination of man's rebellion against the rule of their Creator God (Revelation 16:17) and God's emphatic intervention to restore His sovereignty over His created earth through His Son Jesus Christ (Revelation 19:11-21; Daniel 2:44-45; Zechariah 12-14; Joel 2:11; 3:2). It is history's final war!

The objective of the world's army (Revelation 9:13-16; 16:13-16) against Israel in this final war is to occupy Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:2-11; 14:2), the capital of the world. This will complete man's ambition to be the master of God's vineyard. The evil one behind man's rebellion is none other than Satan himself, energizing the Antichrist and the false prophet, exerting control over the kings of the earth (Revelation 16:13-14). The first rebellion against God occurred in heaven by the archangel Lucifer who is Satan himself (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:14-19). The first rebellion on earth was by Adam and Eve who fell at Satan's temptation (Genesis 3:1-7),

plunging mankind into total depravity. The depraved nature in man, motivated by the prince of this world - Satan, will be dealt a fatal blow in this final battle.

## The place

The word "Armageddon" in Revelation 16:16 is the Greek word "harmageddon", which in Hebrew "Har Megiddo" is literally translated "Mount of Megiddo" which means "the Hill of Slaughter". Megiddo is located on the southern edge of the plain of Jezreel where the Way of the Sea (via Maris) leaves the plain and passes through a long and narrow passage into the plain of Sharon by the coast (adapted from *The Holy Land* by Sami Awwad, The Mount Scopus Hotel, Jerusalem).

Megiddo is a strategic point at the opening of this passage because it is the great highway connecting the land of Egypt and the south, with Syria and the north. It is the place where many historic battles took place throughout Israel's history. Coming from the north, armies marching past Megiddo will directly reach Jerusalem.



For this last battle of Armageddon, the great river Euphrates will be dried up to make way for the kings of the east to march through - down the plain of Megiddo and finally to Jerusalem (Revelation 16:12). Their purpose is to destroy Israel, God's chosen people.

## **The time**

This final rebellion gathers momentum at the 6th vial judgment (Revelation 16:12). It is towards the end of the second half of the tribulation period and will culminate at the 7th vial judgment (Revelation 16:17) where “a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne” declares, “It is done”. This completes the series of God’s judgment (7 seals, 7 trumpets and lastly 7 vials) that began at the beginning of the 7-year great tribulation period recorded in Revelation 6. The church was already taken up to heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Matthew 24:36-41; Mark 13:32-37; Luke 17:26-30, 34-36). Now Christ will return with His raptured saints (Jude 1:14) and the heavenly hosts (Matthew 25:31; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9) to quell man’s rebellion (Revelation 19:11-21) and to establish His earthly rule from Jerusalem. Jesus Christ will return physically on the Mount of Olives and Jerusalem will be topographically transformed. The great city, Jerusalem, will be “divided into three parts” (Revelation 16:19; Acts 1:11; Zechariah 14:4-5).

## **The parties**

Since 14 May 1948, Israel has once again become a nation and has been occupying Jerusalem. Long before that, ancient Israel was destroyed and scattered by the Roman army in AD 70. Modern Israel has, since her independence, fought many wars against surrounding Arab nations. In this final war, it will be between Israel and the rest of the world!

It will be Israel and the people of God on the one side versus the nations of the world on the other. The armies of the world are led by Satan (dragon), the Antichrist (beast) and the false prophet (Revelation 16:13-14). Israel will be no match for the power of the

Antichrist and the armies of the world. But at the moment of their great distress, Israel’s Messiah, Jesus Christ, will come down from heaven to save a distraught Israel.

## **The great unbelief on earth**

Just before Armageddon, regardless of special Gospel efforts, there will be great unbelief. The Gospel will be preached by the 144,000 sealed Jewish witnesses from the twelve revived tribes of Israel (Revelation 7:4-8) between the 6th and 7th seal judgment. There will also be two witnesses from God to declare the Gospel to the whole world during the second half of the great tribulation (Revelation 11:3-12). Finally, the Lord will send an angel to preach the Gospel to all the inhabitants on earth so that men will have no excuse for not knowing the truth. Revelation 14:6-7 says, “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” Man will be without excuse for not acknowledging and worshipping their Creator God!

## **The triumph of Christ**

At the end of the tribulation, during the Armageddon conflict, the Lord shall return to earth in order to deliver Israel, His chosen people, from the invading army of the Antichrist. This is described in Revelation 19:11-14: “And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he

himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.” And in Revelation 1:7: “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.”

In Revelation 19:15, we read of the Lord's weapon of triumph, “And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.”

What is this sharp sword? It is the spoken word of Christ unleashed to destroy the advancing armies of the world. The destruction is described vividly in Zechariah 14:12: “And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.”

The longsuffering of God has reached its limit. The judgment of God is swift and complete. For the unrepentant, there is no escape from the carnage to come.

### **The end of Christ's enemies**

Revelation 19:19-21, “And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before

him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.” All physical and spiritual forces fighting against the sovereign rule of God their Creator will be dealt with, and utterly defeated.

### **The global carnage**

Revelation 16:18-20 describes: “And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great... and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.” Singapore, as well as the rest of the world, will not be spared in this great earthquake. May we realize the futility of building an earthly kingdom that will ultimately be destroyed.

### **Conclusion**

Man once again will fail in their rebellion against God. At the climax of the battle of Armageddon, Israel will repent and accept Jesus Christ as their Messiah, when Jesus will visibly return to defeat the nations of the world (Revelation 19:11-21). The end of Armageddon will see the beginning of Christ's golden reign on earth from Jerusalem for 1,000 years (Revelation 20).





# THE MILLENNIUM

**Dominino dela Cruz, Jr**

The battle of Armageddon has been won by Christ. The Antichrist and the false prophet are thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20). Satan is bound and thrown into the bottomless pit for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1-3). What will happen next? Will Christ immediately return to His Father in heaven? Certainly not! Christ will fulfil what has been said in the word of God that He will rule the entire earth together with His people for 1,000 years of peace, prosperity and righteousness, a period of time which we call the millennium.

Having known the prominent role of Christ in the “millennium”, it is vital that every Christian must know the profundity of the term. As one of my FEBC\* lecturers said, “It is a word that all Bible students and Christians should be familiar with.” In this regard, this article seeks to convey three important points which should deepen the understanding of the reader about the millennium.

## **The Scriptural basis of the millennium**

At the very outset, this question must be answered – Is the concept behind the word “millennium” biblical? The Apostle John wrote: “And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years



should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison” (Revelation 20:1-7).

In the passage above, the phrase “thousand years” is mentioned six times. Under the superintendence of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle John repeated the phrase “thousand years” over and over again to tell us that the 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth is an inescapable reality and an important doctrine of the Bible. But how do we know

\*Far Eastern Bible College

for sure that this 1,000-year reign of Christ will be literally realized on earth? The Apostle John did not leave any room for ambiguity on this matter. He shows to us plainly that the 1,000 years in which Christ will reign will not be in heaven but on earth. Revelation 5:10 says, “And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”

### **Three views of the millennium**

Though the concept of the millennium is a biblical fact, there is much confusion over the precision of its details. As a result, there are three main views on the millennium, namely: 1) postmillennialism, 2) amillennialism and 3) premillennialism, which will be discussed and examined in the light of the Scriptures.

#### **Postmillennialism**

The postmillennialist school teaches that Christ will come after the millennium to announce that His kingdom on earth has been realized. Postmillennialists have an optimistic view of the world in that the church will conquer the sinfulness and unbelief therein so that it will become better and better, until it reaches perfection in a utopian society. According to this view, Jesus will return after the world has experienced complete peace, harmony and prosperity.

This view is inconsistent with the Scriptures. The Bible does not give an optimistic picture of the world but rather a pessimistic one. On the Mount of Olives, the disciples asked Jesus regarding His second coming and the end of the world. Jesus replied, “Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against

nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows” (Matthew 24:4-8). Quite clearly, the idea of a serene world before the Lord’s return is foreign in this text as well as in many others.

#### **Amillennialism**

Next is the amillennial view, which sees no literal millennial reign of Christ on earth. References to the “thousand years” in Revelation 20:1-7 are interpreted as symbolic. Amillennialists believe that the reign of Christ is not physical but spiritual, not earthly but heavenly. In fact, some of them believe that right now Christ is ruling the whole world in heaven through the church. With this understanding, amillennialists also believe that when Christ returns, He will immediately execute the last judgment.

Again, this view is untenable and inconsistent with the teaching of the Scriptures. As mentioned earlier, the Apostle John made it very clear that the 1,000-year reign of Christ and His people will be realized on earth (Revelation 5:10). Moreover, the Bible teaches that during the millennium, Satan will no longer be active. He will be bound in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:1-3). But today, it is evident that Satan is very active. Thus Peter warns us strongly by saying, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

#### **Premillennialism**

The last view is the premillennial view which holds that Christ will return before the millennium and then reign on the earth for 1,000 years. Premillennialists also see a proper distinction between Israel and

the church. Among these three views, the premillennial view is the most consistent with the Scriptures. Old Testament prophecies about the millennium show that the world will be characterized by peace, harmony and prosperity which cannot be achieved by human effort. Therefore, perfect peace on earth will only be realized when The Prince of Peace will establish His kingdom here on earth during the millennium. As the Bible says, "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth" (Jeremiah 23:5).

### **The splendour of the millennium**

Having seen the truth of God's Word that Jesus will return before the millennium and then rule the earth for 1,000 years, now we shall look at the great splendour of the millennial rule of Christ on earth. During this golden period, the world will be like what God intended it to be. The faces of the people in the millennium will be smiling and their hearts will experience the fullness of joy. Let us take a glimpse of the divine beauty of this golden age.

Firstly, the whole world will be at peace. Needless to say, the unblemished and faultless character of the millennium King – Jesus Christ – will be reflected throughout His kingdom. "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:4). A study of the world's history reveals that during the past 3,500 years, there were 3,200 years of war and only 300 years of peace. But in the millennium, the world will have the

benefit of a just and peaceful society, devoid of any armed conflict for 1,000 years with Christ as the King.

Secondly, the curse of Eden will be eliminated. After the fall, man has to face the consequences of sin. Until today, he has to cultivate the ground with the sweat of his brow; he has to suffer sickness; he has to bear with the danger of fierce and wild animals around him, etc. During the millennium, these consequences of sin will be removed from the earth.

People will live long lives. "And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed" (Isaiah 65:19-20).

People will experience prosperity. "But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it" (Micah 4:4). People will be experiencing good health. "And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity" (Isaiah 33:24).

People will co-exist in peace even with wild beasts. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on

the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:6-9).

Thirdly, Jerusalem will be the capital city of the world. Rev Dr Timothy Tow aptly said, "...the United Nations Headquarters in New York City shall be no more, and Jerusalem will take its place by virtue of Christ's seat of government being established there . . ." During the millennium, the name of God will be known throughout the world. Jesus Christ as King will establish His throne in Jerusalem. "Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain" (Zechariah 8:3). For this reason, Jerusalem will be able to draw worshippers from all over the world. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:2-3).

Fourthly, the saints will rule with Christ. The Bible tells us that the raptured saints will also literally come down on earth to rule with Christ in the millennium. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they

lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years . . . Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:4, 6). During the millennium, the earth will be occupied with a mixed multitude of people – the raptured saints, the tribulation saints who died and resurrected just before the millennium and those who have survived the 7-year tribulation. Those who survived the tribulation will continue to procreate to keep the world populated.

## **Conclusion**

Through the many Bible verses that this article has brought to light, we have seen the Scriptural basis of the millennium, examined the different views of the millennium and beheld the splendour of the millennium. After the chaotic and turbulent period that the earth will go through in the 7-year tribulation and in the battle of Armageddon, we will see the earth being completely transformed under Christ's golden millennial rule. Christ's love, justice, mercy, righteousness and peace will prevail throughout the earth. In the millennium, God will prove His sovereignty over His creation as well as His power over Satan.

Dear reader, we do not have the answers and the ability to make this world better until it reaches perfection. Perfect peace and prosperity on earth lie only in the hands of our Almighty God, the Lord Jesus Christ – The Prince of Peace. If you have believed on Him and are at peace with Him, you shall reign with Him for a thousand years on this earth. So, are you at peace with Christ?



# THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT

Dennis Kwok

The great white throne judgment is the final judgment of all unbelievers in all the ages. All those who appear before this throne are the unsaved. It is the judgment of their sin and for their unbelief. As a result of this judgment, all these unsaved will be cast into the lake of fire forever and ever. This is the last and final judgment.

## Events leading to the great white throne judgment

**Satan is “loosed a little season” (Revelation 20:3, 7-8)**

Satan will be thrown into the bottomless pit during the millennium. It will only be at the end of the millennium that he is allowed to be “loosed a little season” (Revelation 20:3). The main reason for his release is for him to gather together all his ‘secret’ followers who are “as the sand of the sea” from the “four quarters of the earth”. His followers, who will be born during the millennium, will not genuinely submit themselves to the 1,000-year rule of Christ. The

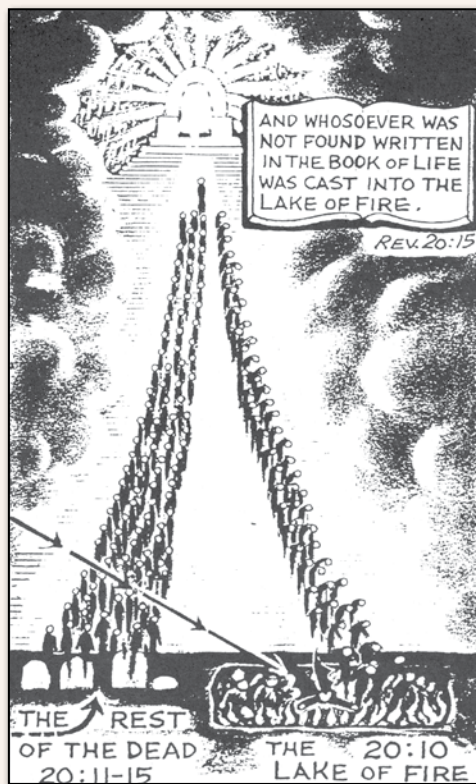
loosing of Satan to effect his deception upon them will show their true colours.

## Satan leads the Gog and Magog armies (Revelation 20:8-9)

In Revelation 20:8, Gog and Magog refer to Satan’s armies being formed at the end of the millennium from the four corners of the earth. The same phrase has been used in Ezekiel 38-39 but these are not of the same armies, for they are fighting in a different battle. The battle that Ezekiel prophesied refers to the one that occurred during the tribulation.

When the armies of the north attacked Israel (Ezekiel 38:15), God sent “overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone” (Ezekiel 38:22). This battle is also known as the Battle of Armageddon in Revelation 16.

The Gog and Magog battle in Revelation 20 is the last and final battle. Satan and his Gog and Magog armies will gather together to rebel against the Lord Jesus Christ. But their defeat will be immediate.



**Satan is forever cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10)**

Upon defeat, Satan is cast into the lake of fire, to join the beast (Antichrist) and the false prophet who have already been there for one thousand years. This teaches the eternity of the lake of fire and runs counter to the false teaching of the annihilation of the wicked. The punishment for them is to be “tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Revelation 20:10).

**Events at the great white throne judgment**

It will be at the great white throne judgment that the second resurrection will occur. The first resurrection or the resurrection of saints unto life (John 5:29; Revelation 20:4-6) occurs once before the great tribulation (1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17) and another time (Revelation 20:4-6) after the great tribulation. The second resurrection or the resurrection of unbelievers unto damnation (John 5:29) occurs only once right here at the great white throne judgment.

**The destruction of the heaven and the earth (Revelation 20:11)**

The appearance of the great white throne saw the first heaven and earth flee from God’s presence, for these have been tainted by sin brought about by Satan’s rebellion and Adam’s fall. This is the reason why the first heaven and earth must be destroyed.

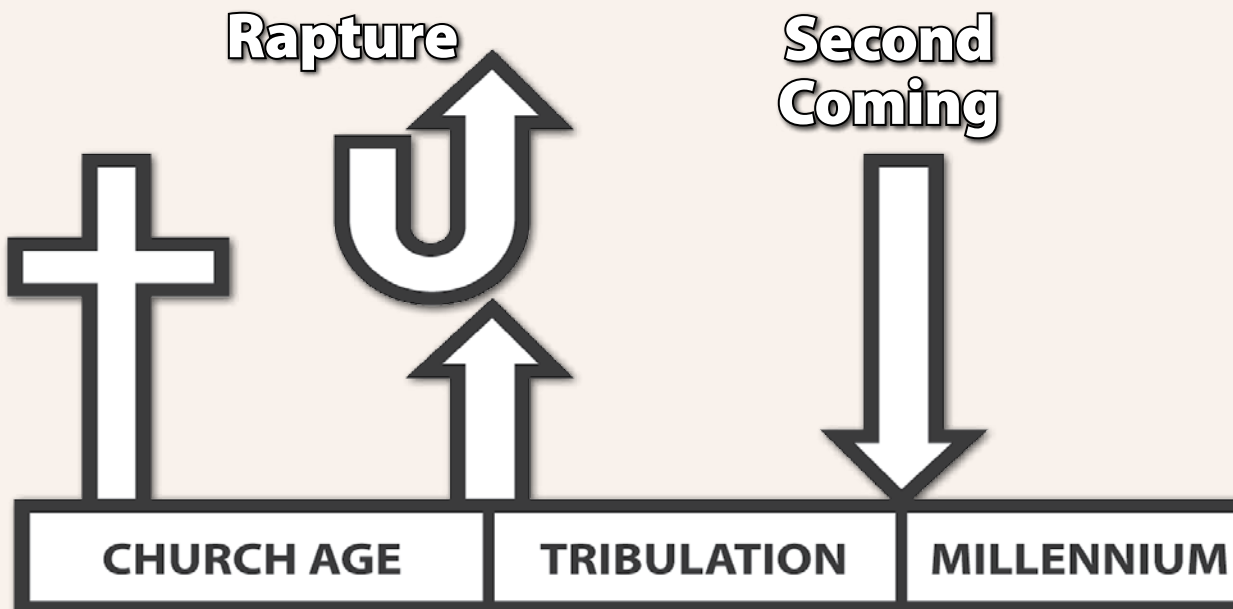
**The judgment of the unsaved (Revelation 20:12-15)**

*Small and great (Revelation 20:12)*

God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34) Regardless of how great a man can be, if he rejects Christ, he has to stand before God’s judgment. All the unsaved, both small and great, will stand before the great white throne to be judged for their sin and unbelief.

*The books and the book of life (Revelation 20:12)*

The great white throne judgment is to administer the punishment to the unsaved, based upon what they had done as recorded in “the books”. Their names will not be



found in the other book, which is the book of life. They will then be cast into the lake of fire.

*“Death and hell” are cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14)*

This is the final destruction. Both “death and hell” are cast into the lake of fire. After the unsaved are judged, they will be forever separated from God in the lake of fire in order to suffer the eternal torment. This is also known as the second death, the first being the physical death. The second death is also referred to as eternal death.

Every man is spiritually dead because of sin until he is born again by faith in Christ based on God’s sovereign election made before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4). Since all true believers will experience the first resurrection, the second death will have no power over them (Revelation 20:6). All of the unsaved whose names are not written in the book of life will suffer the second death forever.

## Evaluation

One need not stand before the great white throne judgment if he believes in Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Lord. It is not God’s will that any should perish but that all should come to true repentance and genuine faith in Jesus Christ (Ezekiel 33:11; 2 Peter 3:9).

Sin is that which separates man from God (Isaiah 59:2). The only way to remove this power of sin that has been enslaving men since the fall of Adam is to believe in the salvific works of Jesus Christ through His sinless life and substitutionary atonement on the cross, and His bodily resurrection from the dead.

Will your name be found in the book of life? Or will you stand before the great white throne judgment and be condemned for your sin and unbelief, and be cast into the lake of fire forever?



**Great  
White  
Throne**

**ETERNITY**

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# THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

**Richard Tiu**

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea” (Revelation 21:1).

No description of this eternal home of all the believers in Christ is more vivid than in the last two chapters of the Bible. From this vision of the Apostle John, readers are given a preview of what to expect after this existing world comes to an end. Several scenes that are flashed throughout this vision are worthy of reflection as this will give believers much hope, comfort, and even a dire longing for that day to come when all of Christ’s redeemed will finally reach that ultimate destination in the new heaven and new earth.

## **Scene #1: No more destruction**

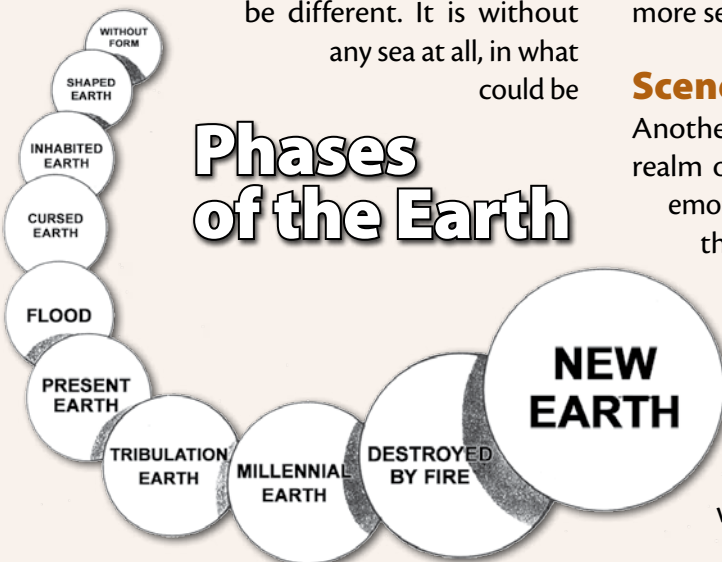
The first picture given is that this place will not only be totally new, it will also be different. It is without any sea at all, in what could be

an unending estate of pure bliss (Revelation 21:1). The size of this humongous square terrain, as measured in Revelation 21:15-17, led one commentator to remark that it can comfortably accommodate 72 billion people at ground level alone!

The absence of the sea is of great significance. About 70% of this present earth is covered by seas and oceans. These water bodies separate islands, archipelagoes and continents. In the Old Testament time of Noah, when the rain swelled the seawaters and engulfed the whole earth, it resulted in the destruction of all mankind and animals except for those in the ark (Genesis 7:10-24; 2 Peter 3:5-6). Even up to this day, the sea continues to cause utter destruction as we look at countless lives and properties lost in various sea disasters, tsunamis, typhoons and the like. In the new heaven and earth, there will be no more drowning, no more deluge, no more destruction of this kind, for there will be no more sea.

## **Scene #2: No more death**

Another scene shown in this brand new realm of life is the radical changes in the emotive character of man simply because the Bible says that the former things are passed away. Dreariness will be a thing of the past. There will only be rejoicing for all inhabitants of that place. There will be no more debilitating diseases which can cause pain and sorrow, and there will be no more decaying bodies.





Everyone will become ageless and flawless. But best of all is that there will be no more death, and God Himself shall wipe away all tears from the eyes of the saints (Revelation 21:4). All of God's redeemed will enjoy an endless life in His presence.

### **Scene #3: No more depravity**

By that time, the devil and all his demons will have been banished already into the eternal flames of torment in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10). Thus, there will be no more tempters, wickedness or sin and depravity; there will be no fearful cowards who fear and please men rather than God; there will be no unbelievers either, neither will there be the abominable, murderers, whoremongers, sorcerers, idolaters and liars, for they all likewise will be sent to their second death in the lake of fire and brimstone (Revelation 21:8; 22:15). The only inhabitants of this place will be the godly, who will be worshipping and serving the Lord throughout eternity. "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:27).

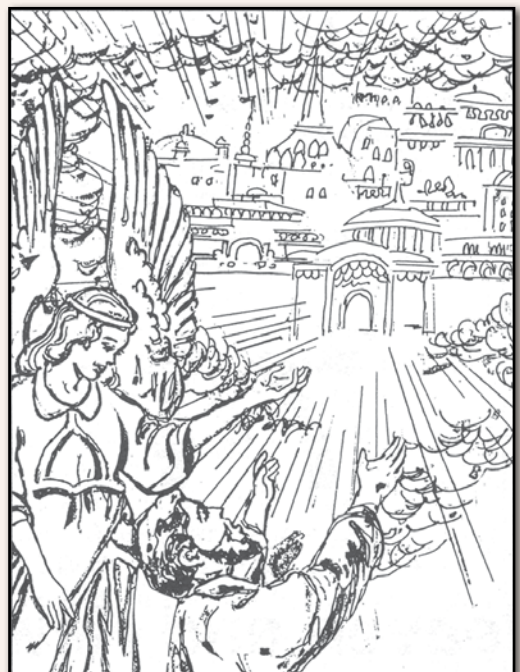
### **Scene #4: No more damnation**

Not long after this present world was created, sin entered into it through man's disobedience. Because of this, God pronounced a curse and the whole of creation was damned. "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life" (Genesis 3:17).

One day, this curse will be removed and there will be no more condemnation. This truth was revealed in that vision of the Apostle John: "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him" (Revelation 22:3).

### **Scene #5: No more darkness**

The final scene being considered here reveals a place of no darkness at all – where night never falls – as it is being illuminated by the radiant glory of God Himself. There will be no more sun and moon. These 2 greater lights will not be needed anymore for God's Shekinah glory will be our light. There will be no more cycles of day and night because the Lord our God will give light forever (Revelation 21:23-25; 22:5). In His very presence, there will also be no need of a temple either, "for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" (Revelation 21:22).



## *Even So, Come, Lord Jesus*

One may recall what the Lord Jesus declared while He was on this earth. "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). Some people now worship the sun, the moon and the stars. Well, these people will one day perish together with the celestial bodies. Only those who will be true followers and worshippers of Christ will move on to enjoy His light in the new heaven and new earth.

The Bible also refers to this place as the New Jerusalem which is built with precious gemstones of various kinds, with twelve pearl gates, and whose streets are made of pure gold (Revelation 21:18-21). This is the final home of the Christian, and it is the hope of going home that should keep his faith going.

This new heaven and earth will last an incalculable amount of time. Eternity cannot be measured, for it is timeless. (Dr Paul Lee Tan, in his book, *Jesus Is Coming*, illustrates eternity with the number "one" joined together with two pages worth of zeroes plus all the zeroes that could possibly fill the earth and universe. Yet even if you can comprehend the value of this number, it does not even come close. For he said that this is the length of only one day in eternity!)

### **Scene for reflection**

Because of sin and wickedness, this heaven and earth that we live in have already been

marked out for destruction at the soon return of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 3:10 makes it very clear: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

Only those who are genuinely born-again, redeemed by the blood of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and whose names are written in the book of life shall escape this destruction (Revelation 20:15). These believers in Christ will then be delivered into an eternity of bliss where all things have become new. Is your name written in the book of life? Have you repented of your sins and received the gift of salvation by faith in the only Saviour of mankind?

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

Maybe today my Lord  
will come for me;  
Maybe today my  
Saviour I shall see;  
Maybe today from  
sin I shall be free.  
Jesus will come, and  
I will go home;  
It maybe today!



—  
"With Christ, we have an endless hope.  
Without Christ it's a hopeless end."  
—

# THE CHRISTIANS' HOPE

**Prabhudas Koshy**

Though the Bible predicts perilous times in the last days, Christians are urged to live with the hope of glorious experiences of heaven which their Saviour has promised them. They might have gone through many troubles and sufferings in this present world, but they can live with the hope of a glorious eternity to come. Every Christian can say confidently, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

The Apostle Paul reminds us in Romans 8:24-25 that "we are saved by hope. . . . But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it". Our salvation that we received by faith kindles within us an undying hope. We hope in the promise of Christ concerning our eternal heavenly home. "Then do we with patience wait for it." We wait, not as criminals for execution, but as a bride for the wedding. The joy is sure to come. So we eagerly and patiently wait for His return. He will surely come to take us to His glorious home.

A Christian's real possession is not in what he sees. Suppose God prospers him and he has riches; let him be grateful, but let him confess that these are not his real treasures. He knows that all the wealth of the world gathered together cannot be compared to the glory that awaits him.

Paul speaks of "the glory which shall be revealed in us," and he tells us in another

place that it is "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." He then said, "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:17-18). What great hope Christians possess! It is glory! Glory shall be ours, even ours, poor sinners as we are. Grace is sweet, but what will glory be? It shall be revealed in us, and about us, and over us, and through us, throughout all eternity.

## **Hope's descriptions**

The Scripture has the following description for the hope that we have received through our salvation in Christ.

**A blessed hope:** Titus 2:13 says that Christians must live their lives by "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ".

**A good hope:** 2 Thessalonians 2:16 tells us that "our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace".

**A lively hope:** 1 Peter 1:3 teaches us that "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead". We have a lively hope, a vigorous, active, operating hope! It lives for ever. Our hope shall never die.

It is worth waiting for the fulfilment of our hope, for it is certainly a blessed and good hope which is imperishable.

### **Hope's prescriptions**

In his first epistle, the Apostle Peter exhorted the believers to "hope to the end". He wrote, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:13). Here Peter mentions three duties of every true Christian. It is interesting to note that in the Greek text, only the last verb is an imperative or command; the first two verbs are participles. In other words, the first two verbal expressions explain to us how we can keep our hope in focus.

The first command is "gird up the loins of your mind". To understand the expression "gird up the loins", we must bring our thoughts back to the time and place of Peter. In those days, people wore long robes which often hinder free and fast movement. Whenever they needed to move quickly, they would gather up their robes and tuck them under a belt. This action of girding up the cloth around the loins is often used to represent one's preparedness for action. The people of Israel were told to eat the first Passover "with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S passover" (Exodus 12:11). So when Peter told his readers to "gird up the loins of your mind", he was telling them to be mentally prepared. Our minds must diligently study the prophecies of Christ's second coming and enthusiastically await this event. We cannot let our minds wander into the things of the world and conveniently forget the promise of His return.

The second command "be sober" gives us further understanding of what it takes to hope for Christ's return. The Greek word translated as "be sober" carries the idea of alertness or vigilance against dangers. Hope involves not only mental preparedness but also spiritual alertness against the snares of the devil which may keep us trapped in sin at Christ's coming. We must keep a wakeful spirit amid all the narcotizing conditions around us. The Apostle Paul also calls us to be sober as we hope for Christ's return - "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation" (1 Thessalonians 5:6-8).

Finally, the command "hope to the end" is a call to all Christians to exercise hope perfectly. The words "to the end" come from the Greek word *telios* which means "perfect". We must set our hope fully on the return of our Lord.

We look forward in steadfast hope for God's grace towards us to be fully realized at the revelation of Jesus Christ on the last day. Then His grace shall accept us to our eternal home while the great wrath of God's judgment will cast the unbelievers into eternal hell. This grace is already present in us from the day we received Christ into our hearts. When our hope is fully set on the final appearance of His return, we will continually receive a greater portion of His grace in our trial-filled journey that we may complete our pilgrimage and receive the final gift of God's grace - our glory.



# BIBLE TRIVIA - GENESIS 46

Sarah Yong

**READ THE PASSAGE FROM YOUR BIBLE AND DECIDE WHICH STATEMENTS ARE TRUE AND WHICH ARE FALSE. CIRCLE THE LETTER IN THE CORRECT COLUMN.**

	True	False
1. Jacob offered sacrifices to God at Beersheba.	A	B
2. God instructed Jacob not to go down into Egypt.	D	E
3. Jacob and his family travelled in the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry them.	F	G
4. Reuben had more sons than Simeon.	G	H
5. Levi's sons were Gershon, Kohath and Merari.	I	J
6. Judah had five sons, but two died in the land of Canaan.	L	K
7. Issachar and Zebulun had the same number of sons.	K	M
8. Gad had seven sons and Asher had a daughter named Serah.	N	O
9. Joseph had two sons named Manasseh and Ephraim.	O	P
10. Asenath, Joseph's wife, was the daughter of Potiphar.	Q	P
11. Benjamin had the greatest number of sons.	R	S
12. Dan and Naphtali had a total of five sons.	S	R
13. All the souls of the house of Jacob which came into Egypt were threescore and ten.	T	U
14. Joseph went up to meet Israel his father in Goshen.	U	V
15. Joseph would tell Pharaoh that his father and brothers were farmers.	Z	Y

**USE THE CIRCLED LETTER FROM EACH QUESTION TO COMPLETE THE STATEMENT.**

## GOD PROMISED TO MAKE OF JACOB

1 8 1 13 5 9 8 and 10 9 10 14 6 9 14 12

### Answers to Vol. 9, Issue 3 - Bible Trivia - Genesis 44 & 45

p. 29 - sacks, money, cup, youngest, steward, silver, city, fell, hand, father, sorrow, bondman, Joseph, wept, before, lives, seen, Egypt, fainted, wagons

# They Are Just Things

A real incident from the life of  
Jonathan GoForth,  
a Canadian missionary to China.

Bibliography: "GoForth of China" by Rosalina GoForth.

The stories are retold by Sis Ruth Low.

Illustrations are done by Sis Meilanie Ferreira.

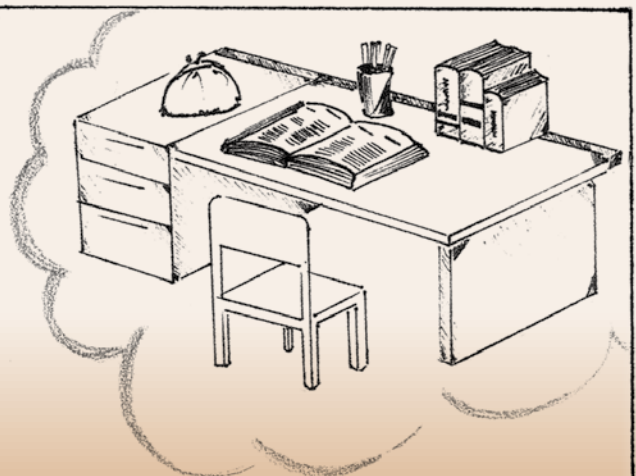
One day, while the Goforths were having dinner at home, they heard shouts and screams.



They ran outside the kitchen and saw that their bedroom was on fire. The fire was spreading rapidly.



Jonathan Goforth immediately ran into the room to retrieve certain things.

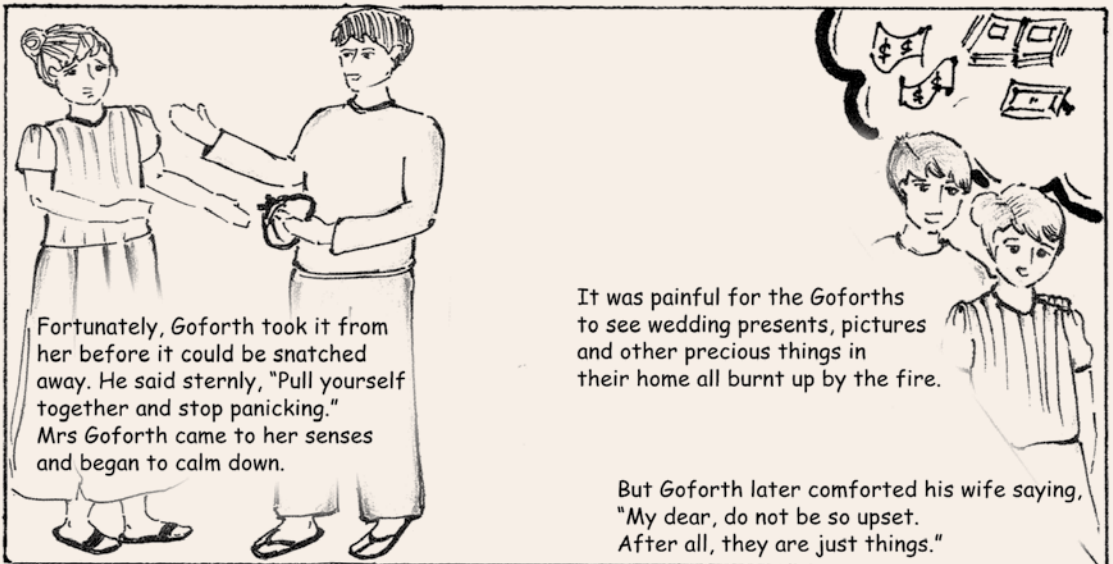


Among the first few things he took were his beloved Bible and a purse.



As Goforth went back to take more things, Mrs Goforth took the purse and ran to the road, thinking it was the safest place to go to.

She was overcome by panic, and in her distraction, she was not aware that there were people who were eyeing the purse in her hand.



Fortunately, Goforth took it from her before it could be snatched away. He said sternly, "Pull yourself together and stop panicking." Mrs Goforth came to her senses and began to calm down.

It was painful for the Goforths to see wedding presents, pictures and other precious things in their home all burnt up by the fire.

But Goforth later comforted his wife saying, "My dear, do not be so upset. After all, they are just things."



Children, how much do your possessions mean to you? How much do you treasure your computer, toys, clothes, money, etc.?

Goforth's attitude towards losing material possessions has taught us to treat these things lightly. While we are on this earth, the important thing is how we live for God, and not how we value our worldly treasures.

Besides, when we die or when Christ comes again, these things no longer matter. They will not last forever!

So children, always be prepared to give up your earthly possessions.

**You have something far better waiting for you - your glorious heavenly home!**

*Proverbs 11:4 says, "Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death."*

# Even So, Come, Lord Jesus!

## Chorus

## Even So, Come, Lord Jesus!

### Chorus

Come, Lord Je-sus Just as pro-mised For Thy bride, the church Ev - en  
 Come, Lord Je-sus Just as pro-mised For Thy bride, the church Ev - en  
 Come, Lord Je-sus Just as pro-mised For Thy bride, the church Ev - en

### Fine

so, come, Lord Je-sus And take us to Thy hea-ven-ly home. This we  
 so, come, Lord Je-sus And take us to Thy hea-ven-ly home. This we  
 so, come, Lord Je-sus And take us to Thy hea-ven-ly home. This we

pray, Not be - cause we doubt Thy pro - mi - ses, But be - cause we be  
 plead, Not be - cause we doubt Thy faith - ful - ness, But be - cause we are  
 hope, Not be - cause we doubt Thy love for us, But be - cause we de

### To Chorus

- lieve all Thy pro - mis - es, To be ve - ry true. So we pray,  
 like stran - gers in this world, Ha - ted and des - pised. So we plead,  
 - sire Thy lov - ing pre - sence, Pure and full of joy. So we sing,

Lyrics & Music: Prabhudas Koshy