

“The 1000 Year Reign of Christ”

Revelation 20:1-10

Introduction... The Time is near the end of the 7th year of the Tribulation

1. The Church has been Raptured almost 7 years ago.
2. In Heaven-Believers have stood before the Judgment Seat of Christ
3. The Marriage Supper of the Lamb has taken place in heaven.
 - There is Joy-unfettered JOY of the Church and Old Testament Company
4. Anti-Christ has made his entrance—at first as a Charismatic figure with answers (seemingly) to the worlds problems
5. Anti-Christ makes a peace pact with the Jews and Arabs-Palestinians
6. The 144,000 Jewish young men are sealed with the seal of God on their foreheads—are allowed freedom to preach the gospel world wide.
 - Rev. 7:4 “4And I heard how many were marked with the seal of God—144,000 were sealed from all the tribes of Israel:” (NLT)
 - Rev. 7:9 we see the results of the ministry of the 144,000
 - 9After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb,*
 - And then the angel tells John who these are he says, they
 - Rev 7:14 “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”
7. Anti-Christ allows temple to be re-built
 - Jews & the World proclaim him Christ—
8. Then the Abomination of Desolation occurs—
 - Daniel 9:27 *Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate.”*
9. The Mark of the Beast is implemented by Anti-Christ
10. The 2 Witnesses are loosed in Rev. 11:3 (NKJ)
 - ³ And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.”*
 - These 2 men then minister & preach from mid-trib on to 3 days before Jesus and the Church appear to fight the Battle of Armageddon
 - In Rev 11:5-12....2 witnesses will...
 - (1) Destroy anyone who trys to harm them by fire from their mouths
 - (2) They'll have power to shut off the rain & strike the earth with plagues
 - (3) They will be killed by Anti-Christ right before the Battle of Armegeddon
 - (4) Their dead bodies will lie in the street for 3 ½ days while all the world rejoices & makes merry.
 - (5) After 3 ½ days, God raises them up....fear falls on all the world
 - (6) God calls them back up to Heaven...in a loud voice

11. ¼ of the World's Pop. has been slaughtered and then ½ of the world's Pop. will be killed.

12. The Glorious Appearing of Jesus Christ will take place.

- Heaven will open and Christ will appear on a white horse, (Rev 19:11)
- Christ will be followed by the armies of Heaven (Rev 19:14),
- Christ will stand on the Mount of Olives

Zech. 14:3-5 *3 Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.*

4 And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives

- The beast and his armies will confront Christ (Rev 19:19)
- Christ will cast the beast and the false prophet into the lake of fire (Rev 19:20)
- Christ's rejecters will be killed (Rev 19:21)

Zech. 14:12-13 ¹² *And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, Their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, And their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths.*

¹³ *It shall come to pass in that day That a great panic from the LORD will be among them.*

Having said all this lets begin our study. Rev. 20:1-10

After the devastation of Armageddon (19:11-21), several matters must be resolved in our prophetic understanding. What is going to happen to planet earth now that the political, religious, and economic systems have been destroyed? What will happen to Satan? What will happen to the righteous dead and those that survived the tribulation period? What will happen to unbelievers? These questions become key issues in Revelation 20. In these 15 verses, we will see four future events come to pass. First, ...

A. Satan's power is limited (20:1-3).

1. Verse 1

- a. Before the millennium begins Satan must be restrained.
- b. An angel comes down from heaven with the key to the bottomless pit and a long or huge chain in his hand.
- c. The word "then" moves the chronological account forward.
- d. In 19:20, God judged the Beast and the False Prophet.
- e. Now He deals with Satan himself.
- f. He does so by assigning an unnamed angel to "man handle"
(or "angel handle") Satan.
- g. "bottomless pit"
 - This is not the same as hell; it is the abyss that we have looked at earlier in chapter 9, 11, & 17

2. Verse 2

- a. This is history's most sensational arrest, the cosmic criminal is put in chains!
 - (1) This serves to remind us that Satan is not Jesus' equivalent.
 - (2) Rather, he is the counterpart of the archangel Michael.

- (3) The principle is this:
- (a) God has full sovereignty over Satan.
 - (b) Therefore, we have nothing or no one to fear.
 - (c) This will not only be true when the events of Revelation 20 unfold, it is also true today.

b. “Bound for a thousand years”

- (1) This is the first of six times this thousand years is mentioned.
- (2) As we study the book of Revelation, we must approach the book from a Literal interpretation whenever possible.
 - As someone wisely suggested about interpreting the Bible, “When the plain sense makes good sense, seek no other sense.”
 - there is nothing that would bring me to the conclusion that this thousand years is symbolic but only a literal 1000 year.
 - John MacArthur states; “Nowhere in Scripture when year is used with a number is its meaning not literal.

3. Verse 3

- a. These are future events.
- b. These events did not take place at the cross.
- c. Scripture describes this present time in which we live as an evil age and Satan is called “the god of this world” (2 Cor 4:4).
 - (1) Today Satan is free and walks about as a roaring lion seeking someone to devour (1 Pet 5:8),
 - (2) But.... because of Christ’s victory on the cross, Satan and his forces are even now a defeated lot.
- d. The reason for this heavy-handed response to Satan is given **“so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed.”**
 - (a) It is crucial to note that Satan’s great ploy is deception.
 - (b) He deceived Eve in the beginning and will go down in flames still working His deception game (cf. 20:7-10).

We are all prone to deception. How does Satan deceive you? Does he whisper in your ear that your sin is okay with God? Does he tell you that it’s not really important for you to read the Word, just as long as the Spirit leads you? How does Satan deceive your family? Does he tell you that divorce is the way out of your marriage woes? Do you hear him say that one day you’ll have plenty of time to invest in your children? How does Satan deceive our church? Do you hear him whisper that everything is just fine the way it is? We don’t need to change. We don’t really need to reach the next generation. That responsibility should be left to other churches.

- e. In the last phrase **“After these things (i.e., the one thousand years) he must be released for a short time.”**

B. The Great Resurrection....Rev. 20:4-6

1. Verse 4... John now sees another vision

a. John informs us that the martyred tribulation saints will be resurrected and will reign with Christ.

(1) These saints are the only group expressly mentioned in this context.

(2) Christ especially cherishes those who become martyrs for His sake.

(3) God loves all believers but there is special blessing and honor that comes to those that lay down their lives for Christ.

b. So are the tribulation martyrs the only ones that reign? I think not.

It's Important to understand....

(1) Just as there are two phases to Christ's second coming

(a) the Rapture of the Church

(b) the Glorious Appearing

(2) There are three phases to the Resurrection of Believers

(a) Phase 1....Church Age Saints

- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

- the Rapture of the Church

(b) Phase 2....Old Testament Saints

- Old Testament places the resurrection of Israel after the Tribulation

- In Daniel 12:1-2, immediately after the description of the Tribulation in the preceding chapter, deliverance is promised Israel at the close of the Tribulation

- also a comparison of Rev.19:7-9 & Psalm 50:1-6 shows Israel being resurrected at end of Tribulation.

- Israel is present at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, so they will be resurrected @ the Glorious Appearing

(c) Phase 3....Tribulation Saints....

- Rev.6:9-11 presents a picture of the Tribulation saints who have been martyred for the testimony of the Lamb waiting for the resurrection and they were told to wait a little longer.

- When Christ comes in His glory to set up His millennial kingdom, the Tribulation saints will be resurrected.

2. Verse 5

a. **“The rest of the dead”** refers to the wicked who are physically dead that God will raise at the end of the millennium (20:12).

b. This second resurrection will be to judgment (see John 5:28-29).

c. John then mentions the **“first resurrection”** (20:5b).

(1) This refers to the first of the two resurrections John spoke of in the context (20:4-6, 12).

(2) This includes the resurrection of the tribulation martyrs at the second coming of Christ (20:4) and other believers resurrected at the same time (i.e., Old Testament saints; Dan 12:2; John 5:28; cf. 1 Cor 15:23).

3. Verse 6.....

- a. There is great blessing and joy in our salvation.
- b. The “second death” has no power over us.
 - (1) The “second death” is separation from God in the lake of fire (cf. 19:20; 21:8).
 - (2) Instead of experiencing this fate, we will reign as priests for a thousand years.

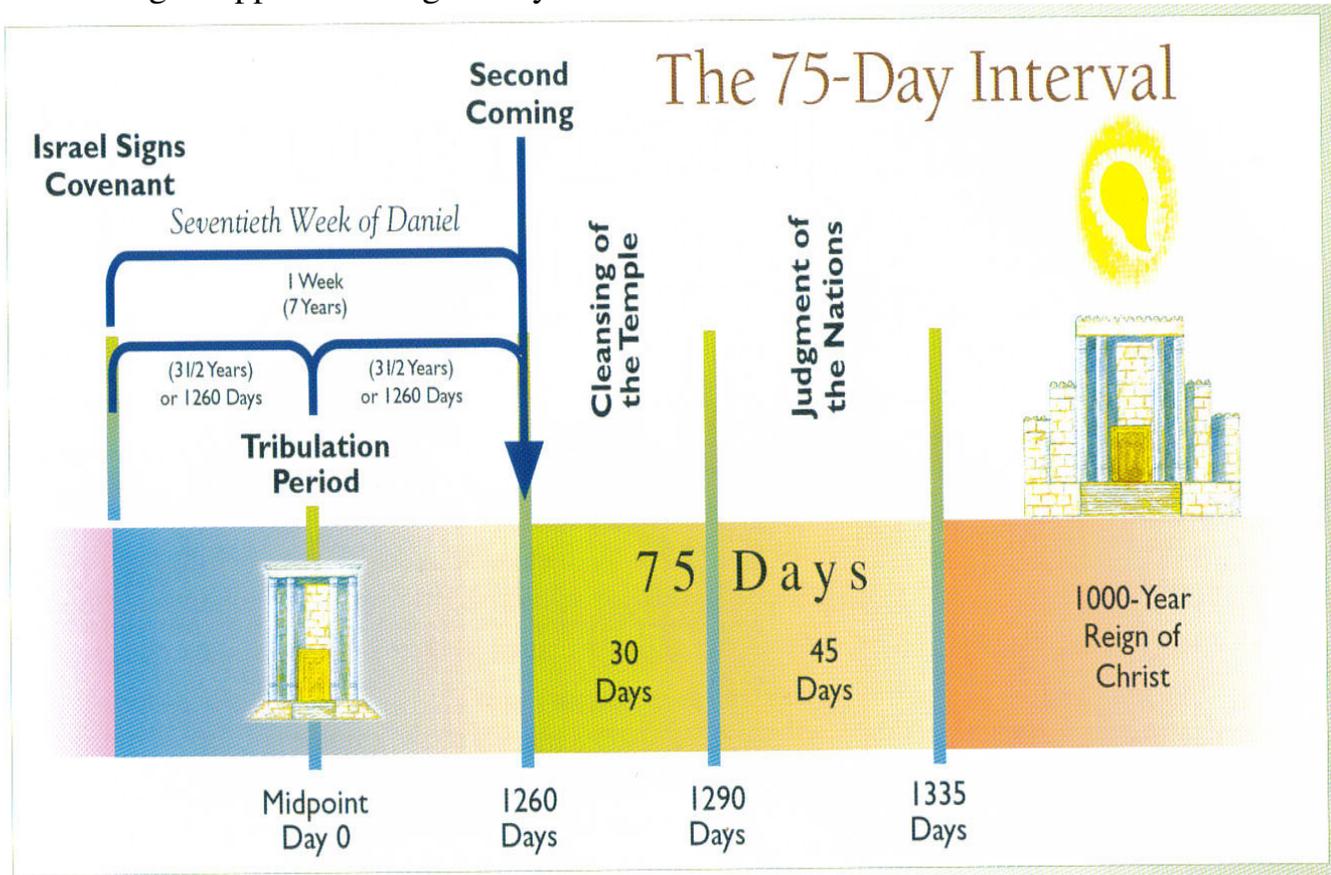
C. The Great Reign....Rev.20:4, 6

1. The 75 Day Preparation for the Millennium

- a. Daniel 12:11-12 indicates there will be a 75 day interval between the 2nd Coming of Christ to Earth and the start of the 1000-year Millennial kingdom.

b It is not at all suprising that our Lord will take some time to renovate His creation in preparation for the Millennial kingdom.

2. Two Things Happen....during 75 days Look @ Chart



1st ...Temple will be remodeled by Jesus & Earth will be renovated...from all the Destruction

2nd ...Jesus will determine Who Will Enter the Millennium?

- a. Few people will actually be left alive on earth in the transition from the Tribulation to the Millennial kingdom.

(1) Low number easy to understand when you consider....

- (a) half a billion Christians or more will be raptured before the Tribulation.

- (b) including children under the age of accountability.
- (c) After rapture...over half the world's population will be killed during the seal and trumpet judgments (Rev. 6:8; 9:18)
- (d) Many more will be killed during the other plagues or judgments.
- (e) millions of new believers will be martyred by the Antichrist for refusing to worship him or take the mark of the Beast.

b. The Judgment of the Nations (Matthew 25:31-46)

- (1) Will be for all who survive the Tribulation.
- (2) Only true believers will survive this judgment.
- (3) There will be three different groups at this judgment.
 - (a) The unsaved followers of Antichrist who are still alive at the end of the tribulation are called "goats"
 - (b) The believers who survive are called "sheep".
 - (c) The "Brethren" vs.40...those who Jesus calls 'these brothers of mine".
 - they are the Jews who go into the Millennium as believers.
 - keep in mind only believers will be permitted to go into the Millennium.

3. Major Features of the Millennium include...

a. The binding of Satan at the beginning of the Millennium. (Rev. 20:1-3)

b. The final restoration of Israel....which includes

- (1) Regeneration (Jeremiah 31:31-34)
- (2) Regathering (Deut. 30:1-10; Isaiah 11:11-12:6; Matt 24:31)
- (3) Possession of the land (Ezek. 20:42-44; 36:28-38)
- (4) Re-establishment of the Davidic throne (2 Samuel 7:11-16; 1Chron. 17:10-14; Jeremiah 33:17-26)
- (5) The reign of Jesus Christ (Isaiah 2:3-4; 11:2-5)
- (6) The loosing and final rebellion of Satan at the end of the Millennium (Revelation 20:7-10)
- (7) The Great White Throne Judgment and the second resurrection or judgment of the unbelieving dead (Revelation 20:11-15)

6. Key Scripture Passages on the Millennium

a. Old Testament....Zechariah 14:9, 16-21; Psalm 2:6-9; Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:6-9; 65:18-23; Jeremiah 31:12-14, 31-37; Ezekiel 34:25-29; 37:1-6; 40-48 Daniel 2: 35; 7:13-14; Joel 2:21-27; Amos 9:13-14; Micah 4:1-7; Zephaniah 3:9-20

b. New Testament.....Matthew 5:1-20; 19:27-30; 26:27-29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; and Revelation 20

7. A look at key passages on the Millennium

a. Isaiah....Chapter 65

- (1) Vs.9...Israel & Judah will be joined together

- (2) Vs.17 God will “create new heavens and a new earth” before the Kingdom is established.
- Most prophetic teachers acknowledge that the earth will be renovated by fire.
 - Many want to locate this event at the end of the Millennium
 - Isaiah 65:17 however precedes the description of the Millennium
 - Indicates that God will create a new atmospheric heaven around the earth, and re-establish the earth on a far better basis
 - Look at 2 Peter 3:1-16
 - The Day of the Lord (2nd Coming) will usher in a time of cataclysmic change on the earth.
 - The earth will be dissolved, meaning the surface of the earth, and the Lord will refurbish it all before He establishes His Kingdom
- (3) Vs.18-19...Jerusalem will become a place of rejoicing; no more weeping
- (4) Vs.20
- indicates that the life-span of a human being will be increased as in the days before the Flood.
 - Believers will evidently live until the end of the Millennium
 - also indicates that if a mortal person reaches a hundred years of age and is not a believer, he or she will be accursed, or die.
 - in other words...those living with mortal bodies during the Millennium are given 100 years to make a decision to receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
 - If they do so they will continue living to the end of the Millennium
 - this parallels the age of the human race before the Flood
 - If they reject Him, they will die on their hundredth birthday.
 - Today there are Three Forces at Work
 1. The World
 2. The Flesh
 3. The Devil
 - (a) The Millennium will be a kingdom of righteousness, administered by the Lord, the righteous judge, no lewd, suggestive, worldly temptations can mislead them.
 - (b) Neither will they be tempted by satan...he'll be chained
 - (c) Therefore the only source of temptation will be the Flesh.
 - (d) In such an environment an overwhelming number of people will no doubt be saved.
- (5) Vs.21-22...Economic stability will be the Standard during this period
- people will not build houses and let others occupy them because of death or sickness.
 - people will enjoy the fruits of their efforts.
- (6) Vs.23 They'll be a people blessed by the Lord
- they will not toil in vain

- those who live through the Tribulation and are believers who Jesus calls “sheep” will enter into the Kingdom and be blessed with child-bearing.
 - infants will not die from sickness or disease...vs.20
 - this will be the most ideal environment in which to raise children
 - couples in the Millennium not only can have children the first 100 years, but for hundreds of years thereafter.
 - Since it will be a time of unprecedented blessing and food supply, a couple conceivably can have as many children as they desire.
- (7) Vs. 24... God will answer His people speedily during the Millennial Kingdom.
- Even while they are in the middle of praying God will answer
 - God will anticipate the needs of His people, supplying those needs in many cases before they call on Him.
- (8) Vs.20-25... The Adamic curse will be rolled back except for death, and people will live for 1000 years. lifting of the curse (Isa 11:6-9; 35:1-2, 9),

b. Mark 12: 23-25

- (1) All resurrected believers will Live Like Angels with our resurrected bodies
- We will not have husbands or wives or even get married
 - Like the angels our lives will be completely dedicated to serving the Lord
 - Two scriptures that give a reason why
 - 1 Corinthians 7:33
 - 1 Corinthians 7:35

c. The Millennium will be a time of tremendous environmental transformation.

- (1) Isaiah 35:1-2...tells us that the desert will blossom and become productive.
- (2) Isaiah 30:23-24; 35:7....There will be abundant rainfall in areas that today are known for their dryness
- There will be plenty of food for animals.
- (3) Isaiah 11:6-7; 65:25....The predatory instincts of animals will cease.
- distinctions between tame and wild will be erased
 - all creatures will live in harmony

d. Isaiah 29:18; 33:24....People will live much longer and many physical infirmities and health concerns will be eradicated.

e. Jeremiah 31:12-14....With the absence of sickness and deformity....along with increased life spans....will minimize the differences between those who still have mortal bodies and those who have resurrected bodies.

8. Spiritual Life in the Millennium will be unlike anything we have ever experienced!

a. Zechariah 14

(1) Jerusalem will serve as headwaters for the religious life of the people, the source of the waterways of the world....Vs.8

- this refers to the “living waters” that Jesus promised the woman at the well in Samaria.

- indicating that the way of redemption and new life would be supplied from Jerusalem, the headquarters of the King(Jesus)

- Also refers to the physical waters provided during the Millennium come from Jerusalem to worship the King every year.

- Not to go worship the King (Jesus) would result in a plague of no Rain.

(2) The Feast of the Tabernacles will be celebrated once again...vs.16
(more on this subject later in our study)

(3) The Millennial Kingdom will be known by its Holiness....vs.20

- When Christ rules, it will be a true Kingdom of holiness

- The world has never known an era of holiness

- the world has never had standards established by the mandate of God

- rather our worlds standards have been established through human practices.

- During the Millennium God’s standard will be the law, and violators will be severely punished.

b. Isaiah 11:9...Living daily in the personal and physical presence of Jesus Christ, who will sit upon the Davidic throne, will have an enormous impact on the lives of believers.

(1) The knowledge and worship of Christ will be global and unimpeded

(2) The Millennium will be an era of great spiritual awareness, sensitivity, and activity for both Christians and the restored nation of Israel.

c. For Israel, the New Covenant will be in effect...Isaiah 59:20-21; Jer.31:31-34; Jer. 32:37-40; Ezek. 16:60-63; 37:21-28

(1)Bringing to fruition the above mentioned passages

d. Worship and activity in the Millennial Temple....Ezekiel 40-48

(1)Jesus Christ will be reigning on earth in Jerusalem

(2)The Millennial Temple will be present and functioning as described

(3)The sacrificial systems will be reestablished.

-these sacrifices will be to the nation of Israel what the Lord’s Supper is to the church today.

- they’ll be a reminder of what they have been saved from

- no meritorious or effectual work will be accomplished through these sacrifices...

- Instead, they will remind Israel repeatedly of their crucified Messiah

- Just as the Passover Feast reminded the nation Israel for centuries that God had delivered them by blood from the land of Pharaoh.

9. Will we know each other in heaven and the Millennium?"

- Scripture does not leave us in doubt.
- We will know each other in heaven.

D. The Great Revolt....Rev.20:7-10.... Satan's judgment is required

1. At the end of the millennium, God will release Satan from the Abyss (20:7).
2. Satan will then attempt his final revolt.
3. He is able to gather nations from all over the world.
4. The huge size of this army isn't hard to explain when you think about all the babies that will be born over a thousand-year period.
5. The fact that people will live a lot longer means that the population in the millennium will be enormous.
6. The phrase "**Gog and Magog**" (20:8) evidently refers to the world's rulers and nations in rebellion against God.

7. Why does God release Satan from the Abyss?

- No explicit answer is given.
- However, three reasons are implied in the text:
 - (1) to demonstrate the wickedness of Satan,
 - (2) to demonstrate the depravity of humanity (cf. Jer 17:9), and
 - (3) to demonstrate the justice of hell.
- Stop and think about these truths.
 - (1) Even after being bound for a thousand years, Satan still comes out fighting and deceiving.
 - (2) With one last bit of strength, he leads a final revolt against the Lord. He's mad!
 - (3) There is no end to his wickedness.
 - (4) Clearly, Satan deserves it and the justice of God demands it (20:10).
- But humanity is every bit as rebellious and wicked.
 - (1) We blame many things on the Devil but people in the millennium will not be able to do that because he will be bound.
 - (2) There is thus no way that anyone can say, "The Devil made me do it."
 - (3) People then will live in a perfect environment and still they will commit sin.
 - (4) There will be perfect government, perfect health, perfect climate, and even formerly wild animals like lions will be tame.
 - (5) There will be perfect justice.
 - (6) Yet, a perfect environment will not keep man from sinning because
 - a. a perfect environment cannot produce a perfect heart.

- b. A perfect environment will not solve humanity's problems;
- c. only personal trust in the person and work of Christ will change a person's heart.
- d. Nothing else can permanently change man.
- You don't have to go to the millennium to find this out.
- This is a human trait today.
 - (1) The better life becomes for some people, the better the possibility that they will conclude they don't need God;
 - (2) that any effective and lasting change must come from within, through God's grace plan of salvation.
- Lastly, one of the purposes of this passage is to justify the necessity of eternal punishment.
 - (1) This section proves that even the equivalent of 14 lifetimes (based on the current life expectancy of about 70 years divided into a thousand years) is not enough to overturn man's allegiance to Satan.
 - (2) Therefore, the eternal lake of fire is a necessity.

[The Bible teaches that Satan's judgment is required. It also predicts a time when...]

E. The Great White Throne....Rev.20:11-15.... Man's judgment is completed

1. Verse 11-12

a. Dr. Tim LaHaye

(1) Four Sets of Books

1. Book of Law (Galatians 3:10)

2. Book of Human Works (Rev. 20:12-13)

3. Book of Life (Rev. 20:12, 15)

-New Testament refers to this book 8 times

-Old Testament refers to a book of names 3 times

4. Lamb's Book of Life (Rev. 21:27)

- a book belonging to the Lord Jesus Christ (Rev. 13:8)

-only believer's since the cross

Dr. Tim Lahaye...." *To properly understand the Book of Life, you must realize that there are really two Book's of Life. One is called "the book of life"; the other, "the Lamb's book of life". These definitely are not the same!"*

Differences between Two Book's of Life

<u>Book of Life</u>	<u>Lamb's Book of Life</u>
Contains the names of all people who have lived	Includes only the names of those who call on the Lamb for Salvation
It is possible to have one's name blotted out of the Book of Life Exodus 32:33	It is impossible to have name blotted out of Lamb's Book of Life Rev. 3:5

(2) Three Reasons one's Name Can Be Blotted Out of Book Of Life

1. For sinning against God....
2. For not being clothed in the righteousness of Christ through the new birth
3. For taking away from the words of the book of this prophecy. Rev. 22:19

2. In verse 13-14...

- a. The sea will give up all those drowned or buried at sea, never having accepted Jesus Christ as Savior.
- b. "Death" ..represents the grave
- c. "Hades"...the place of torment where their spirits have gone.
- d. We may expect a physical resurrection uniting the dead whether their ashes are in
 - the grave
 - in a mausoleum
 - on the earth
 - or in the sea
- e. Those ashes will be resurrected and united with the soul and spirit as they arise from the place of torment
- f. In this resurrected form they will stand before the great White Throne

3. In Rev.20: 15...

- a. Establishes the importance of the Book of Life
- b. It's like God's double check at the Great White Throne Judgment
 - As a person comes forward...they will be judged by the Book of Law, Lamb's Book of Life, and Book of Human Works.
 - Then, just before that person is cast into the Lake of Fire, he or she is given a double check.
 - The recording angel will look through the Book of Life, and "*If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire*".
- c. This double check in the Book of Life points out a consistent scriptural principle...
 - There are only two kinds of people
 - The believing or unbelieving...saved or unsaved...condemned or not condemned... the righteous or unrighteous...just or unjust...wise or unwise.
- d. One does not need to have one's name entered in the Book of Life, for if he or she is alive it is already there.
 - 2 Peter 3:9...God is" not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone come to repentance "
- e. To Keep it there, one must also have his or her name written in the Lamb's Book of Life

4. Additional Observations

- a. The great white throne will be nothing like our modern court cases.
 - There will be a Judge but no jury,

- a Prosecutor but no defense attorney,
 - and a sentence but no appeal.
 - None of these things will exist in this courtroom because Christ will judge the unbelieving world with absolute justice.
 - Nothing will be missed or overlooked as unsaved people from throughout history appear before Christ in the final judgment of the ages.
- a. Eternal punishment is a doctrine that is becoming increasingly unpopular in our day.
- Notice that Jesus Christ, the Judge, spoke very plainly when He affirmed it.
 - If we once saw sin as God sees it, we would understand why a place such as hell exists.

No other verse in the entire Bible should cause us to flee God's wrath and run into His grace and forgiveness as does 20:15. Yet, the vast majority of Americans are in denial. Barna Research recently conducted a nationwide poll about belief in life after death, heaven and hell, and who might end up where. Three-quarters of us believe in heaven, nearly that many believe in hell (71%) — and only one half of 1% say that they're heading for the hot place after the closing bell.

C.S. Lewis was an atheist who tried to prove that God didn't exist. In the process of doing so, he became one of Christianity's boldest defenders. In clarifying his view that hell is a choice, Lewis said, "Sin is a person's saying to God throughout life, 'Go away and leave me alone.' Hell is God finally saying to that individual, 'You may have your wish.'"

There is a book written by a cardiologist at the University of Tennessee that corroborates this biblical truth. In the course of their emergency room work, Dr. Maurice Rawlings and his colleagues interviewed more than 300 people who claimed near-death experiences. What made Rawlings' study distinct is that the interviews were not conducted months or years later but immediately after the experiences had allegedly occurred—while the patients were still too shaken up in the immediacy of the moment to gloss over or to re-imagine what they had experienced.

Nearly 50 percent of them reported encountering images of fire, of tormented and tormenting creatures, and other sights hailing from a place very different from heaven. In follow-up interviews much later many of these same people had changed their stories, apparently unwilling to admit to their families, maybe even to themselves, that they had caught a glimpse of something like what the Bible calls hell. Dr. Rawlings concludes, "Just listening to these patients has changed my life. There is a life after death, and if I don't know where I'm going, it is not safe to die."