

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE & THE END OF THE WORLD www.brantpitre.com

WAS JESUS WRONG ABOUT THE END OF THE WORLD?

1. Eschatology: doctrine of the “end” times (Gk *eschaton*) or “last days”
2. Jesus’ Most Important Eschatological Teaching: the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24-25)
Immediately after the tribulation of those days... they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory... Amen I say to you, *this generation will not pass away till all these things take place.* (Matthew 24:30, 34)
3. The Problem: Apparent Non-Fulfillment of Jesus’ Prophecy
 - a. C. S. Lewis: “The most embarrassing verse in the Bible”
 - b. Albert Schweitzer: Jesus was a failed “apocalyptic prophet”
 - c. Bertrand Russell: *Why I am Not a Christian* and the Divinity of Jesus
 - d. The False Prophet (see Deut 17:19-22)
4. Solution: Jesus is speaking of Two Distinct Events in the Olivet Discourse
 - a. The *Destruction of the Temple* in Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
 - b. The *End of the World* that will take place at His Parousia

THE TWO QUESTIONS: THE TEMPLE AND THE PAROUSIA

1 Jesus left *the Temple* and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of *the Temple*.
2 But he answered them, “You see all these, do you not? *Amen, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another, that will not be thrown down.*” 3 As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, *when will this be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?*” (Matthew 24:1-3)

1. Notice here the prominence of the Temple and its destruction.
2. Notice the two distinct (but related) questions:
 - a. When will the Destruction of the Temple take place?
 - b. What will be the sign of your “Coming” (Gk *parousia*) and the End of the Age?
3. We need to re-read the Olivet Discourse: see how it applies to the first-century A.D.

THE BEGINNING OF THE BIRTH-PANGS

4 And Jesus *answered* them, “Take heed that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and they will lead many astray. 6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places: 8 all this is but the beginning of the birth-pangs. (Matthew 24:4-8)

1. Note: Jesus is *answering* the disciples question about the Temple.
2. False Messiahs: arose between 40-70 AD (Josephus, *Ant.* 20.8.6)
3. Wars: civil war raged in Roman empire (Josephus, *War* 4.8.1)
4. Famines: worldwide famine under emperor Claudius (Eusebius, *Church History*).
5. Earthquakes: Colossae and Pompeii destroyed by earthquakes (50s-60s AD)

PERSECUTION, APOSTASY, AND EVANGELIZATION

9 Then they will deliver you up to tribulation, and put you to death; and you will be hated by all nations/Gentiles for my name's sake. 10 And then many will fall away, and betray one another, and hate one another. 11 And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. 12 And because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold. 13 But he who endures to the end will be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to the Gentiles; and then the end will come. (Matthew 24:9-14)

1. Persecution: both Jews and Gentiles persecuted Christians between 30-70AD
 - a. Early Persecution: by Jerusalem Sanhedrin (see Acts)
 - b. Later Persecution: by Caesar Nero (60's AD; Eusebius, *Church History*)
2. Apostasy: Christians falling away in the face of persecution (cf. Revelation 1-3)
3. Evangelization of the "Whole World" (Gk *oikoumene*)?
 - a. Faith of Church of Rome "is proclaimed in all the world" (Rom 1:8)
 - b. Gospel is "bearing fruit" "in the whole world" (Col 1:5-6)

THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION AND THE GREAT TRIBULATION

15 So *when you see the abomination of desolation (or "desolating sacrilege") spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the Holy Place—let the reader understand—*16 *then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains;* 17 *let him who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house;* 18 *and let him who is in the field not turn back to take his mantle.* 19 *And alas for those who are with child and for those who are nursing in those days!* 20 *Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath.* 21 *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.* 22 *And if those days had not been shortened, no human being would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.* 23 *Then if anyone says to you, 'Lo, here is the Messiah!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it.* 24 *For false Messiahs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.* 25 *Lo, I have told you beforehand. So, if they say to you, 'Lo, he is in the wilderness', do not go out; if they say, 'Lo, he is in the inner rooms', do not believe it.'* For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 28 *Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.* (Matthew 24:15-28)

1. Clear Indications Jesus is *not* primarily talking about the End of Time
 - a. Flight to the Mountains from Judea?
 - b. Not fleeing in winter or on a Sabbath?
 - c. Warning to flee immediately when Abomination appears in Temple ("Holy Place")
2. Should there be any doubt: the Abomination of Desolation in Daniel

After the sixty-two weeks, a Messiah shall be cut off, and shall have nothing; and the people of the prince who is to come *shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood; and to the end there shall be war; desolations are decreed...* he shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease; and upon the wing of *abominations* shall come *one who makes desolate...* (Daniel 9:26-27)
3. Luke's Version: Desolation = destruction of Jerusalem (for Gentile readers)

But *when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies*, then know that its desolation has come near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside *the city* depart... (Luke 21:20-21)
4. Great Tribulation: Romans crucified 500 or more Jews each *day* (*War* 5.11.1)

THE SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN

29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days *the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers in heaven will be shaken*; 30 *then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then all the tribes of the land/earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory*; 31 and he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, *at the very gates*. Amen, I say to you, *this generation shall not pass away till all these things take place*. (Matthew 24:29-34)

1. The Darkening of Sun, Moon, and Stars: the End of the World?
2. Key to Understanding: Language of Old Testament Prophets
 - a. Destruction of Babylon: “sun, moon, and stars” will be darkened (Isaiah 13)
 - b. Destruction of Wicked Nations: stars “fall” from heaven (Isaiah 34)
 - c. Destruction of Egypt: “sun,” “moon,” and “stars” go dark (Ezekiel 32)
3. The “Coming” of God: Judgment of a City or Nation (Barber, *Coming Soon*, 17-18)
 - a. Judgment of Egypt: The Lord “comes” on a cloud (Isaiah 19)
 - b. Judgment of the Land: “the Lord is coming” (Isaiah 26)
 - c. Judgment of Jerusalem:

Behold, *he comes up like clouds*, his chariots like the whirlwind;
his horses are swifter than *eagles*—woe to us, for we are ruined!
O Jerusalem, wash you heart from wickedness, that you may be saved.
(Jeremiah 14:13-14)
4. Son of Man is “at the very gates” of the City of Jerusalem!
5. All This Will Take Place within one “Generation” (Gk *genea*)
 - a. One Generation = 40 years
 - c. 40 Years Later: Jerusalem and Temple destroyed by Roman Empire (70AD)

THE TEMPLE AS A MICROCOSM OF THE UNIVERSE

1. Importance of the Temple in Ancient Judaism
2. The Temple as a Microcosm (“Little Universe”) in the Old Testament

He built *his sanctuary* [the Temple] like the high *heavens*,
like *the earth*, which he has founded for ever. (Psalm 78:69)

THE TEMPLE AS A MICROCOSM OF THE UNIVERSE (Hahn and Mitch, Matthew, 60)

Creation (Macrocosm)

God “rested” on the 7th Day
(Gen 2:3)

God completes and blesses the world on
the 7th Day
(Gen 2:2-3)

“The whole earth is full of his glory”
(Isa 6:3)

The Temple in Jerusalem (Microcosm)

Temple is God’s “resting place for ever”
(Ps 132:14)

Solomon builds the Temple in 7 years
and dedicates it in the 7th month on 7th day
(1 Kings 6:38; 8:2, 65)

“The glory of the LORD filled his Temple.”
(1 Kings 8:11)

THE TEMPLE AS A MICROCOSM IN ANCIENT JUDAISM

1. The Three Parts of The Temple

If anyone without prejudice, and with judgment, look upon these things [in the Tabernacle], he will find *they were in every one made in way of imitation and representation of the universe*. When Moses distinguished the tabernacle into three parts, and allowed two of them to the priests, as a place accessible and common, he denoted *the land* and *the sea*, these being of general access to all; but he set apart the third division for God, because *heaven* is inaccessible to men. (Josephus, *Antiquities* 3.181)

“The house of the Holy of Holies is made to correspond to *the highest heaven*. The outer holy house was made to correspond to *the earth*. And the courtyard was made to correspond to *the sea*.” (Rabbi Pinhas ben Ya’ir; 2nd century A.D.; G. K. Beale, *The Temple*, 46 n. 36)

2. Other Cosmic Elements of the Temple (Beale, *The Temple*, 46)

- a. Seven Lamps of Menorah: symbolized the seven (visible) planets
- b. Curtains: colored blue and purple like “the heavens”
- c. Outer Veil: had the “panorama of the heavens” portrayed on it (*War*, 5.210-14)

3. Temple Destruction: a Concrete Symbol of the Destruction of Heaven and Earth

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TRUE TEMPLE: JESUS’ BODY

45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the night hour. 46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” 47 And some of the bystanders hearing it said, “This man is calling Elijah...” 50 And *Jesus cried again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit*. 51 And behold, *the veil of the Temple was torn* (Gk *eschisthe*) in two, from top to bottom; and *the earth shook and the rocks were torn* (Gk *eschisthesan*); 52 the tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, 53 and coming out of their tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. (Matthew 27:45-53)

TIMELINE OF DESTRUCTION

1. 30 AD **True Temple of Jesus’ Body Destroyed**
 - a. Destruction of Jerusalem Temple prefigured in Temple Veil
 - b. Destruction of Earth prefigured in Earthquake and Rocks split
2. 70 AD **Destruction of Jerusalem Temple**
 - a. Prefigures Destruction of “Heaven and Earth”
3. ??? AD **Second Coming and End of the World**
 - a. Temple of “Heaven and Earth” (Universe”) Will “Pass Away”

JESUS AND THE TEMPLE IN THE CATECHISM (CCC 583-586)

On the threshold of his Passion Jesus announced the coming destruction of this splendid building, of which there would not remain “one stone upon another.” By doing so, he announced *a sign of the last days, which were to begin with his own Passover*. (CCC 585)

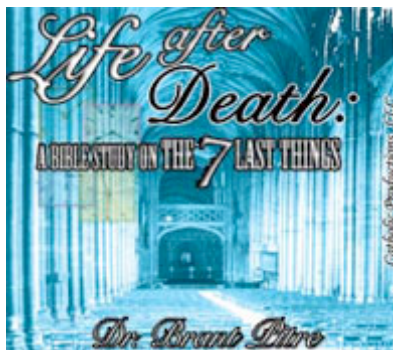
He even identified himself with the Temple by presenting himself as God’s definitive dwelling-place among men [Matt 12:6; John 2:21]. Therefore *his being put to bodily death presaged the destruction of the Temple*, which would manifest a dawning of *a new age in the history of salvation*. (CCC 586)

THE “COMING” OF THE SON OF MAN IN 70 A.D.?

1. Josephus on the Sign in the Heavens at Temple’s Destruction (*War* 6.288-300)

Thus were the miserable people persuaded by these deceivers, and such as belied God himself; while they did not attend, nor give credit, to the *signs* that were so evident and did so plainly foretell their future *desolation*... Thus *there was a star resembling a sword, which stood over the city*, and a comet, that continued a whole year. Thus also before the Jews’ rebellion and before those commotions which preceded the war... so great a light shone round the altar and the holy house that it appeared to bright day time; which light lasted for half an hour... At the same festival, a heifer, as she was led by the high priest to be sacrificed, brought forth *a lamb* in the midst of the Temple. Moreover, the eastern gate of the inner [court of the] Temple, which was of brass, and vastly heavy, and had been with difficulty shut by twenty men... was seen to be opened of its own accord about the sixth hour of the night. ...The men of learning understood it, that *the security of their holy house was dissolved of its own accord, and the gate was open for the advantage of their enemies*. So these publicly declared that *this signal foreshadowed the desolation that was coming upon them*. Besides these... a prodigious and incredible phenomenon appeared; I suppose the account of it would seem a fable, were it not related by those who saw it... for before sunset, *chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen running about among the clouds*, and surrounding of cities. Moreover, as the priests were going by night into the inner [court of the] Temple... they said that they felt a quaking, and heard a great noise, and after that they heard the sound as of a great multitude saying, “Let us remove hence.” (Josephus, *War*, 6.288-300)

For more information on Catholic teaching on the Final Judgment, the New Creation, and the Last Days pick up Brant Pitre’s audio set
***Life After Death: A Bible Study on the Seven Last Things* (distributed by Catholic Productions)**



Who Is the Whore of Babylon? How to Read the Book of Revelation

Introduction: the Book of Revelation

1. A Unique Book: most mysterious, most criticized, most Jewish (over 800 refs. to the OT)
2. The Book of “Revelation” or “Unveiling” (Greek *apokalypsis*) (Rev 1:1)
3. The Question:
 - a. Is Revelation a Blueprint for the End of the World?
 - b. Or has most of Revelation already been fulfilled?

The Book of Revelation: A Short Outline

1. Introduction: John’s Vision of Christ (Rev 1)
2. Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia Minor (Rev 2-3)
3. John’s Visions of the Heavenly Mass (Rev 4-5)
4. The Great Tribulation and the Destruction of the Whore (Rev 6-19)
 - a. The 7 Seals of God’s Judgment
 - b. The Four Horsemen
 - c. The 144,000 Marked on their Foreheads
 - d. The 7 Trumpets of God’s Wrath
 - e. John Measures the Temple (Rev 11)
 - f. The Woman Clothed with the Sun
 - g. The Dragon and the Beast
 - h. The 7 Plagues
 - i. Vision of the Whore of Babylon’s Destruction
5. The Millennium and the Final Judgment (Rev 20)
6. The New Heavens and the New Earth (Rev 21-22:5)
7. Conclusion: Warning against altering the Book (Rev 22:6-21)

Two Views of Revelation (Scott Hahn, *The Lamb’s Supper*, 73)

1. The “Futurist” View:
 - a. A cryptic prediction of *future* events
 - b. These events will only take place at *the end of time*
 - c. Only people living during the “end-times” can properly interpret Revelation
 - d. Example: Tim Lahaye and Jerry Jenkins, *The Left-Behind Series*
2. The “Preterist” View:
 - a. A prediction of *imminent* events
 - b. These events *were fulfilled in the first-century A.D.*
 - c. The Old Testament and first-century history are keys to proper interpretation
 - d. Example: many modern commentaries (Chilton, *Days of Vengeance*)
3. What clues does John himself give? A combination of preterism *and* futurism.

Revelation: The First Century *and* the End of Time

1 The revelation (Gk *apokalypsis*) of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants *what must soon take place*; and he made it known by sending his servant John, 2 who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. 3 Blessed is he who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written herein; for *the time is near* (Rev 1:1-3)

11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who sat upon it; from his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And *I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened*. Also another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, by what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead in them, and all

were judged by what they had done. *Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire.* This is the second death, the lake of fire... *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away,* and I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (Rev 20:11-21:2)

The Whore of Babylon (Revelation 17)

1 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, “Come, I will show you *the judgment of the great harlot* who is seated upon many waters, 2 with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and with the wine of whose fornication the dwellers on earth have become drunk.” 3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and *I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns.* 4 *The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet,* and bedecked with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication; 5 and on her forehead was written a name of mystery: “*Babylon the great, mother of harlots and of earth's abominations.*”

6 And I saw the woman, *drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.* When I saw her I marveled greatly. 7 But the angel said to me, “Why marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of *the beast with seven heads and ten horns* that carries her. 8 The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is to ascend from the bottomless pit and go to perdition; and the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will marvel to behold the beast, because it was and is not and is to come. 9 This calls for a mind with wisdom: *the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated;* 10 *they are also seven kings,* five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he comes he must remain only a little while. 11 As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to perdition. 12 *And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings* who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast. 13 These are of one mind and give over their power and authority to the beast; 14 they will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.”



15 And he said to me, “The waters that you saw, where the harlot is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues. 16 And the ten horns that you saw, *they and the beast will hate the harlot; they will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire,* 17 for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and giving over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. 18 *And the woman that you saw is the great city* which has dominion over the kings of the earth.”

1. Three Figures:
 - a. The Whore
 - b. The Beast with 7 Heads and 10 Horns
 - c. The Lamb
2. What is the Whore Doing?
 - a. Fornicating with the Kings of the Earth
 - b. Drunk with the blood of the Martyrs
 - c. Riding the Beast
 - d. Sitting on 7 Hills
3. What about the Beast?

- a. Blaspheming God
- b. Causes the world to “marvel”
- c. Produces “Kings”
- d. Makes war with the Lamb
- e. Turns on the Whore; burns her with fire

The Whore of Babylon = The Roman Catholic Church?

1. Protestant Interpreters (cf. picture above, Lucas Cranach, 1522 A.D.)
 - a. Fundamentalists: David Hunt, *A Woman Who Rides the Beast* (1994)
 - b. Martin Luther: “I now know of a certainty that the papacy is the kingdom of Babylon...”
(*The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, 1.2)
2. Reasons:
 - a. Babylon = a code name for Rome
 (“She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings” 1 Pet 1:13)
 - b. Seven Hills = seven hills in Rome
 (“the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated” Rev 17:9)
 - c. Purple and Red = colors of the Catholic clergy
 (“She [the Whore] is clothed in ‘purple and scarlet’ (verse 4), the colors of the Catholic clergy” David Hunt, *A Woman Who Rides the Beast*)
 - d. Wealth of the Whore = wealth of the Catholic Church
 (She has “gold,” “jewels” etc. Rev 17:4)

The Whore of Babylon = The Roman Empire?

1. Almost all Modern Scholars:
 - a. Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy* (T. & T. Clark, 1993)
 “The book of Revelation uses two major, complementary images of the evil power of Rome. One is the sea-monster (‘the beast’)... the other image is the great city Babylon, first named in 14:8, and then portrayed as a woman, ‘the great harlot’, in chapter 17. Babylon is the city of Rome.” (*Climax*, 343)
 - b. David Aune, *Revelation* (3 vols. Word Biblical Commentary, 1998)
 “While “the great city” is applied to Jerusalem in [Rev] 11:8, in Rev 17-18 the phrase “the great city” refers clearly to Rome, implicitly or explicitly designated “Babylon.” (vol. 3, 959).
2. Reasons:
 - a. Scholars simply *assume* Rome because Rome was “the greatest of cities” for pagans
 - b. The Seven Hills the Woman is Seated Upon = seven hills of Rome
 - c. Scholars turn the Whore and the Beast into *one* Figure rather than two

The Whore of Babylon = The City of Jerusalem

1. Many Catholic Interpreters:
 - a. Michael Barber, *Coming Soon* (Emmaus Road, 2005)
 - b. David Currie, *Rapture* (Sophia Institute, 2003)
 - c. Scott Hahn, *The Lamb’s Supper* (Doubleday, 1999).
2. Jerusalem Interpretation:
 - a. The Whore = wicked city of Jerusalem
 - b. The Beast = the Roman Empire
 - c. The Lamb = Christ and his persecuted Church

Reason #1: John Tells You that the Whore is Jerusalem!

1. The Whore in Revelation 17:

“And the woman that you saw is *the great city* which has dominion over the kings of the earth.” (Rev 17:18)

2. The Measuring of Jerusalem in Revelation 11:

Then I [John] was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told: “Rise and measure *the temple of God* and the altar and those who worship there, 2 but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample over *the holy city* for forty-two months. And I will grant my two witnesses power to prophesy for one thousand two hundred and sixty days... And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that ascends from the bottomless pit will make war upon them and kill them, 8 and their dead bodies will lie in the street of *the great city* which is allegorically called Sodom and Egypt, *where their Lord was crucified*. (Rev 11:1-8)

Reason #2: Jerusalem is Called a “Whore” or “Harlot” in the Old Testament

“How *the faithful city* [Jerusalem] has become a *harlot*, she that was full of justice! Righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers” (Isaiah 1:21)

Again the word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, make known to *Jerusalem* her abominations, When I passed by you again and looked upon you, behold, you were at the age for love... I plighted my troth to you and entered into a covenant with you, says the Lord GOD, and you became mine... And your renown went forth among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through the splendor which I had bestowed upon you, says the Lord GOD. But you trusted in your beauty, and played *the harlot* because of your renown, and lavished your *harlotries* on any passer-by. "How lovesick is your heart, says the Lord GOD, seeing you did all these things, the deeds of a brazen *harlot*... *Adulterous wife*, who receives strangers instead of her *husband*! (Ezekiel 16:1-32)

When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, "Go, take to yourself a *wife of harlotry* and have children of harlotry, for *the land commits great harlotry* by forsaking the LORD." (Hosea 1:2)

Wine and new wine take away the understanding. My people inquire of a thing of wood, and their staff gives them oracles. For a spirit of harlotry has led them astray, and *they have left their God to play the harlot*. They sacrifice on the tops of the mountains, and make offerings upon the hills, under oak, poplar, and terebinth, because their shade is good. Therefore your daughters play the harlot, and your brides commit adultery. (Hosea 4:11-13)

Reason #3: The Beast Destroys the Whore: Rome Destroys Jerusalem

1. The Whore and the Beast are *not* the same figure:

And the ten horns that you saw, they and *the beast will hate the harlot; they will make her desolate* and naked, and devour her flesh and *burn her up with fire*. (Rev 17:16).

2. Rome and Jerusalem worked together:

- a. King Herod: appointed by Roman Empire—not a true king
- b. Pontius Pilate: worked with Jerusalem authorities to crucify Jesus

3. The Roman-Jewish War: ends in destruction and burning of Jerusalem (70A.D.)

The Number of the Beast: 666 (Revelation 13)

1 And I saw *a beast* rising out of the sea, with ten horns and *seven heads*, with ten diadems upon its horns and a blasphemous name upon its heads. And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it *the dragon* gave his power and his throne and great authority... 4 Men worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "*Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?*"... 7 And it [the beast] was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and tongue and nation, 8 and all who dwell on earth will worship it, every one whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of *the Lamb* that was slain...

16 Also, it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, 17 so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. 18 This calls for wisdom: let him who has understanding reckon *the number of the beast*, for it is a human number, its number is *six-hundred and sixty six*. (Rev 13:1-18).

1. The Characters:

- a. The Dragon = Satan
- b. The Beast from the Sea = Roman Empire
- d. The Lamb = Christ

2. The 7 Heads of the Beast and the 7 Caesars (Barber, *Coming Soon*, 6)

"The seven hills are seven heads who are seven kings, 'five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he comes he must remain only a little while.'" (Rev 17:19-10)

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Julius Caesar | 49-44 B. C. |
| 2. Augustus | 31 B.C. – A.D. 14 |
| 3. Tiberius | 14-37 A.D. |
| 4. Caligula (Gaius) | 37-41 A.D. |
| 5. Claudius | 41-54 A.D. |
| 6. Nero | 54-68 A.D. |
| 7. Galba | 68-69 A.D. |

Nero is the sixth king, reigning at the time Revelation is written. The one after Nero, Galba, reigned only "a little while" – six months in fact.

3. The Number of the Beast:

- a. Hebrew Letters: numeric value (like Roman Numerals, I = 1, V = 5, X = 10)
- b. Greek form of "Nero Caesar" transliterated into Hebrew = 666
- c. Ancient Christians: some altered it to *616* (Latin form of Nero in Hebrew)
- d. Caesar Nero demanded *allegiance* (the "mark") and *worship* as a god (cf. Cain)
- e. Satanic Perversion: compare the 144,000 (cf. Rev 7; Exod 13:9)

The Destruction of Jerusalem, the Whore

1 After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority; and the earth was made bright with his splendor. 2 And he called out with a mighty voice, "*Fallen, fallen in Babylon the great!* It has become a dwelling place of demons, a haunt of every foul spirit, a haunt of every foul and hateful bird; for all nations have drunk the wine of her impure passion, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the

merchants of the earth have grown rich with the wealth of her wantonness.” 4 Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, “*Come out of her my people, lest you take part in her sins, let you share in her plagues; 5 for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. 6 Render to her as she herself has rendered, and repay her double for her deeds; mix a double draught for her in the cup she mixed. 7 As she glorified herself and played the wanton (or “whore”), so give her a like measure of torment and mourning. Since in her heart she says, “A queen I sit I am no widow, mourning I shall never see,” 8 so shall her plagues come in a single day, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she shall be burned with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.*” (Rev 18:1-8)

The New Jerusalem: the Virgin Bride

9 Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you *the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.* 10 And in the Spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain, and showed me *the holy city of Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,* 11 having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like jasper, clear as crystal. 12 It had a great high wall with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed... 21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, transparent as glass. 22 And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. (Rev 21:9-22) **For Dr. Pitre’s Bible Studies on CD, go to www.BrantPitre.com**

For more information on the book of Revelation, see Michael Barber’s book, *Coming Soon: Unlocking the Book of Revelation & Applying Its Lessons Today* (Steubenville: Emmaus Road, 2006)

The Final Tribulation, the “Rapture,” and the Second Coming of Christ

What is “the Rapture”?

1. **Rapture**: the secret “snatching away” (or disappearance) of Christians into heaven before the Great Tribulation that will take place at the End of Time.
2. Best Catholic Treatments of Rapture:
 - a. David Currie, *Rapture: the End-Time Error that Leaves the Bible Behind* (Manchester, NH: Sophia Institute, 2003)
 - b. Carl E. Olson, *Will Catholics Be Left Behind?* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2003)
3. **John Nelson Darby**: an ex-Anglican priest living in America (1800-1882)
 - a. Founder of Plymouth Brethren movement
 - b. Friend of the 15 year old Protestant mystic, Margaret MacDonald
 - c. Ultimate Origin: MacDonald’s private revelation of imminent secret rapture
 - d. Rapture would occur, followed by the Great Tribulation
4. Popularity and Spread of the Rapture Doctrine
 - a. Pentecostals: introduced by Edward Irving
 - b. Fundamentalists: 1883 Niagara Bible Conference
 - c. (C. I.) **Scofield Reference Bible**: most popular study in America, up to today!
 - d. Universities: Dallas Theological Seminary, Moody Bible Institute, etc.
 - e. The *Left Behind* Series: Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins
 - e. There are even some Catholics today who accept the Rapture doctrine!

The False Rapturist End-Time Scenario

1. The Secret Rapture of True Believers to Heaven (cf. Bumper Sticker!)
 - a. First Coming: Jesus comes to rescue true believers
 - b. Jesus does not stay, but returns to Heaven
2. The 7 Year Great Tribulation:
 - a. Coming of the Anti-Christ
 - b. Jews Regain Total Control of Jerusalem and Israel
 - c. The Rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple: Reinstitution of Animal Sacrifice
 - d. Jews will have a Second Chance to Accept Jesus Christ
 - e. Anti-Christ Will Gather Gentile Nations to Destroy Jerusalem
 - f. Unprecedented Persecution of Jewish Believers and new Christians
3. Second Coming of Jesus Christ to Earth
4. The Millennial Earthly Kingdom:
 - a. Jesus will conquer wicked Gentile Nations
 - b. Jesus establishes a 1000-year earthly kingdom, centered in Jerusalem
 - c. Promises to King David of “everlasting kingdom” finally fulfilled (2 Samuel 7)
5. Final Judgment and End of the World
 - a. Final Unleashing and Defeat of Satan
 - b. Final Judgment
 - c. Final Resurrection of the Dead
6. Eternity: New Heaven and New Earth
 - a. Church reigns with God in new Heaven
 - b. Redeemed Israel (believing Jews) enjoys Kingdom of David on new Earth

Two Key Rapture Proof-Texts

For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming (Greek *parousia*) of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven... And the dead in Christ will rise first; *then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up* (Latin *rapiemur*) *together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air...* (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17)

...So will be *the coming of the Son of Man*. Then two men will be in the field; *one is taken and one is left*. Two women will be grinding at the mill; *one is taken and one is left*. Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming... Therefore you must also be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect (Matthew 24:39-44)

1. Don't these passages seem to support the Rapture theory?
2. Don't they seem to describe a secret Rapture of Christians to Heaven?
3. Do they mean that some Christians will be "left behind"?
4. NO. They only can be made to mean that if they are taken *out of context*.
5. Context: the key to interpretation.

Jesus and the Rapture

35 *Heaven and earth will pass away*, but my words will not pass away. 36 *But of that day and hour no one knows*, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. 37 *As were the days of Noah*, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the Ark, 39 and they did not know until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two men will be in the field; one is taken and one is left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one is taken and one is left. Watch therefore, for *you do not know on what day your Lord is coming*. 43 But know this, that if the householder had *known* in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have watched and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 Therefore you must also be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect (Matthew 24:34-44; cf. Luke 17:28-37).

1. Different Context than Destruction of Jerusalem (described in Matt 24:1-34):
 - a. Cosmic (not merely local) Destruction: "Heaven and earth will pass away..."
 - b. Unknown Time (not within 40yrs): "But of that day and hour no one knows..."
 - c. Answer to Disciples Question about the Parousia/Second Coming (Matt 24:1-3)
2. Context: The End of the World, not a Secret Rapture!
3. Old Testament Background: the days of Noah (Genesis 6-9)
 - a. Noah: "Took" his Family and Animals into the Ark (cf. Gen 6:18-21; 7:1-10)
 - b. The Wicked: "Left" out of the Ark; left for Judgment/Punishment
 - c. Righteous: will be "taken" into the Kingdom
 - d. Wicked: will be "left" out of the Kingdom
4. Contextual Confirmation: the Parables (Matthew 24-25)
 - a. Wicked Servant: left out of the inheritance of the Kingdom
 - b. The Five Foolish Virgins: left out of the Messianic Banquet
 - c. Man Who Buried His Talent: left out of "entering" the kingdom's Joy

St. Paul and the Rapture

13 But we would not have you be ignorant, brethren, *concerning those who are asleep*, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 14 For *since we believe that Jesus died and rose again*, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. 15 For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that *we who are alive*, who are left until the coming of the Lord, *shall not precede those who have fallen asleep*. 16 For *the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God*. And *the dead in Christ will rise first*; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words. 5:1 But as to the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need to have anything written to you. 2 For you yourselves know well that *the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night*. 3 When people say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as travail comes upon a woman with child, and there will be no escape. 4 But you are not in darkness, brethren for that day to surprise you like a thief. (1 Thessalonians 4:15-5:3)

1. The Question: Which is St. Paul Describing?
 - a. The Secret Rapture of Christians before the Great Tribulation? OR
 - b. The Second Coming of Christ at the End of Time?
2. Context: The Problem of Believers Who Have Died ("Fallen Asleep")
 - a. Thessalonians: Grieving over the Dead as Lost (cf. 1 Corinthians 15)
 - b. Greeks: Lack of Belief in the Resurrection of the Body
 - c. St. Paul: living believers are not "better off" than the dead
3. First Key: The Bodily *Resurrection* of the Dead
 - a. Resurrection: "The dead in Christ will rise first"
 - b. Living Believers: will also be resurrected
 - c. All Resurrected will Meet Christ: be with him forever in Eternity
 - d. Not a Secret Disappearance, but a public Resurrection!
4. Second Key: The *Public* (not Secret) Coming of Christ!
 - a. The Cry of Command
 - b. The Archangel's Call
 - c. The Sound of the Trumpet
5. The Unknown Time of the Second Coming:
 - a. "Like a Thief in the Night"
 - b. Matches Jesus' Teaching on the Second Coming (Matthew 24-25)

The Rapture in the Book of Revelation

1. There is none.

The True Catholic (Biblical) End-Time Scenario

Stage 1: The Ascension, the Millennium, and the “Last Days”

Since the Ascension God’s plan has entered into its fulfillment. *We are already at “the last hour.”* “Already the final age of the world is with us, and the renewal of the world is irrevocably under way; it is even now anticipated in a certain real way, for the Church on earth is endowed already with a sanctity that is real but imperfect.” Christ’s kingdom already manifests its presence through the miraculous signs that attend its proclamation in the Church...” “The kingdom of Christ [is] already present in mystery” “on earth, the seed and the beginning of the kingdom.” (CCC 670, 669).

1. Since the Ascension, we have been in “the last days” and “the final age.”
2. The “Kingdom of God” is “already present” in the Church.
3. The 1000 Year Kingdom (the “Millennial Kingdom”) is NOW (Rev 20:1-10)

Then I [John] saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain. And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years were ended. After that he must be loosed for a little while. Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom judgment was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony to Jesus and for the word of God... They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and they shall reign with him a thousand years. (Rev 20:1-6)

According to the Lord the present time is the time of the Spirit and of witness, but also a time still marked by “distress” and the trial of evil which does not spare the Church and ushers in the struggles of the last days. It is a time of waiting and watching. (CCC 672)

Stage 2: The Conversion of All Israel and the “Delay” of the Parousia

Since the Ascension Christ’s coming in glory has been imminent, even though “it is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority.” [Acts 1:7] This eschatological coming could be accomplished at any moment, even if it and the final trial that precede it are “delayed.” (CCC 673)

The glorious Messiah’s coming is suspended at every moment of history until his recognition by “all Israel,” for “a hardening has come upon a part of Israel” in their “unbelief” toward Jesus... St. Paul [says]; “For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?” [Rom 11:15] The “full inclusion” of the Jews in the Messiah’s salvation, in the wake of the “full number of the Gentiles,” will enable the People of God to achieve “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,” in which “God may be all in all.” (CCC 674).

Stage 3: The Final Tribulation and the Coming of the Antichrist

Before Christ's second coming the Church must pass through a final trial that will shake the faith of many believers. The persecution that accompanies her pilgrimage on earth will unveil the "mystery of iniquity" in the form of a religious deception offering men an apparent solution to their problems at the price of apostasy from the truth. The supreme religious deception is that of the Antichrist, a pseudo-messianism by which man glorifies himself in place of God and of his Messiah come in the flesh. (CCC 675).

Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our assembling to meet him, we beg you, brethren, not to be quickly shaken in mind or excited, either by spirit or by word, or by letter purporting to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and *the man of lawlessness* is revealed, the *son of perdition*, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, *proclaiming himself to be God...* For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. And then *the lawless one will be revealed, and the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by his appearing and his coming.* The coming of the lawless one by the activity of Satan will be with all power and with pretended signs and wonders, and with all wicked deceptions for those who are to perish, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved (2 Thess 2:1-10).

Children, it is the last hour; and you have heard that *antichrist is coming*, so now *many antichrists* have come; therefore we know that it is the last hour... Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? *This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son..* (1 John 2:18, 22)

The Church will enter the glory of the kingdom *only through this final Passover*, when she will follow her Lord in his death and Resurrection. The kingdom will be fulfilled, then, not by a historic triumph of the Church through a progressive ascendancy, but only by God's victory over the final unleashing of evil, which will cause his Bride to come down from heaven. God's triumph over the revolt of evil will take the form of the Last Judgment after the final cosmic upheaval of this passing world (CCC 677)

“The Life of the World to Come”: The Last Judgment and the New Creation

The Catholic End-Time Scenario

1. The Ascension of Jesus and the “Last Days”
2. The Conversion of All Israel
3. The Final Tribulation and the Antichrist
4. The Second Coming of Christ
5. The Resurrection of the Dead
6. The Last Judgment
7. The New Creation

Introduction

1. Many Christians do not know about the New Creation; they have a semi-*Gnostic* view of salvation
 - a. Gnosticism: saw creation as inherently evil; salvation is non-bodily
 - b. Hope for Man’s Soul, but No Hope for Man’s *Body* (much less the universe)
2. The True Christian Hope
 - a. Immortality of the Soul and Resurrection of the Body
 - b. “Restoration” of All Creation (Gk *apokatastasis*; cf. Acts 3:21)
3. The Creed: “Resurrection of the Dead and the Life of the World to Come”

Stage 5 and 6: The Resurrection of the Dead and the Last Judgment

For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself, and has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this, for *the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth*, those who have done good, to *the resurrection of life*, and those who have done evil, to *the resurrection of judgment*. (John 5:26-29).

Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will that will not be known. Whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. I tell you, my friends, *do not fear those who kill the body*, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has power to cast into Gehenna; yes, I tell you, fear him! Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Why, even all the hairs of your head are all numbered. *Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows*. And I tell you, *everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God; but he who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God*. (Luke 12:2-9)

Not every one who says to me, “Lord, Lord,” shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day [the day of Judgment] many will say to me, “Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?” And then I will declare to them, “*I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers*.” (Matt 7:21-23)

The Catechism on the Final Judgment

The resurrection of all the dead, “of both the just and the unjust,” will precede the Last Judgment... *In the presence of Christ, who is Truth itself, the truth of each man’s relationship with God will be laid bare. The Last Judgment will reveal even to its furthest consequences the good each person has done or failed to do during his earthly life*. The Last Judgment will come when Christ returns in glory... Then through his Son Jesus Christ he will pronounce the final word on all history. *We shall know the ultimate meaning of the whole work of creation and of the entire economy of salvation and understand the marvelous*

ways by which his Providence led everything towards its final end. The Last Judgment will reveal that God's justice triumphs over all the injustices committed by his creatures and that *God's love is stronger than death.* (CCC 1038, 1039, 1040).

The Resurrection of the Dead: The Glorification of Soul *and* Body?

We firmly believe, and hence we hope that, just as Christ is truly risen from the dead and lives for ever, so after death the righteous will live for ever with the risen Christ and he will raise them up on the last day. Our resurrection, like his own, will be the work of the Most Holy Trinity... The "resurrection of the flesh" (the literal formulation of the Apostle's Creed) means *not only that the immortal soul will live on after death, but that even our "mortal body" will come to life again.* (CCC 989-90)

"On no point does the Christian faith encounter more opposition than on the resurrection of the body." It is very commonly accepted that the life of the human person continues in a spiritual fashion after death. But how can we believe that this body, so clearly mortal, could rise to everlasting life? (CCC 996, citing St. Augustine)

The Catechism on the New Creation

At the end of time, *the Kingdom of God* will come in its fullness. *After the universal judgment, the righteous will reign forever with Christ, glorified in body and soul.* The universe itself will be renewed: "The Church... will receive her perfection only in the glory of heaven, when will come the time of *the renewal of all things.* At that time, together with the human race, the universe itself, which is so closely related to man and which attains its destiny through him, will be perfectly re-established in Christ." (CCC 1042; Citing Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium* 48)

The New Heavens and the New Earth

Sacred Scripture calls this mysterious renewal, which will transform humanity and the world, "*new heavens and a new earth.*" It will be the definitive realizations of God's plan to bring under a single head "all things in [Christ], things in heaven and things on earth." In this *new universe, the heavenly Jerusalem,* God will have his dwelling among men. "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away." (CCC 1043-44)

"New Heavens and a New Earth": Isaiah

"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth;
and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.
But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create;
for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy...
They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat;
for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity;
for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the Lord, and their children with them...
The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox;
and dust shall be the serpent's food.
They shall not hurt or destroy in *all my holy mountain,*" says the LORD (Isa 65:17-25)

1. A New Creation and a New Jerusalem
2. A Reversal of the Curses of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3)
3. A New Eden:
 - a. Peace among the animals; vegetarianism
 - b. Eden: is “the holy mountain” of God (Ezekiel 28)
4. Isaiah *Ends* by Repeating Prophecy of New Creation (Isa 66:22-24)!

A “New Heavens and the New Earth”: St. Peter

3 First of all you must understand this, that scoffers will come in with scoffing, following their own passions 4 and saying, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of creation.” 5 They deliberately ignore the fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago, and an earth formed out of water and by means of water, 6 through which *the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished*. 7 But by the same word *the heavens and earth that now exist have been stored up for fire*, being kept until *the day of judgment* and destruction of ungodly men. 8 But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slow about his promise as some count slowness, but is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 10 But *the day of the Lord will come like a thief*, and then *the heavens* will pass away with a loud noise, and elements will be dissolved with fire, and *the earth* and the works that are upon it will be burned up. 11 Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, 12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be kindled and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire! 13 But according to his promise *we wait for new heavens and a new earth* in which righteousness dwells. (2 Peter 3:1-13)

1. Two Destructions:
 - a. The Great Flood: *first* destruction by “Water”
 - b. The Final Judgment: *second* destruction by “Fire” (cf. Luke 17)
2. Old Creation will be Destroyed: but this is not the End

“A New Heavens and a New Earth”: The Book of Revelation

1. Then I [John] saw *a new heavens and a new earth*; for *the first heaven and the first earth had passed away*, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, a *new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God*, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; 3 and I heard a great voice from the throne saying, “Behold, *the dwelling* (Gk *skene* or “tabernacle”) *of God is with men*. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; 4 he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and *death shall be no more*, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away. 5 And he who sat upon the throne said, “Behold, *I make all things new*.” (Revelation 21:1-5)

Implications for Mankind

For man, this consummation will be the final realization of the unity of the human race, which God willed from creation and of which the pilgrim Church has been “in the nature of a sacrament.” Those who are united with Christ will form the community of the redeemed, *the “holy city” of God*, “the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.” She will not be wounded any longer by sin, stains, self-love, that destroy or wound the earthly community. *The beatific vision*, in which God opens himself in an inexhaustible way to the elect, will be the ever-flowing well-spring of happiness, peace, and mutual communion. (CCC 1045)

Implications for the Universe

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For the cosmos, Revelation affirms the profound common destiny of the material world and man... The visible universe, then, is itself destined to be transformed, "so that the world itself, restored to its original state, facing no further obstacles, should be at the service of the just," sharing their glorification in the risen Jesus Christ. (CCC 1046-47)

All Creation "Longs" for Our Resurrection

19 *For the creation waits with eager longing for the revelation (Gk *apokalypsis*) of the sons of God; 20 for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now, 23 and not only the creation, but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the Spirit groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. (Romans 8:19-24)*

The New Eden: the World Restored to its "Original State"

Then he showed me [John] *the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the Tree of Life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There shall no more be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and they shall worship him; they shall see his face and his name shall be on their foreheads. And night shall be no more; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light and they shall reign for ever and ever.*" (Revelation 22:1-5)

Jesus and the New Creation

Then Peter said in reply, "Lo, we have left everything and followed you. What then shall we have?" Jesus said to them, "Amen, I say to you, *in the new creation, when the Son of Man shall sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the tribes of Israel.*" (Matthew 19:27-28)

1. "New Creation": Literally, the "Re-genesis" (Greek *palingenesis*)
 - a. "New World" (RSVCE)
 - b. "Regeneration" (Douay-Rheims)
 - c. "New Age" (NAB)
 - d. "The Renewal of All Things" (NRSV)
2. Jesus' Vision of the Future:
 - a. Not Just a Spiritual Kingdom
 - b. But a Restored Creation
 - c. "Heaven and Earth" will not simply "Pass Away," but be Recreated

When This Happen? Only the Father Knows

We know neither the moment of the consummation of the earth and of man, nor the way in which the universe will be transformed. The form of this world, distorted by sin, is passing away, and we are taught that God is preparing a new dwelling and a new earth in which righteousness dwells, in which happiness will fill and surpass all the desires of peace arising in the hearts of men." (CCC 1048; Citing Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes* 39.1)

Heaven and the New Creation

The ultimate end of the whole divine economy is the entry of God's creatures into the perfect unity of the Blessed Trinity. ...This perfect life with the Most Holy Trinity—this communion of life and love with the Trinity, with the Virgin Mary, the angels, and all the blessed—is called "heaven." Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme definitive happiness. (CCC 260, 1024)