

Review: John 14:15-17; Indwelling of Christ, v. 18; Sequence of Destruction of the Universe & Great White Throne Judgment; Prophecy of the Resurrection, v. 19

John 14:18 - “I will not abandon you as orphans; I will come to you.”

- 1) The apostles are the Lord’s sheep. He promises them that He will not leave them without care, protection, provision, and guidance.
- 2) This is accomplished by enduement and later by the indwelling and mentorship of the Holy Spirit.
- 3) The phrase “I will come to you” has three applications: (1) post-resurrection appearances, or Christophanies, (2) the indwelling of Christ at Pentecost, and (3) the Rapture of the Church.

John 14:19 - “After a little while [a day and a night] the world [unbelievers] will see Me no longer [until after the destruction of the universe at the Great White Throne judgment], but you will see Me [post-resurrection Christophanies]. Because I live [resurrection from the dead], you will live also [resurrection of believers at the Rapture].”

- 1) Once the Lord was buried, no one except believers recognized him following His resurrection. But the Lord promises the apostles that they will see Him. They will recognize Him in resurrection body during his forty-day ministry and following the ascension they will recognize Him through doctrine.
- 2) Once physical sight of the Lord is lost at His ascension in Acts 1:9-11, the apostles were left with only the enduement of the Holy Spirit to sustain them until Pentecost.

An example of conflicting information is found in the parenthetical comment just noted in

John 14:19 - After a little while the world will see Me no longer [until after the destruction of the universe at the Great White Throne judgment] ...

John Smith is presently editing the next book to be published by Joe Griffin Media Ministries and we recently discussed the sequence of events that occurs at the close of human history. A question arose as to which comes first within that sequence. I had written that the destruction of the earth and universe preceded the great white throne judgment, but John cited the following excerpt from:

Thieme, R. B., Jr. *The Divine Outline of History: Dispensations and the Church*. 2d ed. Edited by Wayne F. Hill. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 1999), 77-78:

The Conclusion of the Millennium. After one thousand years of perfect environment, Satan will be released from captivity. The devil will lead rebellious elements of the human race and his own fallen angels against our Lord's perfect environment. Called the Gog and Magog revolution, this final outburst of satanic violence will be suppressed immediately. This will terminate the appeal trial of Satan. Its purpose achieved, human history will end. (p. 77)

At that time all millennial believers will receive their resurrection bodies. At the same time God will resurrect all unbelievers separately from believers (Rev. 20:11-15). The purpose of this resurrection will be to judge all who never accepted salvation. Presiding in terrible majesty from the Great White Throne of the Last Judgment, our Lord Jesus Christ will sentence them to join fallen angels in the Lake of Fire, separated from God forever (Rev. 20:14-15). (pp. 77-78)

Finally will come the destruction of the universe, the creation of a new universe, and the commencement of the eternal state (2 Peter 3:7, 10-13; Rev 21:1-22:5). (p. 78)

I agreed with John that this reference was to be taken seriously and that my statement placing the destruction of the universe before the great white throne judgment should be reversed in the manuscript. However, afterward I had second thoughts. I knew I didn't pull the sequence I had written out of thin air; so I began to do some research. I discovered the following excerpt from:

Thieme, R. B., Jr. *Revelation: 20:11*. (Houston: unpublished pulpit notes: Revelation: 457-671, 1981, from MP3 audio: 26:30-47:50):

Revelation 20:11 - “Then I saw a great white throne, and he who was sitting [κάθημαι, *kathēmai*] on it, from whose presence the earth [γῆ, *gē*] and heaven [οὐρανός, *ouranos*] have vanished [φεύγω, *pheugō*]; consequently no inhabited space was found for them.”

The judge is mentioned in the next phrase, “and he who was sitting on it.” We have the present active participle of the verb κάθημαι [*kathēmai*] to indicate that the judge is now in the court. The present tense is a futuristic present noting an event which has not yet occurred but is regarded as so certain in thought that it may be contemplated as already coming to pass. The active voice: Jesus Christ produces the action of the verb, He is the Judge occupying the bench and presiding over the court of the last judgment. The participle is circumstantial.

It is fitting that Jesus Christ as the only Savior should occupy the judge’s bench. Those who rejected His saving work face Him at the judgment bar. By refusing to believe on Him in time the unbeliever will find that our Lord is a reality when they are on the edge of eternity. They refused to face the fact that Christ is the Savior in time; now they will face the fact that Christ is the judge for all eternity.

The destruction of the universe is mentioned next to indicate that this courtroom finds that there is no longer a universe for those who have failed to make the right decision in time. So we have the phrase, “from whose presence the earth and heaven have vanished.” So just before this judgment occurs both earth and heaven have vanished. We have two nouns as a dual subject. The first is the noun γῆ [*gē*] referring to planet earth and also there is οὐρανός [*ouranos*] referring to the rest of the universe. They are said to have fled. This is the aorist active indicative of the verb φεύγω [*pheugō*], and it actually means here to vanish. The old universe has disappeared.

The culminative aorist tense contemplates the destruction of the universe in its entirety at the end of the Millennium after the Gog revolution, but regards it from the viewpoint of existing results, namely the last judgment and the creation of the new earth to follow. The active voice: heaven and earth produce the action of the verb. The indicative mood is declarative for the destruction of the universe which is the last item on the agenda before all unbelievers are resurrected and judged. The last judgment, known as great white throne, immediately follows the destruction of the universe. So the last judgment follows the termination of the Millennium, the release of Satan from his one thousand years incarceration, and following the Gog revolution and the destruction of the universe.

For a brief resume of the destruction of the historical universe in a little more detail we look to 2 Peter 3:5-14:

Verses 10-12 gives us the story of the destruction of the universe which occurs at the end of the Millennium.

2 Peter 3:10 - But the day of the Lord [a portion of the day of the Lord dealing with the destruction of the present universe and the last judgment of all unbelievers] will come like a thief [the thief in the ancient world had to take his victims by surprise], in which the heavens [the present universe] will vanish with a sudden roar, and the elements will be dissolved with intense heat, both the earth and the works in it [reference to the book of works, the basis for indictment at the last judgment] will be investigated [the future passive indicative of εὑρίσκω, *huriskō* and it is a reference to the last judgment which follows the destruction of the universe].

Note that both the destruction of the present universe and the last judgment are both related and sequential. The destruction of the present universe is followed by the last judgment in which the unbeliever is indicted by his good works found in the “books according to their works.”

Revelation 20:11 - Then I saw a great white throne, and he who was sitting on it, from whose presence the earth and heaven have vanished; consequently no inhabited space was found for them.

v. 12 - Then [sequential use of the conjunction καί, kai] I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written into the books, according to their works.

Previous to the teaching of Revelation 20:11 and the publication of *The Divine Outline of History*, this sequence of subtitles appears in:

Thieme, R. B., Jr. *Dispensations*. Rev. ed. (Houston: Berachah Tapes & Publications, 1972), 19-20:

Age of Christ.

The Second Advent of Christ

The Baptism of Fire

Perfect environment for one thousand years

The Second Advent of Satan [the Gog and Magog revolution]

Destruction of the universe: this will occur as recorded in 2 Peter 3:7-13, when the earth as we know it will no longer exist.

The Last Judgment: a final judgment of all unbelievers following the destruction of the earth. Jesus Christ will be the Judge.

In addition we find that this sequence of events is substantially presented by J. Dwight Pentecost in his book *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1958, 553).

Also, the *NET Bible* has the following “translator’s note” at Revelation 20:12, “Here *καί* (*kai*) has been translated as “then” to indicate the implied sequence of events within the vision.”

The book, *The Divine Outline of History* was edited for R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries by Wayne F. Hill and I believe this is a case of a statement slipping through the cracks. You must now decide from the teaching ministries of the Holy Spirit which occurs first: the destruction of the earth and universe or the great white throne judgment?