

THE HEAVENLY CALLING

consider . . . Jesus

Heb. 3:1

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The Time of the End

Part XXXIV

From Time to Eternity

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell [Hades] delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

And death and hell [Hades] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

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.

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

And God shall wipe away all

tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

And he said unto me, It is done... (Rev. 20:11-21:6a).

The closing verses of chapter twenty form a *climax* for events during the whole of Man's Day and the succeeding Lord's Day, and the events beginning chapter twenty-one form a *new beginning*, moving matters into the eternal ages which follow — which Scripture calls, "the day of God" (II Peter 3:12). And though there are *sharp contrasts* between the two, both sections of Scripture need to be studied together.

Events at the end of chapter twenty make way for and allow events at the beginning of chapter twenty-one to occur. And there are certain things in each which cannot be properly understood unless viewed in the light of one another. Thus, the chapter break is being ignored, and these two series of events are being placed together in this study.

Moving into the Eternal Ages

Satan's rule, with his angels, is from the heavens over the present earth. Satan and those ruling with him were placed in this position by God in the beginning, though later disqualifying themselves to continue ruling the earth

(Ezek. 28:14-16). This resulted in the earth, Satan's kingdom, being reduced to a ruin (Gen. 1:2a).

But God later restored the kingdom during six days of restorative work (Gen. 1:2b-25). And God restored the kingdom with a view to *man*, whom He created on the sixth day after He had restored the ruined creation, *ruling the kingdom in the stead of Satan and his angels* (Gen. 1:26-31). Then God rested on the seventh day (Gen. 2:1-3).

Satan though, knowing the reason for man's creation, through subtlety and deception, brought about *his fall and disqualification to rule* (Gen. 3:1ff). And if man were to ever hold the sceptre in accordance with God's original intent, his fall would require *restoration*, which could only be accomplished through a *Divine redemptive work*.

And this is exactly what occurred, with a *redemptive work* continuing to occur today. God set about to restore the subsequent ruined creation, *ruined man* (Gen. 3:15, 21ff), who would be restored in exact accordance with the manner in which the ruined material creation had previously been restored. God would perform a redemptive work lasting six days, 6,000 years; and then God would rest the seventh day, for 1,000 years, completing the septenary arrangement of time set at the beginning.

At the end of six days, at the end of 6,000 years, man, *through a Divine redemptive work*, would find himself in a position to rule the earth in the stead of Satan and his angels. And Man's rule over the earth at this time would be accomplished through *the second Man, the last Adam, Who, with His co-heirs, would replace Satan and his angels and rule the earth for 1,000 years during the coming Sabbath of rest awaiting the people of God* (Heb. 4:1-9).

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Man today finds himself *very near* the end of six days of redemptive work. And the 1,000-year rule of Christ and His co-heirs lies *just ahead*. This 1,000-year period, fulfilling the seventh day foreshadowed in Gen. 2:1-3, will complete the septenary arrangement of time in relation to man and the earth, set at the beginning of Scripture.

Then, matters can turn to God's final dealings with Satan, his angels, and unbelieving man in relation to this earth during the whole of the septenary arrangement of time, during the complete 7,000 years. And once God has dealt with Satan, his angels, and unbelieving man in this respect, all matters in relation to the present heaven and earth will be *past* (the heaven associated with this earth, or with this one solar system; not the heavens comprising the whole galaxy, or the universe at large). Then God will *destroy* the present heaven and earth and *create* a new heaven and earth in which righteousness will dwell.

The present heaven and earth *will remain in existence* until God's final dealings with Satan and his angels, along with the unbelieving Gentiles whom Satan will lead astray after he has been loosed following the Millennium (Rev. 20:7-10). And the present heaven and earth will apparently *pass out of existence* immediately prior to the judgment of the unsaved dead at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15). This is something seen both at the end of chapter twenty (in connection with the Great White Throne Judgment) and at the beginning of chapter twenty-one (in connection with the new heaven and the new earth being brought into existence).

The Great White Throne Judgment

As previously seen, man was created in the beginning to rule the earth in the stead of the incumbent ruler, Satan, who had disqualified himself to continue holding the sceptre. And this will be realized yet future when Satan and his angels have been put down and Christ and His co-heirs ascend the throne, holding the sceptre of the earth.

But the rule of Christ and His co-heirs over the domain which Satan and his angels will have previously ruled is for *one age only — the Messianic Era, lasting 1,000 years*. In a larger respect though, man was created *to rule not just the earth but to rule out in the universe*. And the latter will be realized during the ages following the Millennium.

(Man's rule during the ages following the Millennium will be developed more fully in the closing part to this series, Part XXXV. Note also closing remarks in the present study.)

The preceding has been dealt with briefly at this point in these studies for a purpose. Understanding the reason for man's creation in the beginning (*regal*) and the fact that this remains uppermost in God's mind — not only during *time* (during 6,000 years of redemptive work and a subsequent 1,000 years of rest) but also during *eternity* (the eternal ages beyond the Millennium) — is necessary if one is to properly understand judgments occurring both before and after the Millennium.

All judgments, premillennial or postmillennial, have to do with *the purpose for man's creation, which, as well, is the purpose for God's redemptive work following man's fall*.

All judgments occurring before the Millennium (the judgment of Christians [Rev. 1:10-3:21], Israel [Ezek. 20:34-44], saved Gentiles surviving the Tribulation [Matt. 25:31-46], and Tribulation martyrs [Rev. 20:4-6]) have to do with *the place each individual being judged will occupy in relation to Christ's rule during the Millennium*.

Many of those being judged will be found worthy to occupy regal positions of varying degrees in the kingdom, depending on their faithfulness, which will have resulted in works; but many others, because of unfaithfulness, resulting in the lack of works, will be found unworthy and will be denied such positions.

There will be *no judgment per se* at this time for the unsaved who survive the Tribulation and subsequently enter into the Millennium. The Millennium itself will serve as their judgment, for the Millennium will be 1,000 years of judging as Christ and His co-heirs rule the earth with a rod of iron.

Other than the Millennium itself, the

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only judgment of the unsaved is seen following the Millennium, preceding the eternal ages. A judgment of the unsaved simply *does not, it cannot, precede* the Millennium, for all judgments preceding the Millennium have to do *solely with the saved in relation to the Millennium*. Millennial issues could have nothing to do with a judgment of the unsaved. Thus, their judgment does not occur until after the Millennium, as seen in Rev. 20:11-15.

And this judgment of the unsaved following the Millennium will have to be *all-inclusive* since it does not occur until this point in time. Thus, this judgment will have to include *all of the unsaved dead throughout the entire preceding 7,000 years*, extending all the way back to man's creation, along with those whom Satan will have led astray after the 1,000 years, following his release from his confinement in the abyss.

And this judgment will evidently have to do with *man alone*, not with both man and angels.

It seems clear, from comparing Scripture with Scripture, that *where Satan goes, his angels go*. Sometimes Satan, in relation to his present rule, is spoken of alone; but other times the angels ruling with him are seen as well (*cf.* Isa. 14:12-17; Matt. 25:41; Luke 4:6; 10:18; Rev. 12:3-9).

And the counterpart to this would be that sometimes Christ, in relation to His coming rule, is spoken of alone; but other times those ruling with Him are seen as well — His co-heirs, Israel, saved Gentiles coming out of the Tribulation, and Tribulation martyrs (*cf.* Joel 2:27-32; Matt. 25:34, 46; Luke 1:31-33; Rom. 8:17-19; Heb. 1:9; 3:14; Rev. 11:15; 20:4-6).

In short, when Satan is cast into the abyss before the Millennium, his angels

will evidently be cast in with him; when he is loosed following the Millennium, his angels will evidently be loosed with him; and when he is cast into the lake of fire, his angels will evidently be cast in with him. And the preceding, at least in the final analysis, could only include the angels seen loosed when the sixth trumpet is sounded and the corresponding sixth vial is poured out in Rev. 9:13-21; 16:12-16 (cf. I Peter 3:18-20; Jude 6).

Attention is called to this fact because some attempt to teach that angels will be judged along with man at the Great White Throne Judgment. The thought of angels also being judged at this time is derived mainly from the statement, "the sea gave up the dead which were in it," in Rev. 20:13a. And a basis for seeing Satan's angels in connection with *the sea* would be Job. 26:5, where *Rephaim* tremble beneath the waters (*Rephaim* is another name for the *Nephilim* in Gen. 6:4; Num. 13:33 [ref. NASB, with *Rephaim* translated "spirits" in Job 26:5; both *Nephilim* and *Rephaim* are transliterated Hebrew words]).

To further support the thought of angels being judged at this time, attention is called to the fact that all of the dead in the human realm would be taken care of by the expression which immediately follows a mention of the sea giving up the dead — "and death and hell ['Hades,' the place of the dead] delivered up the dead which were in them" (Rev. 20:13b). And the question is asked, Why single out *the sea* separate from *death and Hades* unless individuals from outside the human realm are being referenced?

But, if Satan's angels had previously been cast into the lake of fire with him (which would evidently have occurred), there could be no basis for the thought that they would be present and would be judged, along with man, at the Great White Throne Judgment.

And that would be substantiated by noting how the word "sea" is used in this passage. The word "sea" is not only used in Rev. 20:13 but also in Rev. 21:1, at the time that the new heaven and the new earth are brought into existence. And, contextually, it appears evident that the word is used the same way in both verses — not in a literal sense, having to do with a place of angelic

confinement, but in a *metaphorical sense*, depicting something other than a literal sea, which would be very much in keeping with the extensive use of metaphors throughout this book.

"The sea," when used in a metaphorical sense refers to either *the Gentiles* or *the place of death* (e.g., Jonah 1:11-2:10; I Cor. 10:2; Col. 2:12; Rev. 13:1). In both Rev. 20:13 and 21:1, contextually, *death* would be in view. In both places, "the sea" appears in a parallel respect to *death* (cf. Rev. 20:13a, 13b, 14; 21:1, 4). A reference to "the sea" giving up *the dead* (20:13a) is simply another way of saying the same thing as the text goes on to relate — to "death and hell ['Hades']" giving up *the dead* (20:13b, 14). The two references form parallel statements, saying the same thing two different ways, providing an emphasis on *the finality of the matter* — an emphasis having to do with *the end of death*.

(Parallels of the nature seen here are very common in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. And, though less common in the Greek text of the New Testament, contextually, it is quite evident that a parallel of this nature exists both places in this section of the Book of Revelation.)

The Great White Throne Judgment depicts a *final judgment of all the unsaved dead*. Those present in that day will have rejected God's redemptive work and, as a result, can have no part in *God's regal statements regarding man at the time of his creation*. Now they can only be consigned to the same place prepared for the Devil and his angels — a place prepared for those who, not only in the beginning but throughout Man's Day and at the termination of the Lord's Day, had rejected God's supreme power and authority.

In the beginning, Satan had sought to occupy a higher position than the one in which he found himself, the position in which God had placed him; and one-third of the angels ruling with him went along with his God-dishonoring aspirations.

During Man's Day, Satan and his angels have worked continuously to subvert not only God's redemptive work but the purpose for this work; and following the Millennium, Satan and his angels will attempt a final work

in this respect immediately before they are cast into the lake of fire, where they will reside throughout the endless ages of eternity.

And man, rejecting God's redemptive work, will, in the final analysis, find himself in this same place, for the same duration, for basically the same reason — residing in the lake of fire throughout the same endless ages of eternity, for he will have rejected God's redemptive work and the reason for this work.

The Great White Throne Judgment will bring about *an end to sin and death in relation to man*, whom God had created to rule in His kingdom. In the preceding respect, this judgment has to do with *removing from God's kingdom all remaining vestiges of sin and death in the human realm prior to the new heaven and new earth being brought into existence*.

This judgment appears to occur at a time *following* the destruction of the present heaven and earth but *preceding* the existence of the new heaven and earth. In Rev. 20:11, the earth and the heaven are seen to *flee away* from the face of the One seated on the throne — "from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away" (cf. Rev. 21:1). The Greek word *pheugo*, translated "flee away" in this passage, could be understood in the sense of "disappear," or "vanish."

This judgment appears to occur out in space, with the present earth and heaven possibly having passed out of existence at this time, leaving no place for those appearing before the throne to go. Regardless, they will be left at the mercy of the One seated on the throne, though there will be no exercise of mercy, only justice.

Following their judgment on the basis of works (v. 12), for that is the only basis upon which they could be judged (they will have already been judged on the basis of nonbelief surrounding God's Son [John 3:16-18]), they will be cast into the lake of fire, joining the Beast, the False Prophet, and Satan and his angels.

And, when this has been accomplished, *sin and death* will have been done away with, allowing the new heaven and the new earth to be brought into existence.

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The New Heaven and Earth

With the introduction of the new heaven and the new earth in Rev. 21:1, *two parallel sections of Scripture follow*, taking one to the end of the book.

The first section is rather brief, beginning with the new Jerusalem “coming down from God out of heaven,” followed by *conditions* which will exist during the eternal ages (21:2-6a). And this section ends with an overcomer’s promise and corresponding warnings, which would relate back to conditions during the previous Messianic Era, not to conditions during the eternal ages (21:6b-8).

The second section begins the same way as the first, with the new Jerusalem “descending out of heaven from God.” And this second section provides *numerous descriptive details concerning the new Jerusalem* which are not provided in the first. In fact, descriptive details concerning the new Jerusalem comprise almost all of the first part of this second section (21:9-22:5). Then, as in the previous section, this part about the new Jerusalem is followed by a section having to do with overcoming, rewards, and blessings, with the converse of the preceding dealt with as well. And this section, having to do with conditions in the previous Messianic Era, takes one to the end of the book (22:6-21).

(That the two parallel sections forming these closing two chapters of the book are to be divided in the previous manner is *obvious*. Conditions depicted in the latter part of each section *cannot possibly exist* during the eternal ages. And the converse of that concerning the opening parts of these two sections is *equally true*.)

The first thing mentioned relative to the eternal ages is God bringing into existence a new heaven and a new earth to replace a previously destroyed heaven and earth. Then, relative to the new heaven and the new earth, Scripture

states, “there was no more sea” (21:1).

The “sea” would have to do with the whole of the new creation, both *the new heaven and the new earth*. And used in the same metaphorical sense seen in the previous chapter (20:13)—as a reference to *death*, paralleling a subsequent statement concerning *death* (21:4)—the one thing brought to the forefront relative to the new heaven and the new earth is *the absence of death, and accordingly the absence of sin*.

The previous heaven and earth—the heaven and the earth which exist now—*had/had sin in both realms, with a corresponding death in the earthly realm*. Sin invaded *the heavenly realm* in an age preceding the creation of man, when Satan sought to occupy a higher regal position than the one in which he had been placed. Then, sin invaded *the earthly realm* when Satan brought about man’s fall, affecting both man and the earth (note that sin would also have been associated with the previously ruined earth following Satan’s fall).

Preceding the Messianic Era, because of sin in the heavenly realm, *the heavens will have to be cleansed* before Christ and His co-heirs can rule from the heavens over the earth (Job 15:15). And, as well, there will have to be *a restoration of the ruined earth* once again (cf. Gen. 3:17-19; Isa. 35:1ff; Acts 3:21; Rom. 8:19-22; Col. 1:20).

But the destruction of the present heaven and earth at the end of the Millennium and a new heaven and a new earth being brought into existence will result in an end to numerous things which had existed in the past heaven and earth. This termination of things will begin with *sin and death*, as seen in Rev. 21:1. And, as seen in verse four, this will include *tears, sorrow, crying, and pain*. *None* of these things will exist in the new heaven and the new earth.

(The new earth may or may not have bodies of water which we know today as *seas*. Viewing the use of “sea” in Rev. 21:1 correctly, there is really no Scripture which deals with the matter.)

During the Messianic Era, the new Jerusalem will apparently be a satellite city of the present earth. In this respect, there will be a *Jerusalem above* and a *Jerusalem below*. Christ and His co-heirs—his wife—along with certain others, will dwell in the Jerusalem above the earth, which will probably be viewed as the capital of the earth; and the Jerusalem on the earth, in which Christ will dwell as well, will form the capital city of restored Israel in the nation’s own land.

After the destruction of the present heaven and earth and the bringing into existence of a new heaven and a new earth, the new Jerusalem is seen coming down to rest upon the new earth (21:2, 10, 23-27; 22:1, 2). The “great and high mountain” upon which John stood as he witnessed this scene is apparently a metaphorical reference to *the greatness of the kingdom* as it will exist in that day (note the millennial scene in this same respect in Isa. 2:1-4 and Dan. 2:35, 44, 45).

The thought of the new Jerusalem standing on the new earth, as not only *the apparent capital city of the new earth* but, as will be shown, *the center of universal government*, sets forth another thought. The size of the new Jerusalem—about 1,500 hundred miles square, and about 1,500 miles high—would dwarf the present earth. Thus, the new earth will apparently be *much larger* than the present earth, with the land area in the Abrahamic covenant being extensively increased in size, for this land will accommodate the new Jerusalem.

Regardless, as will be seen in the closing part to this series, Part XXXIV, this city will house *the center of government for the entire universe*. God Himself will dwell in this city, seated with His Son on “the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev. 22:1, 3). And God, along with His Son, will *administer the government of the universe from this place through the whole of mankind, and through angels*.

— To be Concluded —

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