

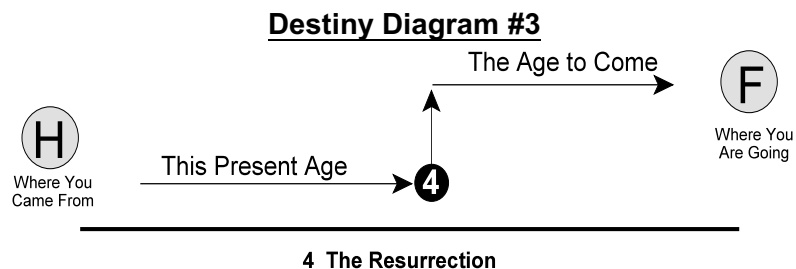
# Lesson # 5

## Life in the Age to Come

In the previous chapter we named the resurrection as one of the basics of the future. The resurrection of the just, the return of Christ and the appearing of the Kingdom government of God on earth essentially marks the end of this present age and the beginning of the next, referred to in the scriptures as “the age to come.” Jesus promised eternal life in the age to come (see Matt 10:29-30). The book of Hebrews also speaks of the age to come (see Heb 6:5).

The age to come is also referred to as the age of peace. In the age to come, Jesus will rule the earth as King of Kings and will bring all things under His authority resulting in peace on earth as it is in heaven. This will be the fulfillment of the that which was spoken about Jesus at His birth when the heavenly host proclaimed, “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”(Luke 2:14). Seven hundred years earlier, Isaiah the prophet foresaw Jesus’ birth and spoke of Him as the Prince of Peace (Is 9:6).

Now it is time to modify our Destiny Diagram. We will insert The Resurrection into our diagram as the number “4” and we will elevate our path line from this point to represent the age to come.



### Overlap of the Ages

However, the Bible indicates that there are *two* resurrections associated with the age to come.

But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.

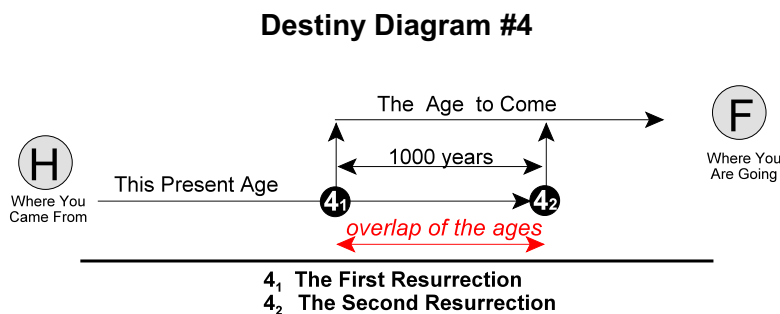
— Luke 14:13-14 (NKJV)

But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

— Revelation 20:4-6 (NKJV)

Both of these passages imply *two* resurrections. Luke 14:14 implies a resurrection of the just separate from the resurrection of the wicked and Revelation Chapter 20 speaks of two resurrections, a

resurrection of the just at the beginning of a 1000 year period (the age to come), and a resurrection of the unjust at the end of this 1000 year period. This requires yet another modification to our diagram.



In our modified diagram, we see the two resurrections illustrated by  $4_1$  and  $4_2$  separated by 1000 years. At the first resurrection, Jesus will return and the just will be raised to immortality along with the just who are living at that time (see 1 Cor 15:51-52). They will enter into “the age come” and reign with Christ. Over these, the second death has no power.

However, the unjust who are living at Christ’s coming will not put on immortality and will continue to live, in some respects as if they are still in this present age. During this time, mortals will be dwelling simultaneously on the earth with immortals. Therefore, we see that the age to come and this present age *overlap* in time.

### The Day of the Lord

The 1000 year period is often called: “The Day of the Lord.” Having put on immortality, God’s people will live for the entire 1000 year period, something that has not been done since sin entered the world through Adam. Because God considers 1000 years to be one day, this may explain why He said to Adam and Eve concerning the forbidden tree, “... for in the *day* that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Genesis 2:17). This would also explain why Paul, when describing the events surrounding this period to the Corinthians said, “The last enemy that will be destroyed is death” (1 Corinthians 15:26). The point that seems to be made here is that when a humans live past the 1000 year mark, the last finger-hold that death has on humanity will slip off and the grip of death will be loosed forever.

Some believe that the 1000 year millennium is not a literal 1000 years. They claim “1000 years” is a symbolic term used to represent an indefinite period of time. They cite the use of “1000” in other places in scripture, such as Psalm 50:10 which states that God owns the cattle on a thousand hills. This example does imply an indefinite number, otherwise the implication would be that God does not own the cattle on hill # 1001. The context makes this obvious.

But there is no such obvious context in Revelation chapter 20. It simply says, “1000 years.” Those who hold to the “indefinite” interpretation also usually point out that, except for Revelation Chapter 20, there are no other places in scripture that refer to a literal 1000 year millennium. They argue that good Bible interpretation requires corroborating scriptures—and I would agree. However, the concept of a 1000 year day becomes a key that reveals many corroborating scriptures concerning this last day. It is found in 2 Peter Chapter 3.

But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

— 2 Peter 3:7-8 (NKJV)

This passage refers to the day of judgment for the ungodly and in the same breath cautions us not to forget that a day with the Lord is as a thousand years and an thousand years as one day. It couldn't be said much clearer. This means that the term "day of the Lord," which can be found in at least 24 verses referring to the day of judgment, is an extended period of time (1000 years). It also means that when the Old Testament prophets say that the day of the Lord is near, it can easily be referring to a time that may be a few thousand years away since, to God, a thousand years is a short time, like one day!

There are also other reasons why the non-literal interpretation of the 1000 year millennium seem unlikely. However, I will not take the time to go into that here.

### **The Period of Restoration**

Peter foresaw this age to come and spoke of it in his message to the people who gathered after the lame man was healed at the beautiful gate (see Acts chapter 3). He challenged those listening saying...

"Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time."

— Acts 3:19-21 (NASB)

Peter understood that the return of Jesus Christ to earth would initiate an age where a mighty restoration would take place. Having returned and subdued all resistance to His kingdom, an age of peace will ensue and Jesus' title, Prince of Peace, will become King of Peace. Because of the righteous government of God ruling the earth, we will see peace and blessing cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Peace and harmony will be so pervasive on earth that even wild carnivores like lions and tigers will cease to hunt other animals and simply eat grass like cattle. No harm will come to children, even if they play by the den of poisonous snakes (Is 2:2-4; 11:4-9).

Peter referred, to the prophets who foretold this age of peace. One of these was the prophet Isaiah. He described this period of restoration this way:

"But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea."

— Isaiah 11:4-9 (NKJV)

Even the life span of mortal humans will be greatly increased! Isaiah says in another place...

Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed.”

— Isaiah 65:20 (NIV)

The picture we get from this passage is a world where difficult pregnancies, birth defects, and sickness in general are a rarity. People will live for much longer periods of time. Life expectancy will be such that any mortal who only lives 100 years, (considered very old in this present age) will be thought to have died young. They will be considered cursed, or in other words, one who was judged early.

In short, the period of restoration of all things will result in a restored earth, earth the way it was originally in the Garden of Eden. Ever since sin entered the human race, all of creation has been groaning and longing for the revealed children of God, who as joint heirs with Christ, will oversee this restoration.

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.

— Romans 8:16-22 (NKJV)

### **Christ's Resurrection: Our Source of Hope**

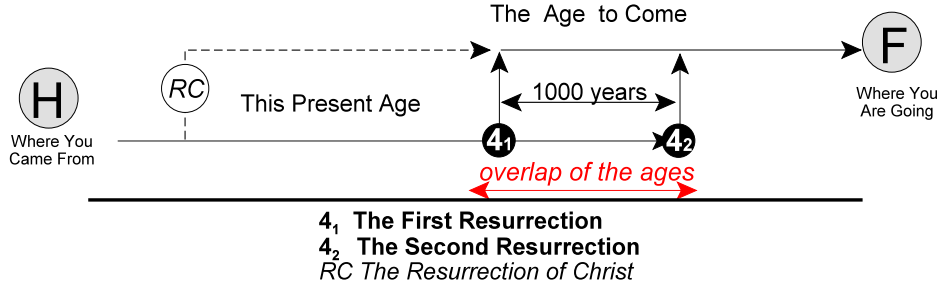
We should point out again that our hope for this glorious future is based in and validated by the resurrection of Christ. The Apostle Paul makes this point in 1 Corinthians Chapter 15 saying, “ But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty” (1 Cor 15:13-14). But, he gives a strong witness of Christ's resurrection.

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

— 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (NKJV)

Therefore, we will modify our Destiny Diagram once again by adding “RC” which stands for the Resurrection of Christ.

## Destiny Diagram #5



### The Age of Amazing Grace

The resurrection of Christ marked the beginning of a time of amazing grace and restraint exercised by God. God is not angry with us. His wrath has been poured out on Jesus. Jesus took our sins upon Himself on the cross, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness - by whose stripes we were healed (see 1 Peter 2:24). What a wonderful opportunity we have in this present age, to bring our sins to Jesus that His blood might cleanse us, that we might receive the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, and that we might come to know Him and the love that He has for us.

The age of grace, the restraint of judgment, and God's patient longsuffering are expressions of His love. May we not be like those citizens in the Parable of Stewardship who hated the Nobleman and saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14). They were slain at His coming. Nor let us be like the lazy servant who lived under the Nobleman's rules, but never really knew Him or His purpose. He was cast into outer darkness.

Our message to those who have drifted away or have not genuinely given their lives to Christ is this: Surrender to Jesus as your Lord and King. Do not delay. His hand is extended in grace. For those who are stubborn and unrepentant in your heart, "...you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed (Romans 2:5 NIV).