

The Sequence of End-Time Events

A Seventh-day Adventist Perspective on the Second Coming, Millennium, and New Earth

This document outlines the biblical sequence of end-time events as taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It uses the Church's officially voted Fundamental Beliefs as the primary denominational source, supplemented by material from the Biblical Research Institute and Ellen G. White where a claim goes beyond the precise wording of the Fundamental Beliefs. Scripture remains the primary authority. Bible quotations are from the World English Bible (WEB), a public-domain translation. ^{1,2,3,4}

Phase 1: The Second Coming of Jesus

The Second Coming is the literal, personal, visible, audible, worldwide, and glorious return of Jesus Christ. It is not a secret event. At His return, the righteous dead are resurrected, the righteous living are glorified, and both groups are taken to heaven; the unrighteous living die. ²

The Righteous (Living and Dead) and Their Ascension to Heaven

When Christ returns, those who died trusting in Him are resurrected first. The righteous who are still alive are changed: mortality puts on immortality and corruption puts on incorruption. Together they are caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. ^{2,5}

Seventh-day Adventists therefore teach that the redeemed are taken to heaven with Christ, rather than beginning a millennial reign among mortal nations on the present earth. ^{2,3}

Where are they? The righteous, both resurrected and living, leave the earth and ascend with Jesus in glorified, incorruptible, immortal bodies.

JOHN 14:1-3

“Don’t let your heart be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many homes. I am going to prepare a place for you. I will come again, and will receive you to myself; that where I am, you may be there also.”

1 THESSALONIANS 4:16-17

“The Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with God’s trumpet. The dead in Christ will rise first. Then the living righteous will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.”

1 CORINTHIANS 15:51-53

“We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. The dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. This mortal must put on immortality.”

The Lost (Living and Dead)

At Christ's return, the unrighteous who are alive die in the glory and judgment associated with His appearing. The unrighteous who had already died remain in their graves. Their resurrection does not occur until the thousand years have ended. ^{2,3,5}

Adventist interpreters connect the desolation of the earth with passages such as Jeremiah 4:23-27 and 25:33, and understand the sword or breath proceeding from Christ as imagery of His decisive judgment rather than as a human military weapon. ^{3,6}

Where are they? All the lost are dead. Those who were alive at Christ's appearing have died, while the previously dead remain in their graves on the desolate earth.

ISAIAH 11:4

"He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips he will kill the wicked."

2 THESSALONIANS 2:8

"Then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will kill with the breath of his mouth, and destroy by the manifestation of his coming."

REVELATION 20:5

"The rest of the dead didn't live until the thousand years were finished."

Phase 2: The Millennium (The 1,000 Years)

The Millennium is the thousand-year period between the resurrection of the righteous at Christ's return and the later resurrection of the unrighteous. During this period the redeemed are in heaven with Christ, while the earth is desolate and without living human inhabitants. ^{3,5}

The Earth and Satan's Captivity

Because the righteous are in heaven and the unrighteous are dead, Satan and his angels are confined to the ruined earth. Adventists commonly explain Satan's chain as a chain of circumstances: he is unable to deceive the nations because no living nations remain for him to deceive. ^{3,6}

Where are they? Satan and the fallen angels are confined to the desolate earth throughout the thousand years.

REVELATION 20:1-3

"An angel seized the dragon, the old serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, so that he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years were finished."

The Righteous in Heaven: The Millennial Judgment

During the thousand years, the redeemed reign with Christ and participate in judgment. The official Adventist statement says that this judgment examines the records of the unrighteous dead and demonstrates the justice of

God's dealings with them. It is therefore better to describe this as a transparent review and confirmation of God's justice than to present particular imagined questions asked by the saved as formal doctrine. ^{3,7}

This phase contributes to the vindication of God's character in the great controversy: God's judgments are shown to be just, merciful, and consistent with the freedom He has given His creatures. ^{3,7}

Where are they? The righteous are in heaven, reigning with Christ and participating in the millennial judgment.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:2-3

"Don't you know that the saints will judge the world? Don't you know that we will judge angels?"

REVELATION 20:4

"I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. They lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years."

Phase 3: The End of the Millennium and Final Judgment

At the close of the thousand years, Christ and the redeemed descend to the earth with the New Jerusalem. The unrighteous dead are raised in the second resurrection, and Satan is released because human beings are once again alive for him to deceive. ^{3,5}

The Resurrection of the Lost

The resurrected unrighteous are gathered by Satan in opposition to God and His people. The righteous remain secure in the Holy City. The biblical text places this final confrontation after the thousand years. ³

Where are they? The lost are resurrected outside the Holy City on the earth. The righteous are with Christ in the New Jerusalem.

REVELATION 21:2

"I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband."

REVELATION 20:7-8

"After the thousand years, Satan will be released from his prison. He will come out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth and gather them together to war."

The Final Eradication of Sin (The Lake of Fire)

Satan leads the resurrected lost in a final attempt against the Holy City. God's judgment is then executed. Fire destroys Satan, his angels, and the lost. Adventists understand the lake of fire as the second death: a complete and irreversible destruction, not an endless preservation of sinners in conscious torment. ^{3,8}

The duration and degree of judgment belong to God, but its final result is the extinction of sin and sinners. Evil is not immortalized. The universe is permanently freed from rebellion, suffering, and death. ^{3,8}

REVELATION 20:9

“They went up over the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. Fire came down out of heaven from God and devoured them.”

REVELATION 20:14-15

“Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death. If anyone was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.”

Phase 4: The New Heavens and New Earth

After the final judgment, God cleanses and renews the earth. The New Earth becomes the eternal home of the redeemed. God Himself dwells with His people, and suffering, death, mourning, and pain are gone forever. ⁴

The statement that the final fire both destroys evil and cleanses the earth is common in Adventist teaching and in Ellen G. White’s account. The official Fundamental Belief focuses on the result: a renewed earth in which righteousness dwells and the great controversy has ended. ^{4,9}

God Dwells with His People

Where are they? The redeemed live forever on the renewed earth in direct fellowship with God.

REVELATION 21:1-4

“I saw a new heaven and a new earth. God’s dwelling is with people, and he will dwell with them. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; neither will there be mourning, crying, nor pain any more.”

REVELATION 22:3-5

“There will be no curse any more. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face. The Lord God will illuminate them, and they will reign forever and ever.”

Reconciling Old Testament Prophecies

Old Testament prophets sometimes describe restoration in terms of Jerusalem, the land, a temple, long life, peaceful animals, and nations coming to worship. Adventist interpretation reads these passages through the New Testament’s fulfillment in Christ and through Revelation’s final picture of the New Earth. Care is needed because not every detail is handled identically by every Adventist interpreter. ^{10,11}

1. The Principle of Conditional Prophecy

Many promises made to ancient Israel were conditional upon covenant faithfulness. Jeremiah 18:7-10 states the principle explicitly: announced blessing or judgment may be altered in response to obedience or rebellion. Adventist scholars therefore distinguish conditional classical prophecy from the more fixed symbolic sequences of apocalyptic prophecy. ^{10,12}

The original document’s statement that every national or geographical promise was simply forfeited was too sweeping. A more careful formulation is that many restoration promises were conditional, that Israel’s covenant

role reached its fulfillment in Christ, and that the New Testament reapplies Israel's covenant language to the multinational people of God. ^{10,11}

2. Fulfillment in Christ and the People of God

The New Testament identifies those who belong to Christ as Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. It also applies to the Christian community language first spoken of Israel, including "a chosen race" and "a royal priesthood." Adventists commonly describe this continuity as spiritual Israel, while affirming that Jewish and Gentile believers are saved on the same basis: faith in Jesus Christ. ¹¹

GALATIANS 3:28-29

"There is neither Jew nor Greek. You are all one in Christ Jesus. If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring and heirs according to promise."

1 PETER 2:9

"You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

3. Ultimate Fulfillment in the New Earth

The broad promises of cosmic peace, freedom from harm, universal worship, and God dwelling with His people reach their complete and permanent fulfillment in the New Earth. Revelation draws heavily on Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah and places their restoration imagery beyond the final judgment, not in a temporary kingdom containing both immortal saints and unconverted mortal nations. ^{4,10,11}

Zechariah 14

Zechariah 14:4 describes the Lord standing on the Mount of Olives and the mountain splitting. Ellen G. White applies this scene to the end of the millennium, when Christ descends with the New Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives becomes a great plain for the city. This is a well-established Adventist interpretation, but it should be identified as an interpretive synthesis rather than quoted as wording from the Fundamental Beliefs. ⁹

Isaiah 11 and Isaiah 65

Isaiah's pictures of the wolf dwelling with the lamb, the absence of harm on God's holy mountain, and the creation of new heavens and a new earth are understood as reaching their fullest realization in the eternal New Earth. Some features of Isaiah 65 reflect the language and conditions through which restoration was originally presented to ancient Israel; Revelation 21-22 clarifies the final state by explicitly excluding death, pain, and the curse. ^{4,10}

The Sequence of End-Time Events

A Seventh-day Adventist perspective

Bible references included in each phase

1



Phase 1: The Second Coming of Jesus

Key components:

- Jesus returns visibly, audibly, and gloriously
- The righteous dead are resurrected
- The righteous living are transformed
- The redeemed meet Jesus in the air and go to heaven
- The unrighteous living perish at His coming

Bible references:

John 14:1–3;
1 Thessalonians 4:16–17;
1 Corinthians 15:51–53;
2 Thessalonians 2:8



At Christ's return, the saved—both resurrected and living—receive immortality and are taken to heaven with Jesus. The lost are left dead on the earth.

2



Phase 2: The Millennium (1,000 Years)

Key components:

- The redeemed reign with Christ in heaven
- The saints participate in judgment
- The earth is desolate and without living human inhabitants
- Satan and his angels are bound by circumstances on earth
- Satan can no longer deceive the nations

Bible references:

Revelation 20:1–5;
1 Corinthians 6:2–3



During the thousand years, the redeemed are in heaven with Christ, while the earth lies desolate. Satan is confined to the ruined earth and cannot deceive anyone.

3



Phase 3: The End of the Millennium & Final Judgment

Key components:

- The New Jerusalem descends from heaven
- The unrighteous dead are resurrected
- Satan is released and deceives the nations again
- The lost surround the Holy City
- Fire from God falls and brings the second death

Bible references:

Revelation 20:7–15;
Revelation 21:2



At the close of the millennium, Christ and the redeemed descend in the Holy City. The lost are raised, make one final rebellion, and then face God's final judgment.

4



Phase 4: The New Heavens and New Earth

Key components:

- God renews and recreates the earth
- The redeemed dwell with God forever
- Death, pain, sorrow, and the curse are gone
- Peace, joy, and righteousness fill the new creation
- God's people reign forever and ever

Bible references:

Revelation 21:1–4;
Revelation 22:3–5



After sin is fully eradicated, God creates the New Earth as the eternal home of the redeemed. His people live forever in direct fellowship with Him.



Summary flowchart for teaching and study • Scripture quotations summarized from the Bible



Summary Timeline

Stage	Event	Summary
1	Second Coming	Christ returns visibly and gloriously; the righteous dead are raised; the righteous living are transformed; all the redeemed are taken to heaven; the unrighteous living die.
2	The Millennium	The redeemed reign with Christ in heaven and participate in judgment. The unrighteous remain dead. Satan and his angels are confined to the desolate earth.
3	Close of the Millennium & Final Judgment	Christ, the redeemed, and the New Jerusalem descend. The unrighteous are raised, Satan deceives them, and they surround the Holy City. God's justice is universally demonstrated. Fire brings the second death and permanently eradicates Satan, sin, and sinners.
4	New Earth	God renews the earth and dwells with the redeemed forever. Death, suffering, and the curse are no more.

References and Bibliography

The numbered references below correspond to the superscript source numbers in the text. Officially voted belief statements are listed first; supplementary interpretive sources follow.

1. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. "What We Believe." Adventist.org. <https://adventist.org/beliefs/> . The official beliefs page explains that Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold 28 Fundamental Beliefs as expressions of biblical teaching.
2. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. "The Second Coming of Christ" (Fundamental Belief 25). Adventist.org. <https://adventist.org/beliefs/official/second-coming> .
3. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. "The Millennium and the End of Sin" (Fundamental Belief 27). Adventist.org. <https://adventist.org/beliefs/official/millennium-and-the-end-of-sin> .
4. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. "The New Earth" (Fundamental Belief 28). Adventist.org. <https://adventist.org/beliefs/official/the-new-earth> .
5. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. "Death and Resurrection" (Fundamental Belief 26). Adventist.org. <https://adventist.org/beliefs/official/death-and-resurrection> .

6. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. *Seventh-day Adventists Believe: An Exposition of the Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*. 2nd ed. Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005. See especially chapters 25-28.
7. Rodríguez, Ángel Manuel. "The Millennium and the Judgment." Biblical Research Institute materials on Revelation 20 and the millennial judgment. Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.
8. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. "The Great Controversy" and "The Wages of Sin" themes in the official belief material concerning the end of sin; see also [Adventist.org](https://adventist.org/beliefs/bible/end-times/will-there-be-an-end-to-sin), "A New Era: The End of Sin." <https://adventist.org/beliefs/bible/end-times/will-there-be-an-end-to-sin> .
9. White, Ellen G. *The Great Controversy*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911, chapters 41-42, especially the descent of the New Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives, the final judgment, and the renewed earth. A searchable edition is available through the Ellen G. White Estate: <https://egwwritings.org/> .
10. Biblical Research Institute. "God's Plan for Israel." <https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/articles/gods-plan-for-israel> . This article discusses the conditional nature of Israel's covenant and restoration promises.
11. Biblical Research Institute. "God's Church in the End-Time." <https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/articles/gods-church-in-the-end-time> . This article discusses covenant continuity and the biblical concept of spiritual Israel.
12. Biblical Research Institute. "A New Trend in Adventist Eschatology: A Critical Analysis of a Recent Publication." <https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/articles/a-new-trend-in-adventist-eschatology-a-critical-analysis-of-a-recent-publication> . Useful for distinguishing conditional classical prophecy from apocalyptic prophecy.

Further Reading

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. "What Does the Bible Say About Eschatology?" [Adventist.org](https://adventist.org/beliefs/bible/end-times). <https://adventist.org/beliefs/bible/end-times> .

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. "Decoding the Millennium in the Bible." [Adventist.org](https://adventist.org/beliefs/bible/end-times/decoding-the-millennium-in-the-bible). <https://adventist.org/beliefs/bible/end-times/decoding-the-millennium-in-the-bible> .

Biblical Research Institute. "Stages of Biblical Eschatology: A Panoramic View of the Last-Day Events." <https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/articles/stages-of-biblical-eschatology-a-panoramic-view-of-the-last-day-events> .

Biblical Research Institute. "The Footsteps of an Approaching God: Reflections on Ellen G. White's End-Time Eschatology." <https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/articles/the-footsteps-of-an-approaching-god-reflections-on-ellen-g-whites-end-time-eschatology> .