

## THE NEXT THOUSAND YEARS

When you travel to an unknown destination you will buy guides and look on the Internet to learn as much as possible. You study it. You are excited about it!

We, Christians, and unbelievers too, are traveling through time. The next destination is the millennium.

Our guide is the Bible. We can learn a lot from the Bible for our life now, but also about the future. I wrote "The next thousand years" is because I think that this time will come soon. At the time of writing (May 2012) within 10 to 15 years. Maybe even earlier.

The next thousand years is also called the Millennium. This is a compound of two Latin words Mille = 1000 and Annium= years. Believers speak also about the 1000-year Kingdom of Peace.

As with so many issues in the Bible there are also different views on this subject. Mostly these differing insights arise because only a few verses are studied, and often not even in the context of the verses that are around it.

This site is called "Bible Open," and as you'll see on this site, we do not proclaim opinion of others, rather, we open the Bible and try to understand what God has said about a topic by using all verses on a subject and use them in their context.

If something is not clear, or when you have another view (with biblical evidence), let me know.

To begin, we read Revelation 20.

## THE MILLENNIAL REIGN

<sup>1</sup>Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key to the bottomless pit and a large chain in his hand. <sup>2</sup>He captured the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and tied him up for a thousand years. <sup>3</sup>He threw him into the bottomless pit, locked it, and sealed it over him to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were over. After that he must be set free for a little while.

<sup>4</sup>Then I saw thrones, and those who sat on them were given authority to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or hands. They came back to life and ruled with Christ for a thousand years. <sup>5</sup>The rest of the dead did not come back to life until the

thousand years were over. This is the first resurrection. <sup>6</sup>How blessed and holy are those who participate in the first resurrection! The second death has no power over them. They will be priests of God and Christ, and will rule with him for a thousand years.

## THE FINAL JUDGEMENT

<sup>7</sup>When the thousand years are over, Satan will be freed from his prison. <sup>8</sup>He will go out to deceive Gog and Magog, the nations at the four corners of the earth, and gather them for war. They are as numerous as the sands of the seashore. <sup>9</sup>They marched over the broad expanse of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. Fire came from God out of heaven and burned them up, <sup>10</sup>and the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet were. They will be tortured day and night forever and ever.

## THE WHITE THRONE JUDGEMENT

<sup>11</sup>Then I saw a large, white throne and the one who was sitting on it. The earth and the heaven fled from his presence, but no place was found for them. <sup>12</sup>I saw the dead, both unimportant and important, standing in front of the throne, and books were open. Another book was opened—the Book of Life. The dead were judged according to their works, as recorded in the books. <sup>13</sup>The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and Death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and all were judged according to their works. <sup>14</sup>Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. (This is the second death—the lake of fire.) <sup>15</sup>Anyone whose name was not found written in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire."

The term "Kingdom of Peace" is not mentioned here. Yet it will be a time of peace because the devil will be bound for 1000 years, but mainly it will be a time of peace because Jesus will reign. Jesus is the Prince of Peace.

It is made clear in the first verses that the devil will be bound in the abyss and the abyss is closed above him. How we should imagine this I do not know, but it is clear from the verses read that the devil cannot do evil for 1000 years. Only at the end of the 1000 years he will be released for a short time. (verses 1-3 and 7).

Why the devil will be released we will see in a moment.

After John saw that the devil was imprisoned he saw thrones, and "those who sat on them were given authority to judge."  
Who are 'those'?

For John this was clear because he knew the prophecies of the Old Testament. He knew what Daniel said about that.

We have the Old Testament too, so let's read in Daniel who 'those' are who sit on thrones and to whom the judgment will be given.

## DANIËL 7

It's always good to read the whole chapter so that the texts I now quote can be seen in their context. The texts that have a connection with Revelation 20 are:

<sup>13</sup> In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. <sup>14</sup> He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed."

<sup>17</sup> 'The four great beasts are four kingdoms that will rise from the earth. <sup>18</sup> But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever—yes, for ever and ever."

<sup>21</sup> As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, <sup>22</sup> until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom."

<sup>26</sup> But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. <sup>27</sup> Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him."

First, it is clear that "one like a son of man" will be "coming with the clouds of heaven".

Jesus calls Himself the "Son of man" as we read in the Gospels.

And on the clouds of heaven, we read in Acts 1:9 and 11. Jesus will come back with the clouds of heaven as He departed.

And when Jesus returns He will reign with royal power. (Daniel 7:13-14, but also e.g. Luke 1:31-33.)

But also the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom (Daniel 7:18).

These saints, however, will first have to endure war waged by the "horn". They will even be defeated by him.

How this will be is discussed in the study of [Daniel / Revelation](#).

It is clear that justice will be provided to the saints of the Most High and that the time is approaching that the saints will take possession of the kingdom. (Daniel 7:21-22)

<sup>27</sup> Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him."

So they are the saints of the Most High that will sit on the thrones. The question is: Who are the saints of the Most High?

Both the Old and New Testament calls those who follow God and do His will saints. In the Old Testament i.e. in Psalm 16:3 and 34:10. The New Testament speaks of saints too.

When Jesus died, there were graves opened "and many bodies of saints fallen asleep were raised." These are probably believers who had died at the time Jesus lived on earth, because they appeared to many. They must have been acquaintances or family of the resurrected believers else they could not be identified as deceased.

And then there are the believers who were at Jerusalem, they were called saints by Ananias (Acts 9:13).

Regularly in the New Testament believers are called "saints". Acts 9:32,41 and Acts 26:10, Romans 1:7, 12:13, 15:25 and 16:15, 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2 Corinthians 13:12; Ephesians 3:8, 4:12 and so on.

So it is the saints who sit on the thrones to rule. Furthermore, John saw the souls of them that were beheaded. They loved the testimony of Jesus more than their lives.

The time when things like this happen is called the time of the Great Tribulation. It is the time in which it is mandatory to worship the beast and his image. It is the time of the mandatory mark on the forehead or the hand (Revelation 20:4-5).

All these believers become alive and will reign with Christ a thousand years (Revelation 20:5).

This resurrection is called the FIRST resurrection in Revelation.

When we talk about the first resurrection, then it follows that there is also a second resurrection that will come. And that is also evident as we read on in this chapter. We will get back to that.

## THE FIRST RESURRECTION

Before we will talk about the second resurrection, we will first have a look at the first resurrection. Those who participated in the first resurrection will never have to face the second death.

If you have read the entire chapter (Rev. 20) then you also read in verse 14 what that means: second death. The second death is the lake of fire. That is the fiery furnace in which all whose names are not written in the book of life will be cast. Those are all who cause sin and who do evil. (Matthew 13:41-43).

But those who participated in the first resurrection will never have to deal with the lake of fire. They are the saints. Not because they never have done all those bad things, but because those bad things are discarded because they are washed away by the blood of Jesus.

Jesus has taken their sins upon Himself and the saints have accepted His atoning sacrifice for them. The saints (we believers in Christ) therefore are holy because He has made us holy.

This first resurrection is for all the saints / believers, including those who are slain in the time of the great tribulation. It follows that the first resurrection will take place at the end of the tribulation. Paul comes to the same conclusion: "... we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup>For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup>After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever." 1Thessalonians 4:15-17.

In his second letter to the Thessalonians, Paul talks again about the same subject: <sup>1</sup>Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, <sup>2</sup>not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. <sup>3</sup>Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. <sup>4</sup>He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God." 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4.

What we learn from these passages is that the first resurrection, the resurrection of the believers that have already died, is associated with the caught up of all the faithful who still lives, to meet the Lord in the air. And as we saw in Revelation 20 that will be after the great tribulation. Nowhere in the bible it is spoken of a 'first resurrection A' and a 'first resurrection B'. There is only one FIRST resurrection.

This is also the moment of the beginning of the Lord's day.

But ... before this happens, something else must happen first, says Paul.

The man of lawlessness must be revealed, the son of perdition, the adversary who exalts himself against all that God or object of worship is. He will set himself in the temple of God, to show that he is a god. So logically, there must first be a temple.

This person, who in Revelation 20:4 is called the beast, will start the great tribulation. As a consequence, perhaps millions of saints / believers will lose their lives. But they will be raised, made alive again, when Jesus comes back. Then they, along with all other saints, will reign with Jesus a thousand years.

## THOUSAND YEARS PEACE

Thousand years there will be a kingdom of peace, with Jesus as King.

<sup>32</sup>The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup>and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." Luke 1:32-33.

There are several things in the Bible about that time of peace. We will read some passages.

<sup>1</sup>This is what Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem:

<sup>2</sup>In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. <sup>3</sup>Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup>He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation,

nor will they train for war anymore.  
<sup>5</sup> Come, O house of Jacob,  
 let us walk in the light of the LORD.”  
 Isaiah 2:1-5, NIV.

We can also find that same image of the Kingdom of peace in Micah, where war does not exist and where Jesus will be the ruler..

<sup>1</sup> In the last days  
 the mountain of the LORD’s temple will be  
 established as chief among the mountains;  
 it will be raised above the hills,  
 and peoples will stream to it.  
<sup>2</sup> Many nations will come and say,  
 “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the  
 LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob.  
 He will teach us his ways,  
 so that we may walk in his paths.”  
 The law will go out from Zion,  
 the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.  
<sup>3</sup> He will judge between many peoples and will  
 settle disputes for strong nations far and wide.  
 They will beat their swords into plowshares and  
 their spears into pruning hooks.  
 Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor  
 will they train for war anymore.  
<sup>4</sup> Every man will sit under his own vine and under  
 his own fig tree, and no one will make them  
 afraid, for the LORD Almighty has spoken.  
<sup>5</sup> All the nations may walk in the name of their  
 gods; we will walk in the name of the LORD our  
 God for ever and ever.”  
 Micah 4:1-5, NIV.

We read a little more in Chapter 5.

<sup>2</sup> “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
 though you are small among the clans of Judah,  
 out of you will come for me  
 one who will be ruler over Israel,  
 whose origins are from of old,  
 from ancient times.”  
<sup>3</sup> Therefore Israel will be abandoned  
 until the time when she who is in labor gives birth  
 and the rest of his brothers return  
 to join the Israelites.  
<sup>4</sup> He will stand and shepherd his flock  
 in the strength of the LORD,  
 in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.  
 And they will live securely, for then his greatness  
 will reach to the ends of the earth.  
<sup>5</sup> And he will be their peace.”  
 Micah 5:1-3, NIV.

And then we read in Isaiah 11:

<sup>1</sup> A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;  
 from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.  
<sup>2</sup> The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—  
 the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,

the Spirit of counsel and of power,  
 the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the  
 LORD—

<sup>3</sup> and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.  
 He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,  
 or decide by what he hears with his ears;  
<sup>4</sup> but with righteousness he will judge the needy,  
 with justice he will give decisions for the poor of  
 the earth.  
 He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;  
 with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.  
<sup>5</sup> Righteousness will be his belt  
 and faithfulness the sash around his waist.  
<sup>6</sup> The wolf will live with the lamb,  
 the leopard will lie down with the goat,  
 the calf and the lion and the yearling together;  
 and a little child will lead them.  
<sup>7</sup> The cow will feed with the bear,  
 their young will lie down together,  
 and the lion will eat straw like the ox.  
<sup>8</sup> The infant will play near the hole of the cobra,  
 and the young child put his hand into the  
 viper’s nest.  
<sup>9</sup> They will neither harm nor destroy  
 on all my holy mountain,  
 for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the  
 LORD  
 as the waters cover the sea.  
<sup>10</sup> In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a  
 banner for the peoples; the nations will  
 rally to him, and his place of rest will be  
 glorious.

Some points from the previous verses:

- Out of Zion the law of the Lord shall go and from Jerusalem the word of the Lord.
- The Lord will rule over mighty nations, not only over Israel.
- There will be no more war, war tools will be transformed into agricultural tools. (Hence the name Kingdom of Peace).
- All the tribes of Israel will return to Israel.
- The animal kingdom will be reformed, wolves will not be aggressive and just be together with the sheep. Lions will be together with cows. Snakes will not be toxic. And so on.

There are more things to say about the millennium, in the study on the [Kingdom of God](#) we go deeper.

## WHY THOUSAND YEARS?

There is not a direct answer to that question to be found in the Bible, but there are clues.

Firstly, there is creation. God created six days, the seventh day He rested.  
 After man has fallen into sin, he has tried, so far, some 6000 years to do it his own way here on

earth. 6000 years of toil and hard work, but especially 6000 years without listening to God. Six days of 1000 years of work. Peter explains that to God a thousand years are as one day. (2 Peter 3:8). After six days of work there comes the seventh day, the Sabbath. That's the day of the Lord. The day when He puts an end to the misery of the past 6000 years, and that is the day that He will establish His Kingdom here on earth. (See also the study on the [Kingdom of God](#)).

That day will therefore begin when Jesus returns to earth and will receive Kingship. When that day comes, all believers will be resurrected, or changed, and meet Jesus in the air. Revelation 20 speaks about that era.

## BACK TO REVELATION 20

We have considered the first six verses of Revelation 20. But there is more. In verse 7 we read that Satan, at the end of that millennium, will be released from his prison. Then he starts doing what he does best: seduce. He will entice people to turn against the authority of Jesus and his saints. It is hard to believe that this is possible. For a thousand years we saints ruled with Jesus. It was a great time of peace. Now the people turn against the Government of God. It is a repetition of history. The first time there were two people who turned away from the blessings of God and His lead over them. Later this happened many times. Israel also turned away from the theocracy of God's Government, they wanted a king of flesh and blood rather than that God was their King. And now we read again that people turn away from the government of God, the government that has brought so much prosperity and blessing for 1,000 years. They will be tempted by the devil to turn themselves against the loving God. They will surround the city where Gods Government takes place.

Ezekiel prophesied about that.

<sup>16</sup>“You will advance against my people Israel like a cloud that covers the land. In days to come, O Gog, I will bring you against my land, so that the nations may know me when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.”  
Ezekiel 38:16

God will show Himself holy. He shall let fire come down from heaven on all those armies which turn against Him because they still have not learned who God is who reigns in Jerusalem. They will be destroyed. But not only the armies will be devoured by the fire, the devil will also face the fire. He will be thrown in

the lake of fire and brimstone. There, too, will be the beast, who is the antichrist and the false prophet. They will be there to be tormented forever and ever.

What John sees next is a great white throne. On that throne someone is seated from whose presence earth and heaven flee. What we learn from previous texts is that the current world persists until the end of the millennium in which Jesus will reign from Jerusalem. Only at the end of that thousand years will the earth disappear, not forever, but to be replaced by God with a new heaven and a new earth, as we see in Revelation 21:1. But before that, all the dead are raised, this is the SECOND resurrection.

The first resurrection took place at the beginning of the millennial reign of God on earth, it is the resurrection of all believers. The second resurrection is for all those that did not come back to life at the first resurrection. At the second resurrection there will be a judgment, (this in contrast to the first resurrection), that of the faithful. The believers are not condemned because they are made one with Jesus. Jesus has washed away all their sins by His blood shed on the cross of Calvary. There is nothing to be judged for the believers!

Those who become alive at the second resurrection will be judged by what is written in the books. They will be judged by their works. There are two types of books. One of those books is the book of life. If the person before the great white throne is not written in the book of life, that person will be cast into the lake of fire. A terrible end. It is the second death. It does not say those thrown in the lake of fire will burn forever. That is destined of the devil, the antichrist and the false prophet.

But, as we have seen, there are people in that second resurrection that are not thrown in the lake of a fire. These people are in the book of life. They are given eternal life.

For many this will be new to hear, but it is nevertheless true that people will be judged by their works. On the basis of how they lived, what they have done.

Jesus spoke about that in Matthew 25.

## THE JUDGMENT OF THE SON OF MAN

<sup>31</sup>“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in

heavenly glory. <sup>32</sup>All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup>He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

<sup>34</sup>“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. <sup>35</sup>For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, <sup>36</sup>I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

<sup>37</sup>“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? <sup>38</sup>When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? <sup>39</sup>When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

<sup>40</sup>“The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’

<sup>41</sup>“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. <sup>42</sup>For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, <sup>43</sup>I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’

<sup>44</sup>“They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’

<sup>45</sup>“He will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’

<sup>46</sup>“Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

Without going deeper into this, it shows according to the Bible passages above, that there are two groups of people who will receive eternal life. The group of the first resurrection, the believers, and part of the group of the second resurrection. The believers are "children of God", more like "sons of God." They partake of the inheritance of God because they are His sons. (This applies to both men and women).

The second group are not sons, nor children of God, but have done what we read in Matthew 25. Therefore, they are granted to go into the Kingdom of God and live forever.

## SUMMARY

In fact, the whole story is in Revelation 20. The Old Testament fills in some details.

As it says in Revelation 20, the period of thousand years start when the Devil is made powerless because he is thrown into the abyss.

The next image is of the thrones on which the saints sit, where they will reign together with Jesus for thousand years.

It appears that the saints, including those who were killed in the great tribulation have come alive at the FIRST resurrection.

This God-government will last a thousand years. There will be no more war. Even the animal realm will adjust. Everything will be peaceful.

At the end of those thousand years, Satan will be loosed again. He will deceive the nations to war against the Government of God in Jerusalem. Fire will descend from heaven and kill them all. The devil is thrown in the lake of fire and brimstone.

Then the Second Resurrection will take place. All those who are not raised in the first resurrection are raised in the second resurrection.

They will not rely on the blood of Jesus but are judged by their works.

Two groups of people will be there. One group has not lived according God's law in their hearts, they are thrown into the lake of fire. The other group has lived according to the rules that Jesus mentions in Matthew 25, they enter into the kingdom of God and will live there forever.

They are not 'sons' of God, as the believers, but residents of the Kingdom of God.

The 'travel guide' provides a clear picture of our (near) future. Personally, I long for those days and I hope you do too.

Christians are longing for that time because they know that they do not come into judgment but will be part of the FIRST resurrection.

Life is, even for Christians, not always easy, and it looks like it the devil will do his best to make it extra difficult in the great tribulation . Many will even lose their lives if forced to choose between Jesus or Allah, the god of the Muslims.

We see that already happening daily in Muslim countries. And wherever the Muslims will get the majority in a country that will happen.

We, born again Christians, know in our hearts, and through the Bible, that there is no other God than God our Father through Jesus Christ.