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From Earth to Heaven and Back Again



By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #140 ~

Do you see where you are going, where you are headed? Do you know the future God has planned for you? I am not just talking about going to heaven. If you are a Christian, it's true that you are heading to heaven, but that's too simplistic, for there's much more than that. Here's your future – you'll be on earth until you die or are raptured, and then you will be in heaven, but only for a short while, for then you will come back to earth to reign with Jesus Christ during the millennial kingdom age. Let me explain this further:

We now live on this earth, but it's not for long. That's because we live in the end-times which means it won't be that many years before the end of this age and the rapture of the church. We couldn't say this 1000 years ago or even 200 years ago, but the fact that the Jews are back in their land gives us a whole new perspective on what God is now doing on this earth, where things are headed, and His timing in all this.

No one knows exactly when Christ will come back, but with all that's happening in the world, it's not going to be centuries, but more like decades, whether that's 10, 20, 30 or 50 years or so. That we live in the end-times means you may not have a normal life-span of 70-80-90 years. You may even suffer a martyr's death or be one of the raptured saints.

God-prophesied events will be taking place, and increasingly so, and this means the Day (of Christ) is drawing near (Hebrews 10:25), and with that, the rapture and the age to come. In the meantime, there's work for you to do, God-ordained work, eternal work, which relates to the lost, the church, and Christ's return. And remember, you will not die, or be raptured, until all the work God wants you to do is completely done. Acts 13:22, 36

Then we will be in heaven, which will be so wonderful, being with Jesus and all the saints who have gone on before us; but we won't be there for long. If you're raptured, you will be in heaven for less than four years. That's because the rapture of the church occurs sometime during the 2nd half of Daniel's 70th week, a 7-year period. One half of 7 years is 3½ years, and that plus the 75 days (Daniel 12:11-12), is less than four years. I couldn't figure in the length of the great tribulation, for it's duration is unknown to us, but it will make it much less than four years. (This tribulation time starts soon after the midpoint of this 70th week.) What I am saying is that raptured Christians will have a very short stay in heaven before they head back to earth for the start of Christ's kingdom age.

The other possibility is that you will die and go to heaven before the rapture ever takes place. Because we live in the end times, you won't be in heaven very long before this age comes to an end and the church is raptured. But you will come down to the skies above the earth for the

rapture, and then immediately head back to heaven with Christ and the raptured believers, staying there for a few more years until the start of the kingdom age. But whether you die or are raptured, the fact that you live in the end-times forces you to conclude that you won't be in heaven that long before you head back to earth to begin reigning with Christ. Think of it this way: you are not going to be in heaven that many years compared to Martin Luther (473 years as of now), Paul (~ 1950 years as of now), Abraham (~ 3900 years as of now), and billions of other believers.

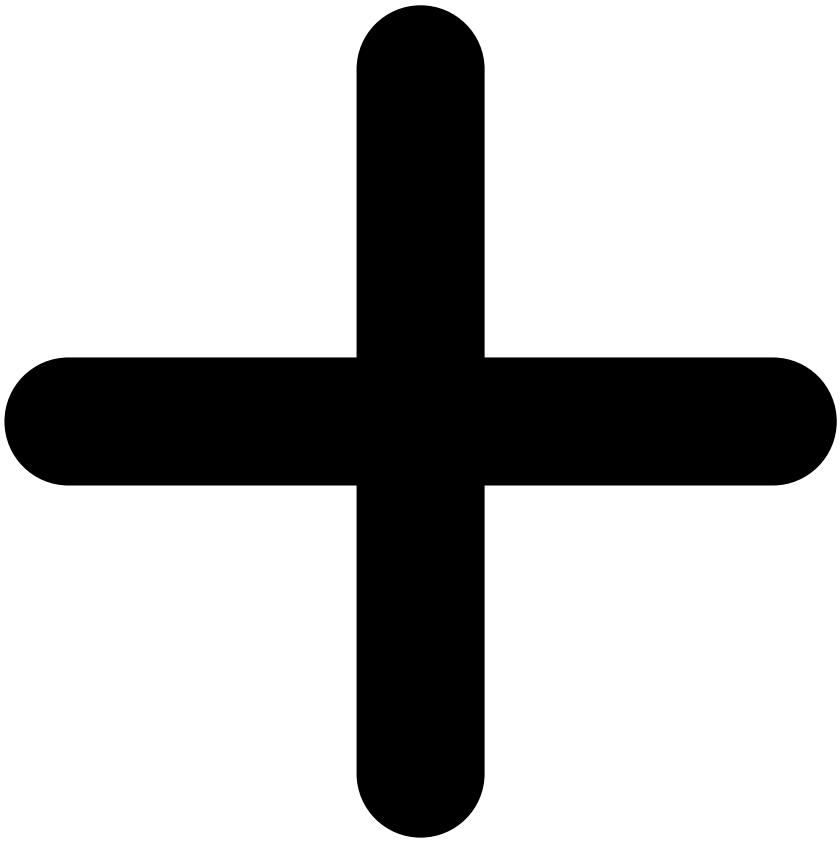
Then we will be back on earth. Revelation 3:26-27, 5:10, 20:6 all tell us that we will be reigning and ruling with Christ on earth. This doesn't mean you won't ever head back to heaven for visits, for I believe you will. But your life during the millennial kingdom, that glorious 1000-year period, is focused on earth, worshiping Christ, and helping Him fulfill His purposes. It will be like nothing you have ever seen or imagined, having a brand-new body, enjoying fellowship with saints, perfectly doing the work God wants you to do, and seeing His plans for the Jewish people being carried out. What an amazing and incredible time that will be!

That's your future, and a future, for many of you, that will come sooner than you think. That's because the length of time between now and when you get to heaven, plus the length of time you will be in heaven before you head back to earth, is not as long as you may think. Let me say it this way: the time between now and the end of this age, plus the time between the end of this age and the start of the next age, is a relatively short period of time. Daniel 9:24-27 (Daniel's 70th week) and the book of Revelation help us to understand when all this will take place. Revelation 6:1-11 tells us what happens in the years leading up to the end of the age; Revelation 6:12-17 describes the signs that will occur immediately before the end of the age; Revelation 7:9-14 is in reference to the rapture, which takes place immediately after the end of the age; Revelation 8-9, 16, 19 tells us about the interval between the ages; and Revelation 20 gives us some information about the next age,

the millennial kingdom age.

In conclusion, you need to be thinking about Christ's coming, and being in heaven, and being back on earth, and that it won't be long before all this takes place. A whole lot needs to happen from now to the start of the next age – wars, famines, earthquakes, global gospel preaching, the Antichrist ruling, great persecution, apostasy, abomination of desolation, the rapture, the Day of the Lord, the salvation of the Jews – and it's all going to take place in a short time-frame. But for now, God has important work He wants you to do before Jesus Christ returns, and begins His reign over this world. *"Behold, I am coming soon."* Revelation 22:7, 12, 20

P.S. I don't know if you have taken the opportunity to look at all the charts, but there's much there that will help you better understand the timing of future prophetic events. I want to encourage you to go over them, for I am convinced they will give you more clarity about the future God has for you. The position of the person in each of the charts is to help you see that there isn't much time left before the end of this age and the coming of Christ.



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