

Appendix from *The Last Ocean*

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The Baptism of Fire

Many Christians know enough about Biblical prophecy to understand that the Millennium is the 1000 year earthly reign of Christ that takes place between His second coming and the Great White Throne Judgment. Some realize that it will be the age of peace on earth, which the angels sang about near Bethlehem. However, very few have ever given consideration to the purpose for this golden age of Emmanuel.

The Last Ocean is the first installment in a fiction series set during the Millennium. The stories follow a fictitious character through a difficult evaluation process that lies at the heart of God's purpose for the Millennium, the final perfection of His children. An understanding of this Baptism of Fire, begins with the following passages from the Holy Scripture:

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

1 Corinthians 3:11-15 (NIV)

I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshipped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Revelation 20:4 (NIV)

The passage in Corinthians tells of an agonizing judgment of works that believers face sometime in the future. From other scriptures, we know that it can't be a judgment of sin,¹ and it can't take place in Heaven.² So, when and where does it take place?

Consider the first sentence of Revelation 20:4: *I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge.* Bible students have long pondered who or what these people were judging during the Millennium. Putting these clues together, indicates that Jesus will assign this judgment of works, referred to in the Corinthians passage above, to the martyrs indicated in Revelation chapter twenty.

You may be asking, 'shouldn't Jesus do this Himself?' Jesus is the only one in the universe qualified to judge sin, (which he will do at the Great White Throne judgment after the

¹ Romans 8:33

² Revelation 21:4-5

Millennium is over) but the judgment in First Corinthians chapter three, is not concerned with sin; it's only about the evaluation and reward for works done by followers of Christ.

Secondly, since the incarnation, Jesus has a physical body.³ He is limited by time and space much as He was during His earthly ministry.

Suppose there were half a billion followers of Christ resurrected from all the ages. In 1000 years, Jesus would only have a minute with each person, that is, if He never ate or slept. It would be impossible for Him to carry out the evaluation process described in the Corinthians passage in that length of time.

When life-after-death is taken out of the realm of fairy-tales, it gets a little complicated, doesn't it. That's why most Christians settle for being 'pan-millennialists'. They give up on understanding it and just believe that it will all 'pan-out' in the end. That's not wrong, but God did give the Biblical revelations for a reason. He wants His followers to have excitement about, and confidence in, His eternal plan for them.

All of this is not to say that Jesus will not be involved. He will personally give the rewards.⁴ This critical participation of Jesus will have a significant place in remaining books of the Millennium Chronicles.

What's the hardest thing for Jesus to bring to perfection - soul, body, or mind? By far it's the mind or more accurately the thinking process.

Jesus' death on the cross made it possible for people to be forgiven of their sins and thus receive the Holy Spirit. Jesus called this salvation. At that moment, the soul is perfected, but the body and mind still have a long way to go?

Even though you may be a follower of Christ; you still have all kinds of problems with your body and do you ever struggle with doubt or bad thoughts? Do you ever make the wrong decision even though you're trying to do the right thing? What about your attitude and emotions? Got those under control 100% of the time? No.

In fact, you've never been to the funeral of anyone that had reached perfection in this life even though you've probably known some wonderful Godly people.

So if the body and mind don't reach perfection in this life, when will they? It's imperative that they do because every follower of Christ must be totally perfect before he or she can enter the new heaven and earth.

Many say that complete perfection comes when a person sees Jesus, face to face, for the first time.⁵ That sounds like a fairy-tale doesn't it? Well, it is. Those folks that saw the resurrected Lord and then experienced the filling of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost did not become perfect in body or mind. Peter, struggled with prejudice and Paul admitted still having a rebellious attitude.

What Jesus called 'salvation', is the perfecting of the soul mentioned above. He can accomplish that in an instant when a person surrenders their life to Him. But how is He going to 'save' the body and mind.

³ 1 Timothy 2:5

⁴ 2 Timothy 4:8

⁵ 1 Corinthians 13:12, 1 John 3:2

The best a person can do for their body in this life is live by the moral and dietary instructions of the Bible. Even with that, it will deteriorate and die. It will be perfected however, at the resurrection which the Bible indicates will happen at the beginning of the Millennium.⁶

That answers the question about the perfection of your body. Now, how's He going to perfect your thinking. Try to imagine how difficult that will be. You'll be just as free in Heaven as you are now, but you'll never make a mistake or wrong decision again. Ever. How's that possible?

Those resurrected bodies will include perfect brains, ready for a final reformation; the perfection of attitudes, understanding, and decision making. Everything about the Millennium may be directed toward this purpose, but the Baptism of Fire, described in Corinthians, is the central event Christ will use to complete the redemption of our rebellious minds.

In this review process; we will be convinced once and forevermore that God's way is always right. That our reason can never be a substitute for His wisdom.

Isn't it interesting that He can save a soul in an instant and resurrect a body in the blink of an eye, but for the reformation of our rebellious minds; He's allowed Himself 1000 years.

The presentation of the Millennium in this book is a fictional story with fictional events, places, and people. Many of the details are from the imagination of the author. However, the template is based on Biblical revelation. Eternity does have flesh and blood. It will be exciting and challenging. And one thing is certain, Jesus loves you so much, He will never be satisfied with anything less than your total perfection.

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⁶ Revelation 20:6