

Things which must shortly be done

The future according to the Bible

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Translator's note

Readers will find striking similarities with what is happening before their eyes in the world.

The original text was written in Dutch well before the war in Ukraine and the war in Israel in October 2023 and Iran 2026. It was not written with the intention of explaining what is happening before our eyes. On the contrary, as you read this document, you will see that God is bringing about what He Himself has decreed in His Word, which announces what is soon to come!

These similarities remind us that the era in which God offers His grace is coming to an end!

Perhaps you have not yet recognised yourself as a sinner, God declaring that there is not a single righteous person among men! You are then eternally lost, with no other hope than to meet God as Judge, who must condemn you to the second death, to spend eternity in hell!

Acknowledge this before God! For then, in His love, He Himself will come to you and simply tell you to believe what He accomplished on the cross in the person of Jesus, His only begotten and beloved Son! To those who believe, God gives eternal

life, and they will not come into judgement! (Read the Gospel of John).

This is the last hour! Tomorrow will be too late (read the parable of the ten virgins in the Gospel of Matthew 25!).

And then, together with all believers, you will be able to wait for the coming of the Son of God from heaven, for He is coming soon!

The translator, March 2026

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Foreword

“The Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants ***the things which must shortly be done***” [Revelation 22:6].

The Lord Jesus may come any day now. His last promise [Revelation 22:20] will then be fulfilled: “*Surely I come quickly*”

We will go out to meet him, meet him in the air, see him, and then dwell with him forever. What a glorious future!

The Bible accurately predicts what will happen then. We are called to be attentive to these coming events [2 Peter 1:19 and Revelation 1:3].

On each page, you will find a question in the first box and a short answer in the next box. Below these answers are expanded with supporting Bible quotations.

It is obviously impossible in this volume to be exhaustive or to explain everything in great detail. That is why we have not attempted to do so.

Things are often stated concisely and affirmatively, while the details may be interpreted differently. The reader is called upon

not to blindly accept what is written, but to examine whether it is in accordance with Scripture.

In the text, "we" always refers to all those who are born again (believers).

What important event for us will take place first in the near future?

The coming of the Lord Jesus to take all believers away in glory. This is often referred to as *the rapture of believers*.

“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: Then 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” [1 Thessalonians 4:16-17].

The Lord Jesus comes to take to Himself all believers who have lived on earth since creation. Most of them have fallen asleep; their bodies are resurrected. The bodies of those who are still alive are transformed (changed) [1 Corinthians 15:51-52]. The Lord Jesus descends from heaven, but without coming down to earth! It is we, the believers, who go to meet him in the clouds (the sky) to be brought into the Father's house. That is why the world does not see him.

“In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” [John 14:2-3].

The Bible does not mention any event that must take place before the coming of the Lord Jesus. **It could happen today!**

What happens *in heaven* after the rapture of believers?

That is where the appearing before the judgment seat of Christ takes place.

When the Lord Jesus came to take all believers and brought them to heaven, they all appeared before 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].

There is no reason to fear, for “*there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*” [Romans 8:1]. There is no condemnation because the Lord Jesus took all our sins upon himself and thus we are justified by him. “*As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us*” [Psalm 103:12].

However, we must *appear* there. That is to say, the Lord Jesus shows us our whole life, how he has appreciated everything. Everything we have done, said and thought is placed in its proper light. We acknowledge before him what was not right, and he

praises us for what was right. Thus there is complete agreement between him and us.

What happens *in heaven* after our manifestation before the judgment seat of Christ?

The marriage of the Lamb is celebrated there.

Marriage is the image of the bond between Christ and the Assembly (or Church). Today, the Assembly is “espoused” to Him [2 Corinthians 11:2]. When she is in heaven, the wedding will be celebrated [Revelation 19:6-9].

The Bridegroom is Christ, the Lamb, the Son of God. *The Bride* is the Assembly. She is composed of all those who have believed in the Lord Jesus since the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost [Acts 2] until the rapture of believers who have believed in the Lord Jesus [Ephesians 5:22-33].

There are also *the friends of the Bridegroom* or *the wedding guests*, those who are called, invited to the wedding [John 3:29 and Revelation 19:9]. These are all the redeemed who are then in heaven, but who are not part of the Church, such as John the Baptist and all the saints of the Old Testament.

What happens *on earth* after the rapture?

Seven years after the rapture of the believers, Christ appears in glory and majesty to establish the 1,000-year reign of peace (the millennium).

Daniel 9:24-27 contains the prophecy of the 70 weeks. These are 70 weeks of years, each of which is not 7 days, but 7 years. That is a total of 490 years.

The first period of seven weeks, or 49 years, begins in 445 BC, when King Artaxerxes gives the order to rebuild Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:1-8). “*From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks*” [Daniel 9:25].

The second consecutive period of 62 weeks, or 434 years, begins with the completion of the reconstruction of the city of Jerusalem. It links the Old and New Testaments and ends with the crucifixion of the Messiah. “*And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself*” [verse 26].

Next comes a period of grace, the Christian era, when the Lord Jesus is rejected and the Assembly (or Church) is formed. Daniel

skips over this period without mentioning it. Indeed, in the Old Testament, the Assembly was still a mystery. This intermediate period ends with the rapture of the saints to heaven.

Then God resumes the thread of history with Israel. Then begins the last seven-year week. At the end of this week, Daniel 9:24 is fulfilled. This is accomplished when Christ comes to establish the reign of peace.

Chronology of the seventy weeks of years



→ 445 BC

Order to rebuild Jerusalem



7

During the first seven weeks of years, or 49 years, the city of Jerusalem is rebuilt.

→ ± 396 BC

Completion of the reconstruction of Jerusalem



62

When the reconstruction of Jerusalem is completed, a period of 62 weeks of years - or 434 years - about which the Bible says little: the period between the Old and New Testaments, until the rejection of the Messiah.

→ ± 28 AD

The crucifixion of Christ



After the 69 weeks of years, there is an intermediate period of unknown duration about which Daniel says nothing. During this period, the Church of God is formed on earth.

→ ?

The rapture of the saints



1

After the rapture, the last week of years begins, i.e. the 70th (and therefore 7 years), when God resumes his relationship with Israel.

→ ?

The return of Christ to earth



After these 70 weeks of years, Israel is fully restored and the blessed period of Christ's millennial reign begins.

The prophecies of Scripture do not count in solar years of 365 or 366 days, but in prophetic years of 12 months of 30 days, i.e. 360 days.

Can the seven years between the rapture of believers and the second coming be further subdivided?

Yes, these seven years can be divided into two periods of exactly 3½ years.

The seven years between the rapture of the saints and the return of Christ are divided into two parts. Exactly in the middle of these seven years, Satan and his angels are cast out of heaven and thrown down to earth [Revelation 12:7-12]. This event is of great importance and has enormous consequences.

The entire seven-year period is called *the hour of trial* [Revelation 3:10], while the second half of these seven years, that is, the last 3½ years, is called *the great tribulation* [Matthew 24:21]. See page 40.

What will be the fate of *Christianity by name only* after the rapture?

When true Christians are taken up to heaven, only nominal Christians remain. The remaining churches, which consist only of false Christians, attach themselves to the Roman “mother church”. This nominal Christian system plays a leading role in Europe and throughout the world during the first years following the rapture of true believers.

Christianity by name only is seen in Revelation 17 and 18 under a double image: that of a *woman* and that of a *city*.

- As a woman, she is the *great prostitute* who prostitutes herself with the kings of the earth to gain power. She claims to be the bride of Christ but allies herself with the leaders of the world. She sits on seven mountains, a familiar designation for the city of Rome.
- As a city, the Roman Catholic Church is the *great Babylon* that acquires wealth through trade.

The woman sits on the beast (see pages 24 and 43). That is, she controls Europe [Revelation 17:3 and 7]. She also sits on the waters. That is, she is connected to the whole world and exercises her influence everywhere [verses 1 and 15].

Christianity in name has degenerated into a Christianity without Christ, into a religious system that has nothing to do with serving God. It seeks only power and wealth.

What about *Europe* after the rapture of believers?

The former Western Roman Empire is reborn and becomes a major political and military power on earth. Western Europe experiences a period of unprecedented prosperity, wealth and power.

Daniel 2 and 7 show the four empires that succeeded one another after the Jews were taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar during the 70-year captivity: *the Babylonian Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire, the Greco-Macedonian Empire and the Roman Empire.*

According to both chapters, these four empires are destroyed by the coming of Christ. They must therefore all exist as empires at the time of Christ's return, but world power is still in the hands of one of them. The centre of the Babylonian Empire is present-day *Iraq*, while that of the Medo-Persian Empire is *Iran*. The Greco-Macedonian Empire is, of course, in *Greece*. The Roman Empire is located in *Western Europe*.

In 476, the Roman Empire disintegrated and ceased to exist. It must be resurrected in order to be destroyed at the coming of

Christ. The beast that rises from the sea represents this restored Western Roman Empire [Revelation 13:1-10 and 17:8]. Over time, the former Western Roman Empire is being reformed. It is currently known as *the European Union*.

A short period of prosperity, power, respect and fear throughout the world awaits the European Union. This Union will be placed under the authority of a man who draws all power to himself: the leader of the restored Western Roman Empire, the first beast of Revelation 13.

What about *America* after the abduction?

America is not mentioned separately, but is considered as one block with Europe.

Biblical prophecies do not mention America. The suggested explanation is that America loses so much power and influence that it has become insignificant by that time.

There may be a better reason: the vast majority of Americans today are of European descent, descendants of emigrants. This makes America a kind of extension of Europe. In other words, when the Bible mentions Europe, America is included. This also applies to countries such as Australia and New Zealand, i.e. the entire "Western world".

What about *Israel* after the rapture?

The State of Israel as it exists today will continue to exist, but still in unbelief. It will be increasingly threatened by neighbouring countries, which is why the Jews will seek protection from Europe (and America).

Many prophecies [e.g. Ezekiel 36 and 37] announce the return of Israel to the Promised Land. The fig tree is budding [Matthew 24:32], as are the other empires of the past [Luke 21:29-30]. Since 1948, the State of Israel has been a reality. However, it is a return *in unbelief*. That is why an extremely difficult period awaits the people of Israel. So far, this mainly concerns the Israelites of the kingdom of Judah, reduced to two tribes, i.e. the Jews (see page 92).

Israel is surrounded by enemies on all sides. The threat from the king of the North — that is, the kingdom north of the land of Israel — is becoming particularly serious. He is often referred to as the Assyrian in the prophecies [e.g. in Isaiah 10:5]. He covers the region of the present-day countries of Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Lebanon. These countries form an alliance [Psalm 83:2-9]. Faced with this threat, Israel forms an alliance with the

restored Western Roman Empire, a united Europe [Daniel 9:27 and Isaiah 28:15]. See page 64.

At that time, a man arises as the leader of Israel, calling himself Christ, but who is in reality *the Antichrist*. He is also called *the King of Israel* and *the false prophet*. He is the second *beast* of Revelation 13:11-18.

What about the *Middle East* after the rapture?

The hatred of Islamic countries towards Israel and Europe, which is linked to Israel, is growing, but it is not yet immediately apparent.

For many centuries, the king of the south and the king of the north have opposed the people of Israel: Egypt and Assyria [Daniel 11:1-35]. They fight each other but are united in their hatred of the apple of God's eye. Fear of Europe prevents them from launching major attacks against Israel in the early stages.

The king of the north ultimately proves to be Israel's great enemy [Daniel 8:23-25]. Their desire to exterminate the Jews leads the peoples of the Middle East to temporarily forget their quarrels and mutual struggles and conspire against God's chosen people. They form a great coalition in which the king of the North, the Assyrian, plays a leading role [Psalm 83:2-9].

Islam is not mentioned in the Holy Scriptures because it did not appear until several centuries after the Bible was completed. However, it is remarkable, but not surprising, that the countries

most hostile to Israel are precisely the most fanatical Muslim countries. Their hostility towards Israel is reaching boiling point, but the lit fuse has not yet been thrown directly into the powder keg.

What about *Russia* after the rapture?

Behind the scenes, Russia is providing great support to Israel's enemies. Russia is a formidable power, but it knows it is inferior to Europe and is therefore adopting a wait-and-see attitude. The old opposition between the free West and the Eastern Bloc exists once again and is becoming more pronounced.

Daniel 8:23-25 gives a description of the king of the north: “*His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power*” [verse 24]. The one from whom Assyria draws its strength is none other than Russia. The Muslim countries surrounding Israel know that they are supported by their powerful neighbour to the north.

In Ezekiel 38 and 39, Russia is represented by Gog and his many allies, the Asian peoples and certain African peoples. Russia is referred to there as the king of the far north. “*And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army*” [38:15]. Seen from Israel, it is located behind Assyria, and it is also effectively supporting it from behind.

Will there be believers on earth after the rapture?

Not at first, because they are all taken up to heaven. However, God works through the Holy Spirit to bring people to faith, initially mainly among the Jews. They will go all over the world to preach. Many will convert to God, especially in regions where Christianity had not spread.

God resumes the thread of history with His people Israel after the rapture of the saints. He works in the hearts of the Jews so that they believe in the Old Testament. They form the starting point of the believing remnant from Israel. These Jews resume the service of offering [Daniel 9:27]. A temple is built [2 Thessalonians 2:4], probably on the site where the al-Aqsa Mosque still stands today, on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

They not only ministered in the offering service, but also preached. *“They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever”* [Daniel 12:3]. And also the following image:

“They that are wise among the people shall instruct the many” [11:33].

Some of these Jewish preachers travel throughout the land of Israel within its borders [Matthew 10:23], while others travel throughout the world, addressing all nations [24:14]. They do not proclaim the gospel of grace, but that of the coming kingdom. This is the ancient message of John the Baptist: *“Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh”* [Matthew 3:2]. It is the message of the coming of the Messiah, of whom the Old Testament prophets spoke so much, to establish the millennial reign of peace.

Can all men repent?

No, only those who have neither known nor rejected the gospel of grace before the rapture of believers.

Countless people throughout the world will believe the message announcing the coming of Christ's kingdom, but more outside the territory of Christendom than within it.

All those who now hear the gospel of grace but who “*have not believed the truth*” and “*have not received the love of the truth that they might be saved*” will be tempted and blinded by the antichrist according to God's will, so that they will believe the lie [2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 and Revelation 13:14]. It is then impossible for them to repent. This is what makes rejection of the gospel of grace so serious today. For them, there is no new opportunity.

That is why, after the rapture, more people come to faith in countries and regions where the gospel of grace was less known.

How will things be for believers then?

This is a particularly difficult time for them. As people turn further and further away from God and His holy commandments and hate His people, believers are persecuted and many of them are killed.

Many people, both Jews and Gentiles, come to faith through the preaching of Jewish messengers. From Israel, a group symbolically numbering 144,000 (a symbolic number) [Revelation 7:1-8], and from the nations, an innumerable multitude [7:9-17]. These are all those who will come to faith, survive these seven years, and enter Christ's millennial kingdom of peace.

In addition, during the seven years following the rapture, many believers will be killed as martyrs because of the Word of God and their testimony [Revelation 6:9-11]. It is mainly the preachers of the Gospel of the Kingdom who will suffer this fate. It is at this precise moment that the prophecy of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 24:9-10 will be fulfilled: *“Then shall they deliver you up to tribulation, and shall kill you; and ye will be hated of all the nations for my name`s sake. And then will many be offended,*

and will deliver one another up, and hate one another” This takes place during “*the beginning of throes*” [verse 8].

The persecution of believers only intensifies during these seven years, so that the number of martyrs for their faith also increases as the last week of years passes.

Do upsetting things happen immediately in the first period after the rapture of believers?

No, not yet in the early days. On the contrary, there is first a very short period of ease and prosperity.

First there is a short period — perhaps a few months? — of calm and prosperity. Because people are blinded, they speak of peace and safety [1 Thessalonians 5:1-3]. This is the time of *the first seal* [Revelation 6:1-2]. The rider on the white horse usually represents victory and prosperity.

At the same time, however, there is a huge increase in sin; lawless living is on the rise, because the Assembly, like the Holy Spirit, has been taken from the earth, and the restraint on lawlessness has been removed [2 Thessalonians 2:6-7].

Will this period of prosperity last long?

No, soon natural disasters will multiply everywhere, wars will break out, famines will set in, and infectious diseases will appear.

Soon, what the Lord Jesus announced in Matthew 24:6-7 will come upon the whole earth: *“Ye will hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that ye be not disturbed; for all these things must take place, but it is not yet the end. For nation shall rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places”*.

In recent decades, we have already seen an increase in these things. Soon, the number and scale of these disasters will increase even more.

In Revelation 6, these judgments are poured out on the earth in the *second, third, and fourth seals*. These are the first judgments that God brings upon the earth, but men do not yet recognise them as such.

This leads people to feel insecure and makes them increasingly anxious. The feeling of unease and insecurity grows.

What is the next stage in these judgments?

With all the crises and turmoil, governments are overthrown and anarchy sets in.

Nations not only fight each other, but also rebel against their own governments and overthrow them. This is represented by the *sixth seal*: the sun turned black like sackcloth, the moon became entirely like blood, and the stars of heaven fell to the earth. [Revelation 6:12-17].

Genesis 1:16 shows that these heavenly bodies represent the authorities on earth: governments falter and fall. A power vacuum is created, which Satan eagerly exploits.

The circumstances during this total anarchy are so terrible that people seek death. They begin to understand that this is an intervention by God.

When do the heavy judgements begin?

When, 3½ years after the rapture, Satan is cast out of heaven: this is the starting point of the great judgments that fall upon the whole earth.

Today, Satan and his demons still dwell in heaven. They are not where God dwells, of course! They dwell in heavenly places. Exactly halfway through the seven years between the rapture and Christ's return, they will be cast out of heaven onto the earth [Revelation 12:7-12]. This has immense consequences.

Satan is furious at his defeat. This is the first stage of the judgement that befalls him (see page 132). Moreover, he knows that he has little time left: 3½ years. In his great fury, he rages like a savage during this period.

These last 3½ years before Christ's return are called *the great tribulation* for Israel: “*Then shall there be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall be*” [Matthew 24:21], “The time of Jacob`s trouble” [Jeremiah 30:7]. “*There shall be a time of distress, such as never was since there was a nation until that time*” [Daniel 12:1]. The

people of Israel will suffer greatly, while believers among the Jews will also be persecuted because they have converted and are waiting for the Messiah.

In addition, God's judgments will fall upon the earth with great intensity. People will realise that God is intervening, but they will refuse to repent and will blaspheme God [Revelation 16:9 and 11].

Chronology of the last week of years



The period of grace in which we live



The rapture of the saints



3½

The first 3½ years of the last week of the year:

the beginning of judgements on the world: (civil) wars, natural disasters, famines, epidemics and revolutions



Satan is cast out of heaven



3½

The last 3½ years of the last week of years, the great tribulation for Israel:

God's final judgments, mainly on the part of the world that is nominal Christianity and on Israel



The return of Christ to earth



The thousand-year reign of Christ:

justice and peace on earth

What are the consequences for *Europe* of Satan's expulsion from heaven?

Satan gives his power directly to a united Europe. This reconstituted Western Roman Empire rises up against God in every way. Its leader is worshipped as God and cruelly persecutes believers.

The Roman Empire had several forms of government throughout its existence - the *seven heads* [Revelation 13:1-10 and 17:7-14]. When John wrote Revelation 17:10, five of them had already passed, and the sixth was present. The empire was first ruled by kings, then by consuls, dictators, decemvirs [= ten men], military tribunes and – in John's time – emperors. It was under this sixth leader that the empire collapsed in 476 AD. It did not exist for some time. Today, it reappears in the form of the European Union and has a seventh form: democracy.

The reconstituted Western Roman Empire exists in the form of ten democratic kingdoms. The number of these *ten horns* is symbolic, taken from the ten toes of the statue in Daniel 2.

This seventh head is mortally wounded: democracy in the European Union collapses and rebellion against governments breaks out [13:3 and 6:12-14]. Satan then gives his power to the beast. This is how the eighth head, the last form of government, develops: the rich willingly give their power to the beast. It is the undisputed dictator. At this time, Europe is the superpower on earth, recognised as such by the whole world. However, it uses its power against God and believers. The Roman Empire now *rises from the sea* [13:1], after Satan has *risen from the abyss* [17:8]. It draws its power from Satan.

What are the consequences of Satan's expulsion from heaven for *Israel*?

The Antichrist, who holds power for seven years in Israel, is, along with the leader of Europe, a direct servant of the devil. When Satan is cast out of heaven, the Antichrist shows his true colours. He claims to be the Messiah and sits in the temple as if he were God, to be worshipped. Furthermore, he forces all men to worship the beast, the head of Europe.

In Israel, the Antichrist exercises power. He claims to be the Christ of God, but he is the devil's instrument. He is the other beast, the second [Revelation 13:11-18], reigning thanks to the leader of Europe and seeking to remain in his favour.

He erects a statue in the temple for the European dictator. This is the abomination of desolation that the Lord Jesus spoke of in Matthew 24:15. The Antichrist forces the people of the Western world to worship this image.

In addition, he introduces into Israel and the Western Roman Empire a mark that men bear on their foreheads or right hands. Without this mark, it is not possible to buy or sell, and therefore

to survive. Only those who kneel before the beast receive this mark.

Not only does the Antichrist force people to kneel before the beast, but he also sits in the temple and is worshipped as God. He is the man of sin and the son of perdition, the personification of evil [2 Thessalonians 2:3-4].

What are the consequences of Satan's expulsion from heaven for *Christianity by name*?

Because the beast, the leader of the united Europe, and the antichrist want to be worshipped as God, they get rid of the false church's domination and destroy it.

The “educated” people of Europe and Israel worship Satan and the leader of the united Europe, just as the Roman emperors were once worshipped as God [Revelation 13:4]. They also bow down to the Antichrist [2 Thessalonians 2:3-4].

The beast tolerates no rivals beside itself. That is why it rejects all other religious systems, including the church. During the first 3½ years, the beast still carries the woman [= Christianity by name] [Revelation 17:3 and 7], but after that, the beast hates her and burns her [17:16]. This means that, at first, the restored Western Roman Empire is still under the strong influence of the Christianity by name (i.e., the Roman Church), but after that, the church is banned and destroyed by the European Union [8:8-11 and 14:8]. This happens shortly after Satan has been cast out of heaven.

The Pope cannot therefore be the beast. Admittedly, both leaders are based in Rome – the Pope as head of Christianity and the beast as emperor of the Western Roman Empire – but they are two different and ultimately opposing powers.

The judgement on the Christianity by name is carried out by the beast and the kings of Europe, but it is led by God: the false bride must be removed. The way is thus opened for the marriage of the Lamb and the Assembly, the true bride [19:6-9]. This is the definitive end of the Christianity by name on earth. Christ vomits it out of his mouth [3:16].

What are the consequences of Satan's expulsion from heaven for *Jewish believers*?

For Jewish believers, the great tribulation begins, the most difficult period they have ever known on earth.

The leader of Europe immediately stops sacrifice and offering in the temple [Daniel 9:27]. He exercises power in Jerusalem, with the agreement of the Antichrist and his followers: the holy city is trampled underfoot by the nations for 42 months [Revelation 11:2].

When the image of the European dictator is erected in the temple, the believing Jews around Jerusalem are called to flee [Matthew 24:15-22]. Those who respond are represented by the woman in Revelation 12:1-6 and 13-17. The dragon, Satan, wants to kill them, but God takes them to a safe place where they will not be harmed and will survive the great tribulation. This is in the territory of Moab, present-day Jordan [Isaiah 16:3-4].

A few other Jewish believers remain as witnesses specifically in Jerusalem [Revelation 11:3-13]. God helps and protects them, enabling them to accomplish their difficult service for 1,260

days (= 3½ years). At the end, they are killed. Their bodies remain in the street for 3½ days. Then they are resurrected and ascend to heaven.

The Jewish preachers who went out to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom to the four corners of the earth encounter enormous difficulties: hunger and thirst, sickness and captivity. Christ recognises them as “his brethren” [Matthew 25:35-36 and 40].

The purpose of the great tribulation is to bring the believing remnant of Israel to true humiliation.

What are the consequences of Satan's expulsion from heaven for *believers from the nations*?

The persecution of all believers intensifies; many die as martyrs.

On page 35, we saw the martyrs of the first 3½ years in Revelation 6:9-11. In chapter 20:4, they are mentioned again in the middle of the verse with the words, “*I saw ... the souls of those beheaded on account of the testimony of Jesus, and on account of the word of God ...*”

Immediately afterwards, those who will be killed for their faith in the last 3½ years are named: “*... and those who had not done homage to the beast nor to his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and hand ...*”. This refers directly to chapter 13:14-18. For all men in the second half of these last seven years, there is only one question: will they bow down to the beast and his image and bear his mark, or will they be faithful to God and bow down only to Him?

The pressure to kneel before this leader of the last world empire is enormous. Those who refuse will be killed. Similarly, Nebuchadnezzar — the leader of the first world empire — demanded that all his subjects bow down before his image, the golden statue, on pain of death [Daniel 3]. The image of the beast is located in the temple in Jerusalem. Replicas may also be erected in many places. The faithful refuse to bow down before the image of the beast and are therefore persecuted to death.

After Satan is cast out of heaven, will great judgments fall upon the earth?

Yes, during the last 3½ years, more severe judgments will fall upon the earth, especially upon Israel and Europe.

In Revelation, three series of judgments are described: the seven *seals*, the seven *trumpets*, and the seven *bowls*.

The judgments that God will execute in the first 3½ years are universal and will be felt throughout the world. These are the *judgments of the seals* in Revelation 6.

During the last three and a half years, His judgments fall most severely on the guilty. The greater the responsibility, the heavier the punishment. These are *the judgments of the trumpets* in Revelation 8 to 11.

Europe, where the Gospel was known but which rebels completely against God under the leadership of the first beast, and Israel, God's chosen people who had received so many blessings but who become completely apostate under the leadership of the

Antichrist, the second beast: these are the regions where the hardest blows fall.

Next come *the judgments of the bowls* of Revelation 16, which take place during the last thirty days before Christ's return.

Can we know exactly when future events will occur?

Yes, prophecies specify these times with extreme precision.

In biblical prophecies, a year consists of 12 months of 30 days each, for a total of 360 days. Therefore, the second half of the last week of the year, the great tribulation, lasts:

- 3½ years [Daniel 7:25; 9:27; 12:7 and Revelation 12:14],
- 42 months [11:2 and 13:5], or
- 1260 days [11:3 and 12:6].

In addition to this period of *1260 days*, Scripture mentions a period of *1290 days* and a period of *1335 days* [Daniel 12:11-12]. In all three cases, the starting point is the same: Satan's expulsion from heaven, the beginning of the great tribulation.

The question is when these three periods end.

When will the 1260 days end?

The end of this period is marked by several elements.

These 1260 days begin to be counted from the moment Satan is cast out of heaven, in the middle of the 70th week of years. He gives his power to the beast, the leader of the restored Western Roman Empire, for a period of 42 months [Revelation 13:1-7]. Throughout this period, he also exercises his power, with the agreement of the Antichrist, over Israel and Jerusalem [11:1-2]. The holy city is thus trampled underfoot by this leader of the nations for 42 months, so that no service to the Lord God can take place.

The Jews then present in Jerusalem and Israel who have converted and serve God flee from the persecutions of the beast and the Antichrist. They are protected and kept safe by God for 1260 days or “*a time, and times, and half a time*” [12:6 & 13-16].

During this same period of 1260 days, God ensures that a small group of witnesses remain in the city of Jerusalem itself to prophesy [11:3-6]. They receive supernatural power that makes them untouchable.

Only at the end of their testimony, that is, after these 1260 days, will the beast receive from God the power to kill these faithful witnesses. Their bodies will remain in the streets of Jerusalem for 3½ days [11:7-10].

The return of Christ does not therefore take place immediately after these 1260 days. First, what is described in surprising detail and chronological order in Daniel 11:40-45 has not yet taken place: the conquest of the land of Israel by the Assyrian, the king of the North.

When will the 1290 days end?

At the return of Christ.

Daniel 12:11 speaks not of 1260, but of 1290 days: *“From the time that the continual sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand, two hundred, and ninety days”*.

After the 1290 days, it will be the day of Christ's return.

The believing remnant among the Jews continues to offer sacrifices to God in the temple in Jerusalem during the first years after the rapture of the saints. They enjoy this freedom until Satan is cast out of heaven. He acts through the beast and the Antichrist; the Antichrist himself sits in the temple and sets up an image of the beast there. As a result, the sacrificial service of the believing Jews is interrupted [9:27].

After the period of 1290 days, the offering service is restored: in the millennium, sacrifices are offered to the glory of God in the new temple.

We who belong to the Assembly do not know when the Lord Jesus will come for us; only the Father knows [Mark 13:32]. Those who convert after the rapture of the saints can know, according to prophecy, exactly when the Messiah will descend: 1290 days after the day Satan was cast out of heaven, when the Antichrist sat in the temple and set up an image to the beast, then their redemption will take place!

When will the 1335 days end?

When Christ has brought order after His second coming, everyone will be subject to Him, and the full blessing of the kingdom of peace will begin.

When Christ descends from heaven, everything will not be perfectly in order and settled overnight. For this, a period of 45 days is necessary, a month and a half: “*Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and thirty-five days!*” [Daniel 12:12].

After these 1,335 days, the full blessing of the millennial kingdom of peace begins under the reign of Christ.

Let us now see what happens in the period between day 1260 and day 1335, still counting from the day when Satan is cast out of heaven and the beast and the Antichrist are revealed.

What will happen first after the 1260 days?

God's witnesses who prophesy in Jerusalem are killed, then resurrected, and they ascend to heaven.

During the great tribulation, the beast exercises unlimited power throughout the Western world, including Jerusalem. God ensures that there are a certain number of faithful witnesses in the city [Revelation 11:3-6]. It is possible that there are not literally two witnesses, but rather a small group of Jewish believers. They prophesy openly for the glory of God and warn people. They act with the same power and spirit as Moses and Elias. God gives them supernatural power. They are untouchable: anyone who wants to harm them is killed by a word from their mouth. No one can stop their testimony.

Only when the 1260 days of their prophecy are completed will the beast put them to death [11:7-10]. Their corpses are not

buried, but remain in the street in Jerusalem for 3½ days. The whole world sees this. All the subjects of the beast and the Antichrist rejoice and congratulate each other, for these witnesses tormented their consciences.

On the 1264th day, God raises them up. They stand on their feet and ascend to heaven in a cloud. Their enemies watch them [11:11-12]. The euphoria of the victory of the beast and the anti-christ with their followers comes to an end. Their joy turns into unprecedented fear. The hour of reckoning has come.

What happens after day 1264?

Israel is attacked simultaneously from the south and the north.

The hatred of the Muslim countries surrounding Israel towards the Jews is so intense, especially since the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, that they seek to exterminate them: *“They say, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, and let the name of Israel be mentioned no more”* [Psalm 83:4].

When the victorious euphoria of the beast and the antichrist due to the resurrection and ascension of the two witnesses in Jerusalem suddenly turns to fear, the Muslim countries around Israel attack together, both from the south and from the north [Daniel 11:40-41].

The enemy from the north is called by God to execute His judgement on the unbelieving Jewish people under the reign of the Antichrist [Isaiah 10:5-6]. God paves the way for this attack by drying up the Euphrates River. This is the judgement of the sixth bowl [Revelation 16:12].

Has Israel taken no action against this threat?

Yes, the State of Israel has formed an alliance with the West.

After the rapture of the saints, the Antichrist takes power in Israel [2 Thessalonians 2:3-12]. It is to him that the Jews look for salvation, even though he comes in his own name [John 5:43]. They accept him as the Messiah and anoint him king over them [Isaiah 57:9a]. At the same time, they form an alliance with the beast, the leader of the restored Western Roman Empire in Europe [57:9b].

The State of Israel and Europe make a covenant for the entire 70th week of years [Daniel 9:27a and Isaiah 28:15]. Israel secures the protection of the West against the hostile Muslim nations that surround it. These nations, in turn, receive the support of a power from the far north, Russia, and its mainly Asian but also African allies [Daniel 8:24].

Already, these two power blocs are becoming increasingly apparent: the free, democratic and theoretically Christian West

versus the authoritarian states of the East and their allies in the Middle East.

In Isaiah 28:15, the Jews place their hopes in the Antichrist and the Beast: “*We have made a covenant with death [= the Antichrist], and with Sheol [= the Beast] have we made an agreement; when the overflowing scourge [= the Assyrian] shall pass through, it shall not come unto us*”.

Do the measures taken by Israel have lasting effects?

No, only for seven years.

This covenant bears fruit for seven years from the rapture of the saints. However, God has announced that the Jews' hope is in vain: “*Your covenant with death [= the Antichrist] shall be annulled, and your agreement with Sheol [= the Beast] shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge [= the Assyrian] shall pass through, ye shall be trodden down by it*” [Isaiah 28:18].

God is thus rigorously executing His judgment on the Jews of the State of Israel. Believing Jews have already fled the country [Matthew 24:15-16]. Those who still live there all bow down before the Antichrist and the image of the Beast. Moreover, they maintain their rejection of the Messiah two thousand years ago. All that remains for God to do is to exercise his judgement upon them.

The Assyrian is the rod of God's wrath [Isaiah 10:5-6]. He beats, tramples and kills the unbelieving Jews who follow the

Antichrist. He mercilessly executes God's judgement, although he does not realise it himself [verse 7].

This is the judgement of Revelation 14:17-20. The vineyard of the earth is Israel, the grapes are ripe for harvest: blood flows freely.

Why do Muslim countries only attack Israel afterwards?

As the power of the restored Western Roman Empire in Europe is weakened by judgments, enemies in the Middle East sense an opportunity. Above all, it is God's time.

Muslim countries are initially reluctant to attack Israel because the Jews enjoy the protection of the restored Western Roman Empire. It is a power of which it is rightly said, “*Who is like to the beast? and who can make war with it?*” [Revelation 13:4].

Why do they dare to declare war on Israel after these 1260 days? Because God's judgments in the time of the great tribulation are falling on the so-called Christian West in particular; moreover, their responsibility is the greatest. This ultimately weakens the West.

Above all, of course, it is because it is God's time. He is using these Middle Eastern nations to discipline Israel, as He has done so many times in the Old Testament.

Which countries are attacking Israel?

They are the countries to the south and north of Israel. Their attacks have the desired result: the unbelieving Jews are destroyed.

During the last thirty days before Christ's second coming, Daniel 11:40-45 is fulfilled. Israel, as has already happened in history, is attacked from two sides at once: by the king of the south and the king of the north.

The king of the south, as seen from Israel, is *Egypt*.

In Daniel, *the Assyrian* is called the king of the north: one of the four regions of Alexander the Great's Greco-Macedonian empire that disintegrated after his death [Daniel 11:4]. This region roughly covers the territory of the ancient Assyrian empire. Its centre of gravity is in Iran, Iraq and Turkey, with Syria and possibly Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Assyrian is therefore a coalition of these powers.

The two attacks from the south and north take place simultaneously, but this does not mean that these two powers are allies.

The attacks are a great success. “*I will assemble all the nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished ...*” [Zechariah 14:2]. Israel will be severely defeated in no time. Only the Antichrist himself will escape (see page 74), but this is only a reprieve.

How will things unfold after Israel's defeat?

After Egypt and Assyria have defeated Israel together, Assyria attacks Egypt, defeats it, takes possession of it, and plunders it.

The king of the North, the Assyrian, has the military advantage. Not only does he conquer the land of Israel and a number of surrounding nations at lightning speed — with the exception of Edom, Moab, and Ammon (which are Saudi Arabia and Jordan) — but he also occupies and plunders Egypt [Daniel 11:42b-43a].

He obtains help from Africa, the Libyans and the Moors or Ethiopians [verse 43b]. These are the countries east of Egypt (Libya, with perhaps Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco) and the states south of Egypt (Sudan, South Sudan and Ethiopia, with perhaps Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia and Kenya). The exact borders cannot be specified, of course, but it is noteworthy that these are precisely the Islamic countries of Africa.

Will the Assyrian victory last long?

No, no sooner has he conquered Egypt after Israel than danger arises on two sides.

The Assyrian armies fought successfully in Egypt, but news from the east and north frightens him - in this case, of course, as seen from Egypt. In great fury, he returns as quickly as possible to Israel. “*But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him; and he shall go forth with great fury to exterminate, and utterly to destroy many*” [Daniel 11:44].

The *tidings out of the east* consists of the news that the believing Jewish remnant — who had been hidden in a safe place for 1260 days and cared for by God (see page 49) — had retaken the holy city of Jerusalem [Micah 5:4-5]. Therefore, when the Assyrian returns to Jerusalem, he does not enter the city he had victoriously conquered, but pitches his tents outside the city, near the Mount of Olives [Daniel 11:45]. He tries again to take possession of the city, but this time without success [Isaiah 29:1-8].

The *tidings out of the north*, likely to further terrify the Assyrian, is that European armies are on their way to come to Israel's aid

[Revelation 19:11-21]. The armed forces of the beast, the restored Western Roman Empire, advance towards Israel. Their rallying point in the north of the country is Armageddon [16:13-16]. It is from there that they want to drive the Muslims out of the Holy Land; it is the last of the Crusades.

How does the Western armies' attempt to liberate Israel from the occupiers end?

They are destroyed by Christ at Armageddon.

At the head of the Western armies are the beast and the false prophet [Revelation 19:20]. The *beast* is the power of Europe and the *false prophet* is the Antichrist, the leader of the Jews (who are already destroyed at this point). The latter apparently manage to escape the Assyrian's grip. As soon as the latter attacks the land of Israel, the antichrist flees to his European ally and calls on him for help. With the beast, he returns to his country at the head of the European armies to liberate it from Islamic occupation.

When the armies of the West are gathered at Armageddon - that is, "Har Megiddo", the mountain or hill of Megiddo - the Lord Jesus descends from heaven, seated on the white horse and followed by all the believers who are already in heaven at that time [19:11-16].

As soon as the beast and the antichrist see him coming, they forget about the hostile Muslims and, in their madness, wage war against Christ sitting on the white horse.

With the sharp sword coming out of his mouth, that is, with his word alone, he kills the European armies [17:12-14]. Their bodies are devoured by birds [19:17-18]. They are resurrected after the kingdom of peace and condemned to the lake of fire for eternity.

However, their two leaders, the beast and the antichrist, are immediately thrown alive directly into hell [19:19-21]. They are the first creatures to be thrown there (see page 134).

This is the battle of Armageddon!

How will it end for the Jews who took Jerusalem back from the Assyrians?

The Assyrian besieges them in the holy city, but he himself is destroyed by Christ when He comes. Thus, the believing Jews of Jerusalem are delivered.

While the European armies gather at Armageddon in the north of the country, the Assyrian advances towards Jerusalem in the south [Daniel 11:45a]. He makes the Mount of Olives, east of the city, his military camp.

Zechariah 12:2-3 is fulfilled: “Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of bewilderment unto all the peoples round about, and also against Judah shall it be in the siege against Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in that day that I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone unto all peoples: all that burden themselves with it shall certainly be wounded, and all the nations of the earth shall be assembled together against it”.

The Assyrian gathers his forces to retake Jerusalem [Joel 3:1-2 and 9-17]. The believing remnant of God's people, Israel, who have retaken Jerusalem, barricade themselves in the city. The

siege is painful [Isaiah 29:1-3]. The believing Jews are in great distress. It is then that the King of kings appears to deliver them.

The Lord Jesus Christ descends precisely where the Assyrian has his military camp: the Mount of Olives. These enemies have no chance of escape and are destroyed there [Daniel 11:45b].

This is the moment of Christ's return!

Who are all those who see the coming of Christ?

All the people living on earth at that time.

During the rapture of the saints seven years earlier, the Lord Jesus does come *towards the earth*, but He *does not* come *to the earth*. In fact, we believers go to meet Him in the clouds. We meet Him “halfway” in the clouds, and He then takes us to His Father [1 Thessalonians 4:16-17]. Therefore, the world will know nothing about it; only all true believers will have suddenly disappeared.

At the Second Coming, Christ will descend to earth, visible to all, friends and enemies alike. He will set foot on the Mount of Olives: “*His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem toward the east*” [Zechariah 14:4].

Christ's second coming will not escape anyone's notice. “*Behold, he comes with the clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they which have pierced him*” [Revelation 1:7; compare Zechariah 12:10].

This may be possible in part because of today's technology and means of communication, but the most important thing is that every eye will see him!

Does Christ come alone?

No, he has a large retinue: all the saints and all the angels accompany him.

Not only does Christ descend from heaven, but He has a large following: “*Jehovah my God shall come, and all the holy ones with thee*” [Zechariah 14:5b]. All the saints, both from the Old Testament and from our time: that represents several million people. “*He shall have come to be glorified in his saints, and wondered at in all that have believed, for our testimony to you has been believed*” [2 Thessalonians 1:10]. His immense entourage contributes to His glory.

All the redeemed, from creation to the rapture of the saints, follow the great King.

Likewise, all the angels will follow the Son of Man, and none will be missing [Matthew 25:31]. There will be millions, even billions of them [Revelation 5:11].

What a day that will be for Him! Today, He is still regarded on earth as the Crucified One; then He will be completely

rehabilitated in the eyes of the whole world. But also to all those who love His appearing [2 Timothy 4:8].

Who else joins Christ's following?

Believers who have died as martyrs for their faith during the last week of years.

At the rapture of the saints, all believers since creation are resurrected, all those who belong to Christ. And those who are alive will of course meet the Lord Jesus.

During the seven years between the rapture and the second coming, countless people come to faith, both in Israel and in the nations. Among them, many are killed for their faith.

Those who die as martyrs during the first 3½ years are referred to in Revelation 20:4 as *“those beheaded on account of the testimony of Jesus, and on account of the word of God”*.

The martyrs of the last 3½ years are *“those who had not done homage to the beast nor to his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and hand”* [compare 6:9-11].

They are resurrected at Christ's return, since they live and reign with him during the millennial reign of peace, according to

Revelation 20:4. They are the last to be part of the first resurrection: the resurrection of all deceased believers.

They too belong to those who accompany Christ.

Where does Christ's return take place?

On the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, the navel of the earth.

The prophets speak at length in many places about the return of the Lord Jesus Christ: “*And Jehovah will go forth and fight with those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem toward the east*” [Zechariah 14:3-4a].

His appearance at Armageddon to destroy the Western armies takes place just before the Second Coming. This appearance must be distinguished from the Second Coming itself.

When he descends to become king, he descends near Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King [Matthew 5:35].

What are the consequences of Christ's return for the Mount of Olives?

The Mount of Olives splits open, and a great chasm appears.

His second coming is accompanied by extraordinary natural signs. *“... and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, - a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee by the valley of my mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: ye shall even flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah”* [Zechariah 14:4-5a].

All eyes will see Christ, but those closest to him will be the Assyrians. For he has set up his camp at the foot of the Mount of Olives. How frightened he is! He has only one thought in his mind: to flee!

While the beast and the Antichrist, in their audacity, want to wage war against Christ and, in their blindness, think they can

defeat him, the Islamic Assyrian understands that only flight can save him. To this end, the mighty Mount of Olives splits open.

Through the resulting chasm, they flee for their lives, just as a great earthquake had once caused men to flee. However, where the King of kings has descended with his heavenly armed forces, there is no escape for those who have lived in rebellion against him. They will all meet their end there [Daniel 11:45b and Joel 3:12-15].

What are the implications of Christ's return for Jewish believers in Jerusalem?

They are delivered by their Messiah.

As the besiegers of Jerusalem are destroyed, the besieged Jews are delivered. They have been hidden for 3½ years and God has taken care of them. When the Assyrian takes Jerusalem and then heads for Egypt, they retake the holy city and entrench themselves there. The return of the Assyrian armies and the encirclement of Jerusalem plunge them into great distress. If they hope for any help from the European armies, these are destroyed. So they can only expect help from above – and indeed, help comes from above. Their Messiah is coming!

What deliverance and what joy, but at the same time what terror! They too see him. And they see in his hands and feet the marks of the cross. At that moment, they realise that the Messiah in whom they have placed their hope is the same Jesus of Nazareth who had already come two thousand years ago, but whom they had rejected. *“... they shall look on me whom they pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for an only son, and*

shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem ...” [Zechariah 12:10-11].

Christ welcomes them in grace, as Joseph said to his brothers when he revealed himself to them and they recoiled in terror: *“Come near to me”* [Genesis 45:4].

Where does Christ go from the Mount of Olives?

He enters his city of Jerusalem and assumes power himself.

Once before, to the cheers of the Jews, the Lord Jesus had entered the city of Jerusalem on the back of a colt. “*Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest*” [Matthew 21:9]. But this was not yet the final fulfilment of Zechariah 9:9. It was then a matter of enthusiasm due to the people's hope of being freed from Roman occupation.

After His second coming, Zechariah's prophecy will be fulfilled: “*Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion; shout, daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King cometh to thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass*” [Zechariah 9:9].

Then there will be true faith in the hearts of the believing remnant of the Jews who have been purified by the great tribulation.

Psalm 24:7-8 is fulfilled: *“Lift up your heads, ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? Jehovah strong and mighty, Jehovah mighty in battle”*. The King of kings enters Jerusalem victorious to establish the kingdom of God and set up his throne there.

How long does the day of Christ's return to earth last?

More than 24 hours.

A great deal will happen on the day of the Second Coming. For this reason, 24 hours are not enough. That is why the day is extended, as it was in the past by Joshua's prayer: "*Sun, stand still upon Gibeon; And thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon!*" [Joshua 10:12].

"It shall be one day which is known to Jehovah, not day, and not night; and it shall come to pass, at eventide it shall be light" [Zechariah 14:7]. When evening falls and it is normally dark, it will still be light.

What are the implications of Christ's return for the Israelites throughout the world?

Christ brings all the Israelites, that is, the 12 tribes, to the Promised Land.

The ten tribes of the kingdom of Israel were taken into exile by the Assyrians [2 Kings 17] and are to this day invisible to the human eye; they cannot be found. In the current state of Israel, there are therefore mainly Jews, descendants of the two tribes of the kingdom of Judah. The latter was taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, but some later returned to Judea and Jerusalem.

AFTER the second coming, Christ will bring back all 12 tribes to the land he promised to Abraham's descendants: *“He shall lift up a banner to the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth”* [Isaiah 11:12]. *“... behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, when I will turn the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith Jehovah; and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it”* [Jeremiah 30:3; see also 16:15-16].

This promise, repeated by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 24:31, is being fulfilled.

Do all Israelites arrive in Israel?

No, only the true believers among them reach the promised land; the unbelieving Israelites are judged on their way to Israel.

Many of the 12 tribes of Israel still live in unbelief. That is why God sifts them along the way: *“And I will bring you out from the peoples, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out; and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there will I enter into judgment with you face to face ... And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me; I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, but they shall not enter into the land of Israel”* [Ezekiel 20:34-38].

Under Moses' leadership, God brought the people of Israel out of Egypt, but many died in the wilderness because of their unbelief and did not reach the promised land of Canaan. God is doing the same thing again.

The Lord Jesus sends his angels [Matthew 24:31] and the believing remnant of Israel [Isaiah 66:19-20] throughout the earth to bring the born-again Israelites to the Promised Land. They bring their brothers as an offering to the Messiah.

What happens to the Israelites who arrive in the land?

They are reconciled with one another; thus the schism between the two tribes of the kingdom of Judah and the ten tribes of the kingdom of Israel is finally lifted, and Israel becomes one people again.

Not only do all the believers from the 12 tribes arrive in Israel, but they are reconciled with one another. The schism between the two tribes and the ten tribes is lifted. *“Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, whither they are gone, and will gather them from every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all”* [Ezekiel 37:21-22].

“And the envy of Ephraim [= the ten tribes] shall depart, and the troublers of Judah [= the two tribes] shall be cut off; Ephraim will not envy Judah, and Judah will not trouble Ephraim” [Isaiah 11:13].

“And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint themselves one head”
[Hosea 1:11].

This reconciliation is not only an external, political thing, but — much more importantly — the result of an internal change.

Do the 12 tribes then serve the Lord God?

Yes, God makes a new covenant with them.

The ten tribes and the two tribes are not only reconciled *with each other*, but above all they have been reconciled *with God*.

This concerns only a small part of Jacob's descendants, because “*should the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, **the remnant shall be saved***” [Romans 9:27]. But God considers this "remnant" to be his entire people: “*So all Israel shall be saved*” [Romans 11:26].

It is with this people, with the believers of the twelve tribes, with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, that God makes *the new covenant* [Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Hebrews 8:8-12]:

- I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts
- I will be their God, and they shall be my people
- They will all know me
- I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their iniquity no more

We who, by grace, belong to the Assembly (Church) of God, already enjoy the blessings of this new covenant. However, this covenant is not established now with the Assembly, but later with the 12 tribes of Israel during the kingdom of peace.

They enjoy the blessing of the reign of their Messiah, the King of kings.

What task do believing Jews perform first and foremost?

God uses them to exercise judgement on the nations surrounding Israel.

This remnant of Israel is used by Christ to exercise judgement on the surrounding nations, which owe a great debt to God for having touched the apple of his eye. “*They shall devour all the peoples round about*” [Zechariah 12:6].

These are mainly:

- Edom (Saudi Arabia)
- The Philistines who lived in the region of today's Palestinians
- Moab and Ammon (Jordan)
- The cities of Tyre and Sidon (Lebanon)
- Egypt, after the Assyrians had already destroyed the Egyptian army
- Syria with its capital Damascus; and
- Greece.

Many places in the prophecies speak of this [e.g. Isaiah 11:14; Jeremiah 49:23-27; Joel 3:19; Micah 5:7; Zechariah 9:13; 10:4-5 and 12:6]. God gives his chosen people the satisfaction of taking revenge on his enemies himself.

Is the judgement on the nations surrounding Israel final?

Partly yes, partly no.

For the peoples living in the territory promised by God to Israel, no restoration is possible. They are definitively exterminated. This is the case, for example, with Edom and the Philistines.

For other peoples, there is restoration after judgement. Because an inner change takes place in some of them, they share in the blessings of the reign of peace.

While Israel is attacked in the last weeks before the second coming of Christ by the king of the north and the king of the south, and the king of the north subsequently prevails over the king of the south, these three nations are united during the reign of peace. There is a close connection between Egypt and Assyria, which passes through Israel. Together, the former sworn enemies serve the Lord God [Isaiah 19:19-25].

The judgement on Greece is mentioned separately in Zechariah 9:13. This indicates that at that time this nation was not part of the restored Western Roman Empire.

Although the first three kingdoms lost their supremacy on the world stage, they continue to be kingdoms until the return of Christ [Daniel 7:12], in order to be judged by him [2:44-45]. These include the Babylonian Empire (Iraq), the Medo-Persian Empire (Iran) and the Greco-Macedonian Empire (Greece). While the power of the restored Western Roman Empire (Western Europe) is destroyed just before the second coming [Revelation 19:19-21], judgement on Greece is exercised by the believing remnant of Israel immediately after the second coming of Christ.

Who is the last nation to be judged?

Russia, with its many allies.

The last enemy power to be judged at the beginning of the kingdom of peace will be Russia, the kingdom of the far north, as seen from Israel [Ezekiel 38 and 39].

This Gog comes from “*the north*” [38:6, 15 and 39:2]. He is “*the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal*” [38:2]. Ros, Meshec, and Tubal refer to Russia, Moscow, and Tobolsk.

These Gog and Magog [38:2] should not be confused with the Gog and Magog of Revelation 20:7-10. Here, it refers to Russia and its many allies at the beginning of the kingdom of peace. In Revelation 20, it refers to all of humanity at the end of that kingdom.

When will the judgement on Russia and its allies take place?

Just before the end of the 1335 days.

The European armies have been destroyed, as have those of the Muslim nations surrounding Israel. The chosen people of Israel have exercised judgement on the surrounding nations. They live on their land, under the rule of Christ, and fear no enemy. Then Russia, with its many allies, especially from Asia and Africa, thinks it can easily conquer the country, a jewel among all countries, and make rich spoils there: “I will go up to the land of unwallled villages; I will come to them that are in quiet, that dwell in safety, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, to seize a spoil, and to take a prey” [Ezekiel 38:11-12].

Russia supported the Assyrian, but remained in the background itself. It sees all its adversaries and rivals eliminated by Christ's judgments. It and its many allies seize the opportunity — and perish on the mountains of Israel [38:21-22]. They begin to fight each other, and through epidemics and natural disasters, Christ

executes his judgement on them so that they are totally destroyed.

The Israelites will bury their corpses for seven months, after the birds and animals of the field have had their "feast" [39:4 and 12]. The Israelites will use all the weapons they carried to make fire for seven years [39:9-10].

Thus, judgement was exercised on all enemies around the second coming, 45 days have passed since Christ's return, and the happiness of his reign in righteousness and peace is established: "*Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and thirty-five days!*" [Daniel 12:12].

What will be the fate of people living on earth around the world at the return of Christ?

They all appear before his throne.

During the judgments of the seals, trumpets, and bowls over the course of seven years, countless people perish. In all the judgments that Christ executes — alone or with his own — at the time of his second coming, many of his enemies are killed. They remain in the grave for another thousand years, until the great resurrection of all unbelievers at the end of the reign of peace. They will then appear before the great white throne [Revelation 20:11-15].

However, after Christ's second coming, all those who are *alive on earth* at that time will appear before the throne of his glory [Matthew 25:31-46]. This throne of the glory of the Son of Man is located in Jerusalem, for it is the holy city. The angels take all men and bring them before the throne [Matthew 13:41-43].

This appearance before the throne of the Son of Man is also presented in Revelation 14:14-16.

This appearance after the second coming takes place in several stages. The last to appear before Him will be those from the region of Russia and its allies when their armies on the mountains of Israel are destroyed.

How is judgement exercised before the throne of Christ?

He separates men into two groups: believers enter the kingdom of peace and unbelievers are cast into hell.

The King of kings divides men into “sheep” and “goats” [Matthew 25:31-46]. The decisive question is what their attitude was towards “his brethren”. These are the converted Jews who will preach the Gospel of the Kingdom throughout the earth between the rapture of the saints and the second coming. The Lord Jesus, himself from the tribe of Judah, associates himself with them.

Those who received them and accepted their message are sheep and enter the millennial reign of peace: “*Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the world’s foundation*” [verse 34]. But those who reject their preaching are immediately cast into hell: “*Go from me, cursed, into eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*” [verse 41]. At that moment, there are only the beast and the antichrist (see page 134).

When all the living have appeared before the throne of Christ and the unbelievers among them have been thrown into the fiery furnace [13:41-42 and 49-50], the population of the world consists only of believers, both from Israel and from the nations. They are the subjects of the great King [verse 43].

Humanity is not very numerous at this point, because many have been killed in the judgments and all unbelievers have been eliminated, but during the reign of peace, many children are born and the population grows enormously.

What will be Satan's fate during the reign of peace?

Satan has been bound and thus rendered harmless throughout this thousand-year period.

Since Genesis 3, the devil has been tempting men to sin. Under Christ's reign, the ruler of this world has been rendered harmless.

When the 1,335 days of Daniel 12:12 are over, he is bound with chains for a thousand years and thrown into the abyss. This abyss is also closed and sealed above him [Revelation 20:1-3].

This abyss is God's prison for demonic powers. The demons in Luke 8:31 did not want to be sent there. On the contrary, in Revelation 9:1-11, God temporarily releases the demons from this abyss so that they can influence and torment men.

During the millennial reign of peace, Satan and all his demons are locked up in the abyss and thus rendered harmless; they can no longer incite men to disobey God.

He is no longer the prince of this world; instead, the King of kings reigns. Only then does justice reign on earth for the first time.

This is the second stage of the execution of the judgement on Satan, not yet the final judgement. This will only take place after the millennial reign of peace (see page 132).

What will be the fate of creation during the kingdom of peace?

Creation is restored.

Because of Adam's sin, creation was struck by a curse [Genesis 3:17-19]. Subjected to *barrenness* and the bondage of *corruption* [Romans 8:19-22], the difference from its condition before the fall is enormous. Since then, creation has been groaning, and man's mismanagement has only intensified this. Even the world understands that creation needs “recreation” and “revitalisation”. This is what takes place during the reign.

The thousand years of the reign of peace are the “*times of refreshing*” and the “*times of the restoring of all things*” [Acts 3:19-21]. The Lord Jesus died for this too. “*In him all the fulness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell, and by him to reconcile all things to itself, having made peace by the blood of his cross - by him, whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens*” [Colossians 1:19-20]. We are already reconciled to God [verse 21], so creation will be too.

Just as the Creator spoke in Genesis 1 and created everything visible in six days, the Lord Jesus Christ will soon, by a word of power, deliver creation from the curse of sin.

The change wrought by Christ is so great that He says in Isaiah 65:17, “*I create new heavens and a new earth*”. This takes place at the beginning of the kingdom of peace, when the 1335 days are completed.

During the reign of peace, will the new heavens and the new earth already exist?

No, the new heavens and the new earth will be created after the reign of peace.

Revelation 21:1 speaks of something different from Isaiah 65:17. *“I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away ...”*

This verse is fulfilled after the reign of peace, when the eternal state begins. It is then that the first creation disappears completely. *“The day of the Lord ... in which the heavens will pass away with a rushing noise, and the elements, burning with heat, shall be dissolved, and the earth and the works in it shall be burnt up”* [2 Peter 3:10]. The heavens will be set ablaze and disappear, and the elements will melt with fire [verse 12]. Then God will make a completely new creation where there has never been sin, but where righteousness dwells [verse 13].

Thus, at the beginning of the reign of peace, according to Isaiah 65, the old creation is “recreated”, renewed or restored,

but after the reign of peace, according to Revelation 21, an entirely new creation takes place.

What does it mean that the curse on creation is lifted during the reign of peace?

It is a period of full earthly blessings.

For man, the obligation to work and provide for himself remains, but it is no longer tiring and painful as it is today. For women, everything related to childbearing is no longer painful [Genesis 3:16-19].

The enmity between men, between men and animals, and between animals is removed [Isaiah 11:6-9 and 65:25]. Carnivorous animals are changed and eat plants as they did before Genesis 3.

A handful of grain will yield such an abundant harvest that its ears will wave like the cedars of Lebanon [Psalm 72:16]. The vines on the mountains will produce much wine, and the cows on the hills will give great quantities of milk [Joel 3:18].

Because of sin, disease has made its appearance. Under Christ's reign, no one suffers from it, for the leaves of the trees are for healing [Ezekiel 47:12].

There is no infant mortality, and people do not die of old age [Isaiah 65:20]. Currently, the human lifespan is seventy years, and for the strongest, eighty years [Psalm 90:10]. Medical treatments can sometimes add a few years to this, but those who enter the reign of peace all live for more than a thousand years. They do not suffer from wear and tear on their hips or knees.

Will the curse that currently weighs on creation be completely lifted during the reign of peace?

In principle, yes, but there are exceptions.

There are two exceptions during the reign of peace:

- 1) The serpent is still condemned to crawl on its belly and eat dust [Genesis 3:14 and Isaiah 65:25]; and
- 2) the marshes and ponds around the Dead Sea remain salty and therefore unhealthy, while the Dead Sea itself is teeming with fish [Ezekiel 47:8-11].

Judgements on the serpent in Genesis 3 and on Sodom and Gomorrah in chapter 19 remain as a warning.

Are there any other changes in creation?

Yes, a new river and a new plain appear.

A new river

During the kingdom of peace, a new river flows through the land of Israel [Ezekiel 47:1-12; Joel 3:18 and Zechariah 14:8]. It originates in Jerusalem, more precisely in the temple of Jerusalem. Starting from the sanctuary, the river becomes deeper and deeper and divides into two rivers: one flows into the Mediterranean Sea and the other into the Dead Sea, and the waters will be made healthy.

With this river full of water in both summer and winter, the land of Israel is assured of sufficient and healthy water. Man no longer needs to do irrigation work. The Promised Land flourishes like a paradise. There is an abundance of fish, vegetables and fruit.

All kinds of trees grow along the riverbank, their fruit providing food and their leaves used for healing [Ezekiel 47:12]. Pain and sickness, hunger and thirst are eradicated.

A new plain

The landscape of Judah is radically changed by the King of kings. The hilly region becomes a plain. In this great plain, only the city of Jerusalem is elevated [Zechariah 14:10]. The city that the Lord God has chosen to dwell in is the radiant centre of the earth. It is there that God is worshipped, it is there that all nations go up with their offerings [verse 16].

Where is service rendered to God?

In the place He has chosen for this purpose: in Jerusalem, in the new temple.

Service is rendered to God in a new temple that far surpasses the glory of all previous ones.

- 1) The first temple was built by Solomon [1 Kings 6], but was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar [2 Chronicles 36:19].
- 2) Under Zerubbabel, the temple was rebuilt by the Jews after their 70-year exile [Ezra 1-6]. A hostile king from the north destroyed it around 170 BC [Daniel 11:31].
- 3) At the time of the Lord Jesus on earth, there was a temple in Jerusalem built by Herod [John 2:20]. The Romans burned it down in 70 AD.
- 4) After the rapture of the saints, there will be a temple in Jerusalem where believing Jews will first offer sacrifices and offerings [Daniel 9:27] and where, later, the Antichrist will sit and set up the image of the beast. This temple is therefore desecrated and will be destroyed.
- 5) Ezekiel 40 to 48 speaks of the millennial reign of peace. The imposing temple that stands in Jerusalem at that time

is described in detail, in which God is praised and sacrifices are offered to Him.

It is not only the believers of Israel who come with offerings to celebrate Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Tabernacles [Ezekiel 45:21-25]. God desires that people from all nations come up to the new temple for the Feast of Tabernacles [Zechariah 14:16-19]. Failure to do so will be punished by withholding rain and consequently famine.

How does the government function in the kingdom of peace?

Christ reigns in righteousness, and the result is peace.

God had placed the government of the earth in the hands of man. By listening to the ancient serpent, man submitted himself to Satan. Since then, Satan has been the prince of this world for six thousand years. In the seventh millennium, not only everything on earth but also everything in heaven is subject to one head, the glorified man Jesus Christ. We share this glorious position with him [Ephesians 1:9-11].

“Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment” [Isaiah 32:1]. Only then will there be a perfectly just government on earth for the first time.

After the administration of the earth has been entrusted to men for six thousand years, the millennial reign of the Son of Man brings a change. The six-day “work week” is followed by God's Sabbath rest for His people [Hebrews 4:9].

Because Satan is bound and can no longer tempt men, there is less iniquity. However, man is still depraved by nature.

Therefore, sin still exists, but it is not tolerated. Every morning, the great King of kings renders justice and executes judgment on all who sin openly [Psalm 101:8; Isaiah 65:20b and Zephaniah 3:5].

Christ is the true Melchizedek: first, according to his name, he *is the King of righteousness*, and second, according to his title, he is *the King of peace* [Hebrews 7:1-3]. Peace is always the result of righteousness.

Does Christ reign alone?

No, the saints reign with him.

All those who take part in the first resurrection reign with Christ for a thousand years [Revelation 20:4-6]. These are:

- all believers from creation until the rapture of the saints
- all believers who die during the seven years between the rapture and the second coming and who are resurrected after the second coming.

Passing judgement and executing it is entirely given to the Son of Man [John 5:22], but judgement in the sense of ruling and governing is shared by Christ with his own: “*Do ye not then know that the saints shall judge the world? ... Do ye not know that we shall judge angels?*” [1 Corinthians 6:2-3].

Believers who belong to the Assembly, who constitute his bride, have a special part in this [Revelation 21:9-22:5]. They alone will reign with Christ “*to the ages of ages*” [22:5].

Does Christ rule with His own from the holy city of Jerusalem?

In principle, yes, but the practical implementation of Christ's government is placed in the hands of a delegate.

A prince reigns in Jerusalem, representing the King of kings [Ezekiel 44:3]. This man is a true descendant of David, a descendant of the royal line, that is, of the tribe of Judah.

This prince is not the Lord Jesus himself, for he will offer a sin offering not only for the people, but also for himself [45:22]. Furthermore, he has sons and is therefore a married man [46:16-18].

There is not even room to live in Jerusalem for Christ and the millions of believers who share in the first resurrection and reign with him.

Everything is subject to Christ, we are united with him and reign with him, but fortunately we do not have to concern ourselves with the practical exercise of government. Heavenly things occupy us, Christ himself fills our hearts.

Where are all believers during the kingdom of peace?

Some are in heaven, others on earth.

All believers who participate in the first resurrection rule the earth from heaven with Christ [Revelation 20:4-6]. This includes all believers who lived on earth until the rapture, as well as all believers who died (for their faith) during the seven years between the rapture and the second coming. The latter will be resurrected and glorified at Christ's return. They have a *heavenly* place.

However, all believers — from Israel and the nations — who are living on earth at Christ's return enter into the reign of peace. They have an *earthly* position. That is, they live out the thousand years on earth as subjects under the blessed government of the great King of kings. They have offspring, and the earth is populated once again.

“The earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah ... the nations shall seek it” [Isaiah 11:9-10].

How does the reign of peace end?

This period in human history is also marked by a downward trend.

Those who have lived in the kingdom of peace since the beginning have all gone through difficult years of trials and tribulations. They have chosen God's side with conviction. They remain faithful to the King of kings.

The many people who will be born during the thousand years will have to make their own choice, as in all other ages: for or against God and His Anointed One.

Satan is bound and can no longer seduce people, but the sinful nature of every human being has not yet been eliminated. During the reign of peace, we see that human nature is still inclined towards evil, even without Satan's influence.

Many submit to Christ only in a feigned manner, not sincerely. It is only because they know that they will be killed if they sin openly.

How does God reveal this situation among men?

For the last time, He uses Satan for this purpose: Satan is released for a short time to induce men to rebel against God.

At the end of the kingdom of peace, Satan is released for a short time. Immediately, he resumes his former activity and tries to incite men to oppose Christ [Revelation 20:3 and 7-10].

All men, whether from Israel or the nations, are faced with a choice. Once again, the multitude, Gog and Magog, opposes God and Christ: *“They went up on the breadth of the earth, and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city”*[Revelation 20:9].

This Gog and Magog should not be confused with the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel 38 and 39, which refers to Russia and its many allies at the beginning of the kingdom of peace. In Revelation 20, it refers to all of humanity at the end of that kingdom.

While across the breadth of the earth the unbelievers march towards Jerusalem to fight the King of kings, inside the beloved

city are the true believers of Israel, while around Jerusalem are gathered all the sincere believers from the nations.

Fire comes down from heaven and consumes the rebels. For a short time, they are killed.

What happens to Satan then?

He is thrown into hell.

The devil is thrown into hell, and all the demons with him [Revelation 20:10]. So this is where the beast and the antichrist are already, along with those who are referred to as "goats" as opposed to "sheep" (see page 134).

This is the third and final stage in the execution of the judgement on Satan.

Since Genesis 3, the devil has set men against God and seduced them into sin. On the cross, Jesus Christ fundamentally defeated him and nullified his power [Colossians 2:15 and Hebrews 2:14]. The practical exercise of his judgement and that of his demons takes place in three phases:

- 1) In the middle of the seven years between the rapture of the saints and the return of Christ, he is cast out of heaven onto the earth (see page 40).
- 2) After the Second Coming, he is bound and thrown into the abyss (see page 111).

- 3) After the kingdom of peace, he is thrown into hell for good (see page 134).

Then what happens to unbelievers?

The final judgement takes place before the great white throne.

The first resurrection — that of all deceased believers — is completed at Christ's return. It takes place in four phases:

- (a) the resurrection of Christ,
- (b) the resurrection of all believers who are raptured,
- (c) the resurrection of the two witnesses (see page 61), and
- (d) the resurrection of the martyrs during the seven years following Christ's return.

After that, no more believers die. This is *the resurrection to life* [John 5:29]. *The resurrection for judgement* takes place a thousand years later.

All unbelievers are resurrected only after the reign of peace and appear before the judgment seat. These are all unbelievers since creation: “*the dead, great and small*”. The Son of Man sits on the throne. They are judged according to their works and thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone [Revelation 20:11-15].

This is the fourth time that the gates of hell are opened to cast creatures into it:

- the beast and the Antichrist (see page 74)
- the goats (see page 109)
- Satan and his demons (see page 132)
- the dead, all unbelievers.

From then on, all the fallen angels, Satan and his demons, as well as all men who did not want to repent, are locked up in hell for eternity. There will never be another rebellion against God. Because Christ judges both fallen angels and rebellious men according to their works and therefore being strictly just, the severity of the punishment is different.

What happens to believers who lived on earth during the reign of peace?

They do not appear before the great white throne, but are manifested before the judgment seat of Christ.

Before the great white throne, only unbelievers appear, to be condemned. No believers appear there.

Believers from the reign of peace are manifested before the judgment seat of Christ: *“For we must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of the Christ, that each may receive the things done in the body, according to those he has done, whether it be good or evil”* [2 Corinthians 5:10]. Their bodies will also be changed and made fit for eternity.

This is true for all men: each one, after finishing his life on earth and receiving his final and eternal destiny, will appear before the Lord Jesus. For the redeemed, this happens at three different times:

- 1) The largest group appears before the judgment seat of Christ after the rapture of the saints. These are all those who have been redeemed since creation until the rapture.

- 2) Believers who die during the seven years between the rapture and the second coming will be resurrected after the second coming and will then stand before Christ.
- 3) Believers living on earth during Christ's millennial reign will never die. They will be brought before His judgment seat after the reign of peace.

The two events mentioned in points 2) and 3) are not described literally anywhere in the Bible, but are derived from 2 Corinthians 5:10.

What happens to the old creation?

It disappears and God makes a new creation.

When the devil is locked up in hell with the evil spirits and all unbelievers, and the believers are changed and brought before the judgment seat, sin will have been dealt with once and for all. The created heavens and earth then disappear, for they have been defiled by sin (see page 115). *“I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away”* [Revelation 21:1].

When all enemies are eliminated and everything is finally settled, the Son of Man hands over power and the kingdom to God, *“that God may be all in all”* [1 Corinthians 15:28].

Not only is Satan locked up for eternity in the lake of fire, but sinful nature is also eliminated. There is no more sin. During the reign of peace, righteousness reigns on earth; in eternity, it *dwells* there [2 Peter 3:13].

How will things be in the eternal state?

Everything is then immutably good, perfect, and glorious!

All believers who belong to the Assembly of God are sons of God. They can dwell with the Father and the Lord Jesus in the many mansions of the Father's house [John 14:2-3]. There they contemplate the glory of the Lord Jesus [17:24] and sing a new song [Revelation 5:9-10].

The other redeemed are on the new earth. These are all the believers from other periods, as well as those who lived without being responsible for their actions: the weak in mind, little children, and babies who died or were deprived of life in their mother's womb. The difference between Israel and the nations no longer exists.

The Church, the bride of Christ, as *“the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of the heaven from God”* onto the new earth and will be the dwelling place of God with redeemed men [Revelation 21:2-3].

The angels of God populate the new heaven.

There is no mourning, no crying, no pain, and no sickness [21:4]. We are perfectly happy. God is honoured and the Lamb is worshipped.

This far exceeds our understanding and will infinitely surpass even the most unimaginable expectations. We will be with Christ, which is far better [Philippians 1:23]!