

Chapter 17

Beyond Our Age

It is God's passion to share his very best with you.
What a place he has prepared for you,
the eternal New Jerusalem!

Our current Age began with the flood *water* of Noah, and will end with the *fire* of war. Armageddon is not the end of God's story, as scriptures foretell events far beyond our current Age. The Millennium Age will follow. After that, the New Jerusalem Age begins—never to end.

TABLE 17-1: PRIMARY BIBLICAL AGES *

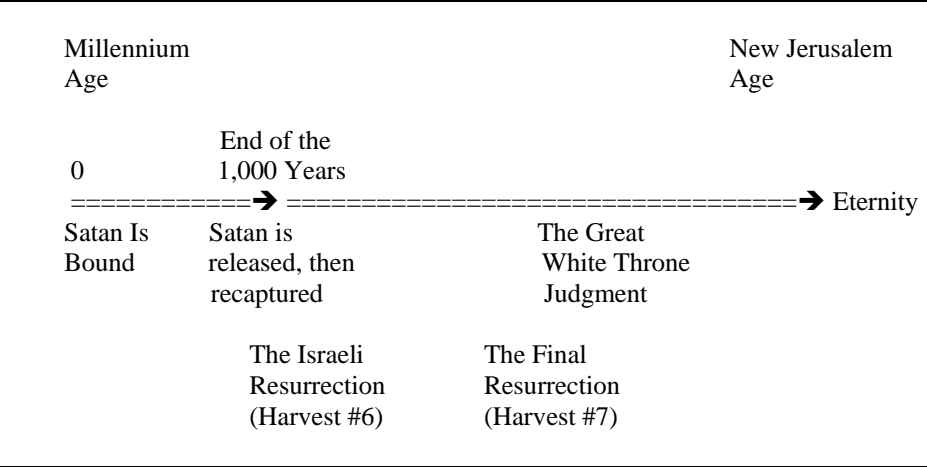
Age	Life Expectancy	Scripture
Garden of Eden	No Death	Genesis 1:8 – 3:24
Pre-Flood	Hundreds of Years	Genesis 4:1 – 8:14
Post Flood	70 Years Old	Genesis 8:15 – Revelation 19:21
Millennium	Hundreds of Years	Revelation 20
New Jerusalem	No Death	Revelation 21, 22

* AGE BASED UPON CHANGE IN LIFE EXPECTANCY.

Prior to its start, two landmark events shape the character of the Millennium Age. First, an angel binds Satan and throws him into the Abyss for a thousand years. Then the sixth harvest resurrects the Israeli believers who died during the final 43 months of the end-times. With Satan removed from the scene and all God's people resurrected from the dead, the Millennium Age begins.

Following the Millennium Age, the final resurrection of the dead occurs. These resurrected people are brought before the Great White Throne to face judgment. Condemned people are sent to the lake of fire for eternity. Then at last, we reach the New Jerusalem Age.

TABLE 17-2: BEYOND THE END-TIMES



Pre-Millennium Events

As just stated, prior to the Millennium Age, two landmark events occur that are critical to shaping the character of that Age.

Satan is Bound

At the end of our Post-Flood Age, *an angel coming down out of heaven binds Satan and casts him into the Abyss for a thousand years. Once Satan is removed from earth, sin greatly decreases. Consequently, the Millennium Age is characterized by one thousand years of peace.*

And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time. (Revelation 20:1-3)

Satan was a *serpent* in the Garden of Eden—causing trouble by deceiving Adam and Eve. (Genesis 3:1) In Revelation he is a *serpent* four times (Revelation 12:9, 12:14, 12:15, 20:2) and a *dragon* 13 times (Revelation 12:3-13:4; 13:11, 16:13, and 20:2). This is a supernatural dragon—with great power and authority, such as over the beast with *ten horns and seven heads*. This dragon is very real—not some Disney character.

Yet even with Satan *bound*, sins resulting from weaknesses in human flesh could continue. Sin such as the prideful boasting of what we have (possessions), or boasting about what we do (position, ability), or lusting the things we see—come from weakness in our own flesh. (1 John 1:6) Nevertheless with Satan banned from the earth sin will be reduced; suffering from consequences of sin will be markedly reduced.

Harvest #6: The Israeli Resurrection

At the sixth harvest, Israeli believers that died during the final 43 months of the end-times are resurrected. Many were martyred—beheaded. This resurrection brings to life all God’s people, just prior to the thousand-year Millennium Age.

Scripture groups the first six harvests together—the collective term to describe them is the “first resurrection.” The people who take part in the first resurrection are those who will enjoy eternal life. The people harvested in the initial six harvests belong to God—collectively they will *reign with Christ* during the Millennium Age.

I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshipped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years. (Revelation 20:4-6)

The previous scriptures identify two groups of people:

1. Those with authority to judge. [believers will judge]

- *Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?* (see 1 Corinthians 6:2)

- *Do you not know that we will judge angels?* (see 1 Corinthians 6:3)

2. Those who had been beheaded.

- End-time Israel martyrs were not available for earlier harvests.

- Islamic and other nations have historically beheaded Jews.

-- Nick Berg (Iraq, 2004) and Daniel Pearl (Pakistan, 2002)

-- Chmelnitzky beheaded 300,000 Polish Jews (1648-1649)

They **1** those resurrected prior + **2** end-time Israeli believers will reign with Christ one thousand years.

That *the rest of the dead* are not resurrected *until the thousand years were ended*—refers to the seventh harvest. This final and largest harvest resurrects people sentenced to spend eternity in hell.

The Millennium Age

God restores the earth from the ecological catastrophes, and the earth once again becomes fit for habitation. Just as the Ark took Noah's family from the Pre-Flood Age into the next Age—there will be Israelis alive at the return of Christ who will move from our current Post-Flood Age into the Millennium Age.

Persons born into this Millennium Age will live to be hundreds of years old, similar to the extended life spans typical in the Pre-Flood Age. For example, Adam lived to 930 years. Noah, who was born in the Pre-Flood Age, lived to be 950 years old. (Genesis 5:5 - 9:29) During the Millennium Age, Jesus will reign on earth as King. God's people will reign in roles subordinate to Christ our King.

The following verses sound very much like an eternal heaven. However people still die: *he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed*. Therefore, these verses must be referring to a different Age.

“Behold, I will create a new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands. They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them. Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent’s food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain,” says the LORD. (Isaiah 65:17-25)

The Millennium Age ends with a brief period during which Satan gathers the enemies of God. (Revelation 20:3) Satan is released to test the faith of the nations. That testing will cause unbelievers to plan war against God. The nations of the earth will *surround the camp of God’s people*. However, before the attack begins—*fire will come down from heaven* and devour them.

When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God’s people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. (Revelation 20:7-10)

Near the end of our Age, God will protect the Philadelphia church through an early rapture. (Revelation 3:10) At the end of the Millennium Age, God will provide the *camp of God's people, the city he loves* similar protection by averting a second battle of Armageddon. (Revelation 20:9)

The Great Throne

The final harvest follows the Millennium Age. This harvest is different from the preceding six harvests. This last harvest resurrects people destined for hell and brings them before Jesus' throne. Any person whose name is not in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire—where they will experience the devastating second death.

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11-15)

These unfortunate people will stand before the *great white throne* of Jesus Christ. Even after being resurrected, this sorry-looking group is still described as *the dead*. A horrifying prospect, decayed bodies are resurrected in no better condition than at the time of death. Flesh will be falling off skeletons—rotten body parts. The damned will have a body that is constantly dying, but unable to die. Beyond doubt, these condemned people will experience an eternal *second death*. The curse is that people will be tormented, yet be unable to die.

Those people resurrected at the seventh harvest are judged according to books. The *book of life* records names of all whom have eternal life. The names of God's people are recorded in the *book of life*. (Exodus 32:31-33; Revelation 3:5; Philippians 4:3)

Scripture is vague about what happens to believers who die during the millennium. Possibly the resurrection of believers who died during the Millennium also occurs at the seventh harvest. *If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life*—implies that some of the people's names could be found in the book of life.

A remnant of people standing before the white throne might possibly be saved. This same verse could have read, "Since no person's name was found in the *book of life*, they were all cast into the *lake of fire*." Such wording would have left no doubt everyone before the great white throne was condemned.

The judgment upon persons condemned to hell is that—*each person was judged according to what he had done*. Consider that for each condemned person there is no forgiveness—at all. Every mistake—every single sin—will be laid out before God.

Hell is a place of fire, maggots, and stench. Isaiah wrote, *their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched* (see Isaiah 66:24) Jesus said that hell was a place where, '*their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched*.' (Mark 9:48) The word *worm* refers to maggots. In hell, people are also *tormented with burning sulfur* (Revelation 14:10; 21:8) Organic sulfur causes the odor associated with rotten eggs; burning sulfur also emits sulfur dioxide, which has a suffocating odor.(1)

God's will also judge his people. Theirs is a kinder and gentler judgment, featuring rewards: *we will all stand before God's judgment seat*. (see Romans 14:10) During this judgment, *fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward*. (see 1 Corinthians 3:13-14)

New Jerusalem

Following the Great White Throne judgment, the earth and sky flee. God soon brings a new heaven and new earth, an eternal city called *New Jerusalem*. Jesus spoke of this eternal heaven: "*In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.*" (John 14:2)

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. (Revelation 21:1) He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” (see Revelation 21:5)

New Jerusalem will be like the Garden of Eden. The old heaven and earth will disintegrate, and a new heaven on earth will take its place. God sends the holy city, New Jerusalem, to the new earth. This final heaven will be a garden city where God dwells with his people. This garden city is the place of fulfillment for God’s covenant. The tree of life seen the Garden of Eden—will be in the Garden of Jerusalem. (Genesis 2:9; 3:22; Revelation 22:2)

One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. He measured its wall and it was 144 cubits thick, by man’s measurement, which the angel was using. The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoptase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass. (Revelation 21:9-21)

God will share eternal flesh with believers, a relationship portrayed as a husband and wife relationship. Accordingly the wedding announced before the Millennium is ongoing after that Age. Paul wrote that *we are members of his body*. “*For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.*” *This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.* (see Ephesians 5:30-32)

I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” (Revelation 21:2-4)

Without Warning

Jesus is coming soon, without warning, for those who earnestly keep watch. He repeated this promise three times in the very last chapter of the New Testament.

I am coming soon. (see Revelation 22:7; 22:12; and 22:20)

Reference:

1. Wikipedia. *Sulfur*. April 8, 2007. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sulfur>