



### THE DESTINY OF THE EARTH

#### Desolation or Restitution?

"The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Psalm 24:1).

Man has orbited the earth and atomic bombs have blasted it. But the earth continues on its orbit around the sun, and each day it revolves on its axis. This planet bangs in space in its assigned position as a great ball among the heavenly bodies, having been in existence for thousands of years with the races of man living upon it. What is its destiny? What is to become of this earth in the future? What will happen when the world comes to an END? What does the BIBLE say?

#### God Created the Earth

The first words of the Bible are:

*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth* (Genesis 1:1).

In six days the mighty power of God brought the earth into being with all that is upon it.

*For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast* (Psa. 33:9).

*For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day . . .* (Exod. 20:11).

Truly it was a marvelous work. Man has

studied the elements of the earth and the forces of nature for centuries and yet has not learned all the mysteries. And so we stand in awe at the power which made so great an earth.

#### Why Did God Create the Earth?

Surely He had a purpose in this work. If it is for man to know, it must be revealed in the Bible, which is the Word of God. Indeed, in Isaiah 45:18 we find:

*For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else.*

Yes, God made this earth to be inhabited and He made man to inhabit it.

*The heavens, even the heavens, are the Lord's; but the earth hath he given to the children of men* (Psa. 115:16).

It is God's will that man live upon the earth in peace and in obedience to His word. He did not create the earth for trouble but for peace and joy.

*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created* (Rev. 4:11).

#### Corruption in the Earth

Instead of being obedient, man has turned away from the laws of God. Sin and wicked-

ness are everywhere. We live in the time described in the Bible as "the last days" and "the time of the end," near to the second advent of Christ. In the 24th chapter of Matthew we find a prophecy by Christ concerning the signs which would be in the earth just before His second coming:

*But as the days of Noe [Noah] were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be (Matt. 24:37).*

This is a reference to the great flood when Noah was saved by building the ark. Of these "days of Noah" we read:

*And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. . . . And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth (Genesis 6:5, 12).*

Because of this sin and corruption God destroyed mankind from the earth by the great flood of waters.

Except for Noah and those with him in the ark the great flood destroyed all life upon the earth, "in whose nostrils was the breath of life." The surface of the earth was cleansed and changed. After the flood the earth stood renewed, and since then the nations of mankind have developed over all the world. The true people of God have been few and as we have come down to our time the world is filled with sin even as it was in the time of Noah. Then, God destroyed man from the earth. What will God do next because of sin?

### A Great Destruction To Come

Once God destroyed mankind by water. The next destruction will be BY FIRE! We find the prophecy of this in the third chapter of Second Peter:

*But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men (verse 7).*

The verses above this one describe the destruction by the flood, and the comparison is made to show that the destruction by fire will also be of the surface of the earth.

### When Will the Destruction Come?

This great destruction by fire will take place at the second advent of Christ. Jesus described the time of His coming as being unexpected by the world, even as a thief may come in the night. And so we read:

*But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up (2 Peter 3:10).*

That this fiery destruction will come at the second advent of Christ is also shown in 2 Thessalonians 1:7 and 8:

*And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in*

*flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The prophet Isaiah foretold this destruction in similar language:

*For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many (Isa. 66:15, 16).*

This is evidently the same time spoken of by the apostle John in the book of Revelation. Speaking of the events accompanying the second advent of Christ we read:

*And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? (Rev. 6:13-17).*

### A Great World Conflict

From the preceding Bible passages we have found that a great fiery destruction will come before and at the time of the second advent of Christ. Now let us notice something else which will be taking place at the same time. We read:

*For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken... and half of the city shall go forth into captivity.... Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against 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 on the east... and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee (Zechariah 14:2-5).*

A vast conflict is here described. All the nations of the world, the great and the small, will take part in this great struggle. Jerusalem will be the center of the battle. Other Bible references indicate that two great alliances of nations will fight against each other. One group will be fighting to hold Jerusalem but they will lose. Just as the city is taken and half of it is captured, the Lord comes forth and descends to the Mount of Olives.

The great conflict in which all nations are engaged just before the second coming of Christ appears to be the same as the battle of Armageddon described in the 16th chapter of Revelation. Of this we read:

*For they are the spirits of devils, work-*

ing miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon (Rev. 16:14, 16).

What a vast and tremendous conflict this will be when all the powers of earth pit their strength against each other. The center of the conflict will be a great battle which will center at Jerusalem. But in modern times nations at war are in conflict everywhere. With the use of great missiles with atomic warheads a vast fiery destruction can sweep around the earth.

**After the Conflict, Christ Rules**

The fourteenth chapter of Zechariah describes three events in order. The first is the great world conflict involving all nations and the battle centering at Jerusalem. The second is the coming of Christ to the earth, touching down at the Mount of Olives. The third is the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ on the earth. Of these wonderful things we read:

*And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem... And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one (Zechariah 14: 8, 9).*

**After Desolation, Christ Rules**

The twenty-fourth chapter of Isaiah de-

scribes a great destruction on the earth. We read:

*Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof... The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are devoured: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left (Isaiah 24:1, 3, 6).*

Most of the chapter is made up of descriptions of a similar nature. Surely a very great destruction over all the earth is here described. Punishments are especially mentioned as coming on the great and high people and the kings of the earth:

*And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth (Isaiah 24:21).*

There is a striking similarity between this verse and the description of events at the second advent of Christ as found in Revelation 6:15-17, which in part reads:

*And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains... said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For*

*the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*

This great time of destruction will be so great that the earth is even described as being "empty." There are some who teach that this means that every living human being will be removed from the earth. It is taught that the righteous will all go to heaven and that the wicked will all die, and the earth will remain in complete desolation for the entire millennium. One of the books which has this teaching quotes Isaiah 24:6 as a supporting text. But the last four words of the verse are left off and no indication is given that any part is omitted. The writers maintain that every person will be gone from the earth. But the words which they omit from the Bible say "and few men left." The destruction will be so great that the earth will appear empty, but not all will be gone. THERE WILL BE MEN LEFT!

The great, wicked ones of the earth " . . . shall be gathered together . . . in the pit . . ." (Isaiah 24:22). The pit is the grave (see Psalm 88:4, 5).

The wicked will be dead during the millennium, but there will be people left upon the earth, and Christ and the saints will reign on the earth. Just as in Zechariah 14 we find the Kingdom of Christ established on the earth after the last great conflict, so in Isaiah 24 we find the Kingdom of Christ established on earth after the great destruction and desolation. We read:

*Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of*

*heavens shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously (Isaiah 24:23).*

### The End of the Desolation

Our study has shown that events preceding and at the time of the second advent of Christ will cause the earth to be in a very desolate condition. But Jesus and the redeemed will have come to the great valley made by the dividing of the Mount of Olives. A great plain is mentioned in Zechariah 14:10, and then in verse eleven we read:

*And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.*

Yes, the "utter destruction," the time of desolation, will have come to an end and the work of restoration begun. The terrible scars left by the last conflict will soon begin to disappear. The Lord Jesus will be King over all the earth and a great clean-up work will take place. A part of this is described in the book of Ezekiel:

*And it shall come to pass in that day that I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel. Yea, all the people of the land shall bury them. And also the name of the city shall be Hamonah. Thus shall they cleanse the land (Ezekiel 39:11, 13, 16).*

### A Time of Restoration and Restitution

In his great sermon recorded in the third chapter of the Acts, the apostle Peter pro-

claims the second advent of Christ and the wonderful time to follow. We read:

*And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began (Acts 3:20, 21).*

This verse says that Jesus will remain in heaven until the "times of restitution." In other words, the time of restitution will begin right after He returns. Which holy prophets spoke of such a time? We find that two of them told of it in almost identical words in Isaiah 2:1-5 and in Micah 4:1-8. Let us notice some of the verses in the last named reference:

*But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord [the kingdom of Christ] shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; [Christ's kingdom will be over all governments, large and small] and people shall flow unto it... for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem... nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid... (Micah 4:1-4).*

Notice the mention of the vines and fig trees. This does not sound like a desolate

earth but rather like a prosperous time with abundant fruits of the earth.

Conditions on the earth during the millennium are also described in the 35th chapter of Isaiah. This is a very beautiful chapter filled with hope and joy. We read:

*The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as a rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon... And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water; in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing shall flee away (Isaiah 35: 1, 2, 7, 10).*

Surely this will be a wonderful time. It will not be a time of continued world-wide desolation, but of restoration and restitution. In this we find the glorious fulfillment of the divine purpose for the earth also spoken by the prophet Isaiah:

*For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else (Isaiah 45:18).*

How wonderful it is to contemplate the great work of God. He has made this earth for mankind, and no matter how great the forces of destruction which may come upon it, they will not destroy it. God's work cannot be in vain!

#### The 1,000-Year Reign with Christ

This is the time when the redeemed of this age will reign with Christ on the earth for 1,000 years. As we have seen, it will not be a time of DESOLATION but of RESTORATION. The redeemed will reign with Christ ON EARTH, NOT IN HEAVEN. (For a more complete study of the millennium, see the tract, "The 1,000-Year Reign with Christ.")

We may note that Revelation 5:10 tells us that the redeemed of this age will be "kings and priests." The text reads:

*And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.*

With this we connect Revelation 20:6:

*Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*

Thus, we find that during the millennium the redeemed will reign with Christ here on the earth.

#### The Eventual Destiny—the New Earth

During the millennium on earth Christ will complete the great work of redemption.

At the close of this time of reign, He will turn the completed work to God the Father:

*For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet (1 Cor. 15:25). Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father... And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him... that God may be all in all (Verses 24, 28).*

The Kingdom of Christ does not end, but He turns His eternal Kingdom to God the Father. This ushers in the time of the New Earth.

We remember that we found in Isaiah 45:18 that God created the earth to be inhabited: "he created it not in vain." The earth then will continue to be inhabited through all eternity. But this earth will be made NEW, after the great work of the millennium is completed. Now, and presumably during the millennium, three-fourths of the earth is covered with the waters of the seas, but regarding the ushering in of the New Earth, we read:

*... And there was no more sea (Rev. 21:1).*

The last two chapters of the Bible describe the glory of eternity in the New Earth. Old Jerusalem will be gone, but in its place will be the glorious New Jerusalem. Only redeemed, immortal people will be there, where there will never be any sorrow or suffering. Then will the full purpose of God for this earth be fully realized. "He created it not in



vain"; He created it "for His pleasure." Every vestige of the curse will be gone. There will be no memory of this age of suffering and trial.

In the millennium, the redeemed will reign with Christ for 1,000 years to accomplish a special work. But in the New Earth—

...the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever (Rev. 22:5).

**Conclusion**

Thus, we find the glorious destiny of the earth. World conditions just before the second advent of Christ will cause great destruction and desolation and bring the earth to its lowest ebb, to its most accursed condition since the flood. But the first work of the millennium is that of cleansing and restoration. During the millennium the earth will be beautiful and good. Following the millennium it will be a New Earth, perfect and glorious for all eternity.

Now is the time to accept the Lord Jesus Christ and His wonderful plan of salvation. Now is the time to read and obey the Bible. Now is the time to prepare for the second advent of Jesus, that we may be among those who will rise to meet Him, who will then reign with Him on the earth, and eventually enter into the glorious kingdom of God.

63-6-6-1905

**OTHER FREE BIBLE TRACTS**

Order for personal study or giving to others

Title	Pages each
The 1,000-Year Reign with Christ	16
The Second Coming of Christ	32
The Punishment of the Wicked	32
The Time Element in the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ	32
The New Birth	24
Steps to Salvation	18
The Ordinance of Baptism	16
The Observance of the Lord's Supper	24
The Signs of Our Times	24
Can You Afford to Take the Chance?	16
World History Foretold	34
Palestine, Jews and Bible Prophecy	24
Which Day Is the Lord's Day?	32
It a Man Die, Does He Still Live?	24
The Rich Man and Lazarus	26
Is the Bible True?	4
Adam's Apple	4
Legal Advice from Heaven	4
A Real Love Story	4
World History Foretold	4
The Return of the Jews and Jerusalem	4
The Ten Commandments	8
What Must I Do to Be Saved?	4
Two Appointments You Must Meet	4
Faith and Repentance	4
Jesus Is Coming Again	4
Religious Surgery	4
Keeping Fit Spiritually	8
The Doctrinal Beliefs of the Church of God (Seventh Day)	32

Order from  
**The Bible Advocate Press**  
 Stanberry, Missouri 64489