

city. Their past flashes before their eyes and they remember all the rejected opportunities God sent them in their lifetime. This is hell; even before the fire comes down. And then, it does. Revelation 20:9: *"They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them."* The wicked try to take by force what they refused to receive by grace. How tragic and strange!

There are many lessons we can learn from the millennium:

- Do not wait until the last minute to choose to serve God; do so today!
- God is fair and absolutely values the intelligent, thoughtful, and loving obedience of His children.
- Hell does not burn for eternity, but it does have eternal consequences. The New Heaven and the New Earth prove that hell comes to an end.
- God does not execute the final, terminal punishment upon the wicked until everyone (the wicked included!) are convinced of His justice.
- God desires the salvation of all of His children!

Presentation guide 10:

## How do I secure my future?

In the book of Revelation, the Bible describes a fascinating period of one thousand years where Satan is forced to take a "vacation". This is a period where the earth is left desolate with no one left to deceive and tempt. Revelation 20 says that the devil is "bound" and "cast" into the bottomless pit, but then released after a thousand years (vs. 1-3). We will refer to this period as the millennium. The word millennium comes from two Latin words: mille, meaning "one thousand", and annum, meaning "year." But why? What's the point of this thousand year break?

### Two Resurrections

After performing one of His many miracles, Jesus made an interesting statement. He said that there will be two resurrections: 1) the resurrection of life, and 2) the resurrection of damnation (See John 5:28, 29). As we will discover in this lesson, the millennium takes place between these two resurrections. (See also Acts 24:15. Additionally, Hebrews 11:35 speaks of a "better resurrection", making it clear that there is more than one.)

### The Beginning of the Millennium

There are five important events that begin the millennium. They are:

1. The Second Coming of Jesus ~ 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17
2. The resurrection of the righteous ~ 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17  
(the "dead in Christ" are resurrected)
3. The translation of the living ~ 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; John 14:1-3  
(the living righteous are taken to God, without dying)

4. The wicked are slain ~ 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Psalm 68:1, 2

(the wicked perish at the site of the Christ glorified)

5. Satan is bound ~ Revelation 20:1-3

(he is “bound” because everyone is gone; the earth is empty of human inhabitants)

There are four categories of people when Christ returns. Here they are with their respective circumstances:

- The righteous dead are resurrected to meet the Lord in the air.
- The righteous living are caught up together with the righteous dead.
- The wicked dead remain in grave until judgment after the millennium.
- The wicked living are destroyed by the brightness of Jesus coming.

This is why we say that the earth is empty of any living human inhabitants. It makes sense, doesn't it?

### **A Desolate, Uninhabited Earth**

After the return of Jesus to earth, because of the widespread destruction associated with the power and glory of the Second Coming, the Bible describes the earth as being “a bottomless pit” (Revelation 20:3). This phrase comes from the Greek word *abusos*, from which we derive the English word *abyss*. This word *abusos* is used to describe the condition of the earth before God completed His beautiful creation in Genesis chapter 1, but there it's translated “deep,” (verse 2). You find *abusos* in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament). In the following texts you get a picture of a dark, desolate earth: Isaiah 24:19-22 and Jeremiah 4:23-27. The language used here strongly links us back to Revelation 20.

### **A Thousand Year Book Review**

In Revelation 20:4, the Bible says that during the millennium the followers of Jesus are involved in a judgment. This is a period before the final destruction of sin and sinners where the righteous review the cases of all who are lost. Apparently, God actually makes Himself accountable to the created

universe in the judgment. He will forever settle any possible doubt in regard to His efforts to save absolutely everyone. At this time, God will open many things that have been hidden from our eyes. He will reveal what has taken place ‘behind the scenes’. Notice the words:

*“Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?”* 1 Corinthians 6:2

*“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts.”* 1 Corinthians 4:5

### **The Close of the Millennium**

Just as five events opened the millennium, five events will also close the millennium.

1. The wicked are raised ~ Revelation 20:5 (they are raised to face their sentencing and execution)
2. Satan is released ~ Revelation 20:7, 8 (his release occurs when the wicked are raised and suddenly there people to deceive and lead)
3. The New Jerusalem descends ~ Revelation 21:1-3 (the saved are in the city!)
4. The wicked are destroyed ~ Revelation 20:9, 10; 21:8 (this is hell; these are the fires of hell)
5. The earth is made new ~ 2 Peter 3:13; Isaiah 65:17 (as Jesus said, “*the meek shall inherit the earth*” Matt. 5:5)

### **A Compelling Scene**

At the close of the millennium, following the resurrection of the wicked, everyone who has ever lived will be alive all at the same time! All of the righteous will be inside the city, the New Jerusalem; all of the wicked will be outside of the city. This is a terrible, sad moment. The wicked have missed out on eternity. The great controversy between good and evil is moments from coming to a close forever and they find themselves on the wrong side. Worst yet, they may well recognize friends and family members inside the