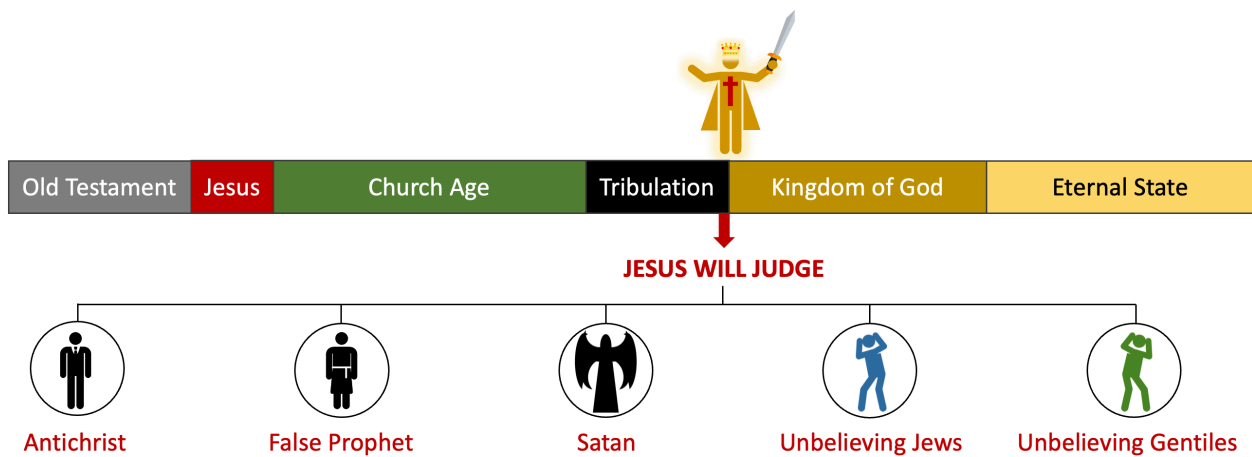


23. How the World Ends – Part 3

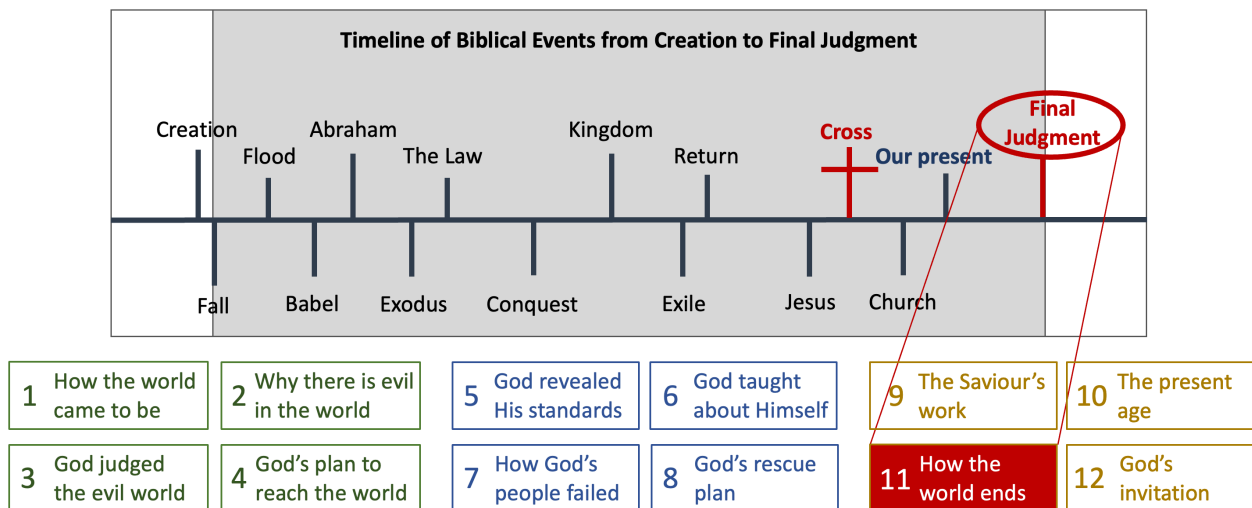
Previously...

The time of the Tribulation will be a terrible time for the nation of Israel. Yahweh will send very severe judgments on them that will also affect the world. But it is through the Tribulation that Israel will finally repent of their rebellion against the Creator-God.

At the end of the seven-year Tribulation, Jesus will return to judge all who are left on the earth.



In this lesson, we will learn more about the final event in mortal history: the Kingdom of God, followed by the Eternal State.



THE THOUSAND-YEAR KINGDOM OF GOD

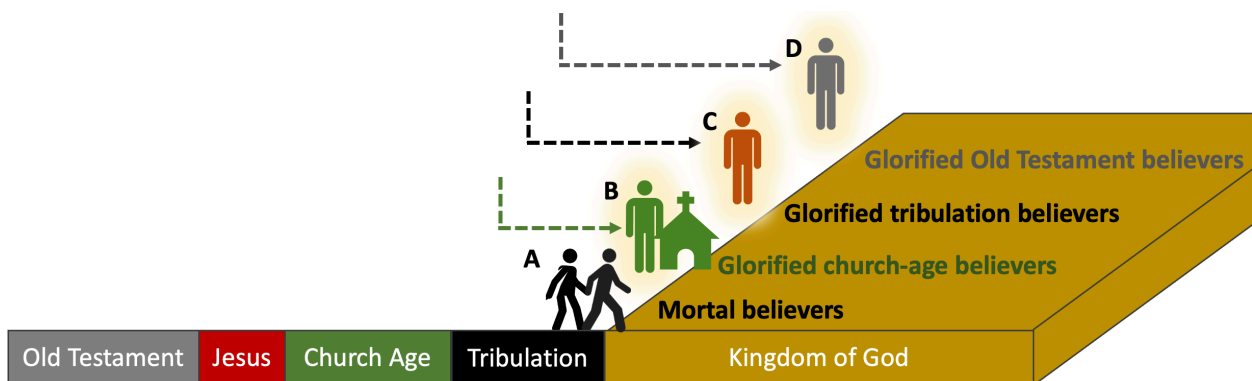
After Jesus completes His judgments, He restarts the Kingdom of God on earth.



The Bible says that the period of the Kingdom will last a thousand years.

Who enters the Kingdom of God?

There will be four groups of believers who enter the Kingdom.



- A. There will be **mortal believers** (both Jews and Gentiles) who survive the Tribulation. They will enter the Kingdom period as mortals. They will continue to marry, have children and build families.
- B. There will be **immortal, glorified, resurrected church-age believers** coming back down from heaven to be on earth again.
- C. There will also be **immortal, glorified, resurrected tribulation believers who had died** during the time of the Tribulation but have now been given their new bodies.
- D. There will also be **immortal, glorified, resurrected Old Testament believers who had died during the Old Testament period**.

All the immortals (that is, those with glorified, resurrection bodies) will be fully righteous and without sin and evil. They will never sin again. The Bible says that their bodies will be different. They neither marry anymore nor have children.

What is the Kingdom of God like?

The Bible gives many details on what the Kingdom of God will be like. Here is a summary.



Nature

Nature in the coming Kingdom will be transformed from that of the world we currently live in. In fact, so many aspects of it will be unfamiliar that it will almost feel like a totally different planet. For example:

- The **sun** will be seven times brighter and the **moon** will be as bright as the sun.
- The **weather and climate** will be very cooperative: it will rain just when the plants need it.
- There will be no **water** shortage because water will flow from every high ground. Harvests will be plentiful and vegetation will always be rich and lush.
- Also, there will no longer be any **wastelands** or unproductive parts of nature. God will cause wastelands to blossom with flowers, deserts to become green with vegetation and the whole earth to be well-watered. The curse that came with the Fall will be reversed significantly.



Rain at
planting time



Plentiful
pastureland



Wonderful
harvests



Streams from
every hill



Sun seven
times brighter

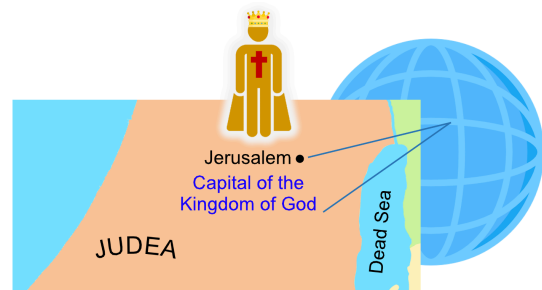
- The **animals** in this new Kingdom will all live in peace with one another and with all mankind. There will no longer be killing or eating of one another in the animal world because all the animals will be plant-eaters.



Government

The supreme leader of the coming Kingdom will be Jesus. He will be both the political as well as religious leader. And He will rule not just the Jews, but the whole world.

The capital of the Kingdom of God will be Jerusalem and it will be from this actual location on earth that God Himself will physically and directly rule.



In addition, the Messiah will not only rule humans, but He will also have total and absolute control over the spirit beings.

This means there will be no rebellion from either humans or spirit beings at this time. Moreover, Jesus would have imprisoned Satan in the bottomless pit for these thousand years, so he won't be able to cause any trouble.

Because of this, there will be real, worldwide peace. There will no longer be any fighting or wars between nations and peoples.

The government of the Kingdom will include resurrected, church-age believers. These perfectly righteous people will now rule the nations with Jesus. Who will rule which nation and people group? Jesus would have determined these roles at the Bema (the Judgment Seat of Christ).

People

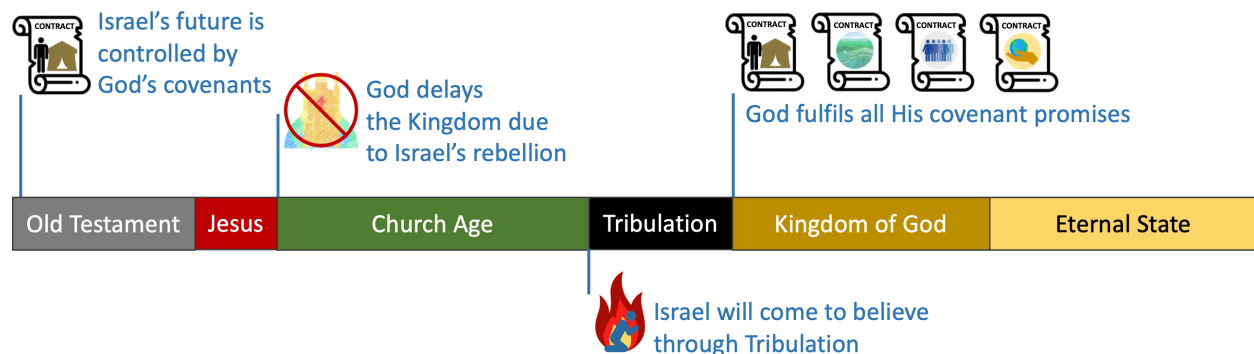
At the end of the Tribulation, Jesus clears the earth of unbelievers. The only mortals left on earth are believing Jews and believing Gentiles. The believing Jews as a group will form the believing nation of Israel. They, along with the believing Gentiles, are the ones who begin the Kingdom period as mortals. They will continue to get married and have children.

These mortals living during this thousand-year period will become very different physically from the humans of today. In the coming Kingdom, God will significantly reverse the curse on the body so that people will live very long, healthy lives. How long? Hundreds of years. (Note that during the time of the Kingdom, there will still be death, but this will change in the next stage of the future, which we will discuss shortly.)

There will also be great economic prosperity for everyone. No one will be poor or lazy. Everyone will lead very satisfying lives, enjoying the fruits of their labour. The people will also exercise the Divine Institution of responsible dominion well. They will take very good care of all natural resources, the environment and the animals.

The nation of Israel

It is at the time of the Kingdom that Yahweh will fulfil all the unconditional promises that He made to the Jews.



Recall that Yahweh had made with them the New Covenant (Lesson 14, pages 4–6), where He promised that He would one day forgive their sins, put His law into their hearts and regather them to their Promised Land forever.



Through Jesus' work on the cross, believing Israel can receive forgiveness.

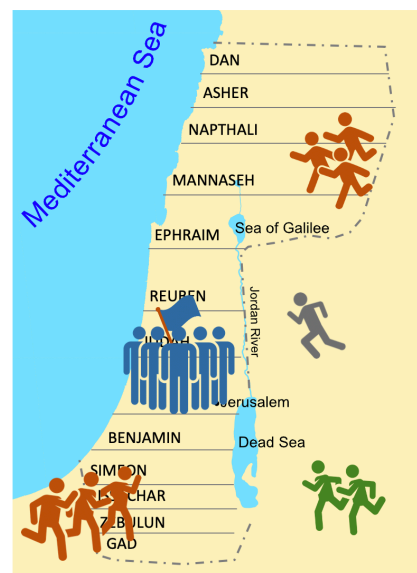


And as a nation, they will receive all that Yahweh has promised them.

Land: The Jews will finally and peacefully possess all the land that Yahweh had promised to Abraham. In fact, the Bible actually records the “land title deed” for all the tribes of Israel during this Kingdom period. The borders of each tribe are described in detail.

Descendants: Yahweh had promised Abraham many descendants. Not only did Jesus come from the line of Abraham, we will see that God will keep His promise of causing this people group to survive throughout the centuries, despite many attempts by evil people to eliminate them.

Worldwide blessing: Recall that throughout the history of Israel, they were not able to be truly obedient to God. So they were never able to fulfil the role of being missionaries for God and therefore, being a blessing to the world.



All the covenantal promises will be fulfilled at the time of the Kingdom. Israel as a nation will finally be the worldwide blessing that God had intended them to be. They will be missionaries to the world.



But with whom will they share the information about God since all mortal people at the start of the Kingdom period are believers in Jesus? The Jews will be sharing about Jesus with the children of the mortals.



The mortals will continue to have children during the thousand years. These children will have the free will that Yahweh gives all mankind. They will be able to choose to be friends with Jesus or choose to be His enemies.

Some people wonder what would happen to the believing mortals who die during the Kingdom period. What we know for sure is that they would receive their resurrection bodies before the start of the eternal state. However, the Bible doesn't give details of when this would happen. Perhaps they would receive their resurrection bodies immediately after mortal death or at the end of the Kingdom period. What is certain is that they will definitely receive their resurrection bodies and go on to eternal life.

At the end of the thousand years, Yahweh tells us that a significant event will happen.

THE FINAL BATTLE

Yahweh will release Satan from the bottomless pit and he will not have changed after a thousand years in captivity.



Despite living under Jesus’ physical and perfect reign during the Kingdom period, the Bible tells us there will be many mortals who will secretly choose to be enemies with Jesus. When Satan is released, he will gather these rebellious mortals into a mighty army to fight against King Jesus.



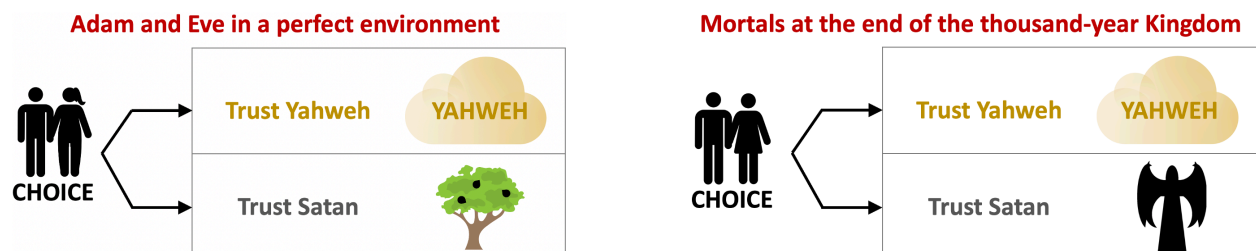
This army will be made up only of rebellious mortals. Immortal, resurrected believers will not be part of this army as they had made their choice to trust in Jesus during their mortal lives and they can never fall or sin again.

Though this mortal army will try to attack God’s faithful people, Yahweh will supernaturally defeat it.

Why does Yahweh want to release Satan from the bottomless pit?

It is to give a real choice to the mortal people living in the Kingdom.

Just as Adam and Eve had the real opportunity to choose between Yahweh and Satan, God will also give the mortals in the Kingdom a real choice, to choose between Jesus and Satan.



But more than that, God wants to show that even without Satan’s presence, mortal mankind can choose to rebel against God in their hearts.

People like to say that if the devil were not around to cause evil in the world and influence mankind to be evil, mankind would be good. Yahweh will show through this future rebellion that mortal mankind’s heart will still be sinful and evil, even without the devil around. Mankind will thus have to take full responsibility for their own sin.

The Final Judgment

After this battle, Yahweh will finally throw Satan into the lake of fire for all eternity.



Then Yahweh will completely destroy the heavens and earth.



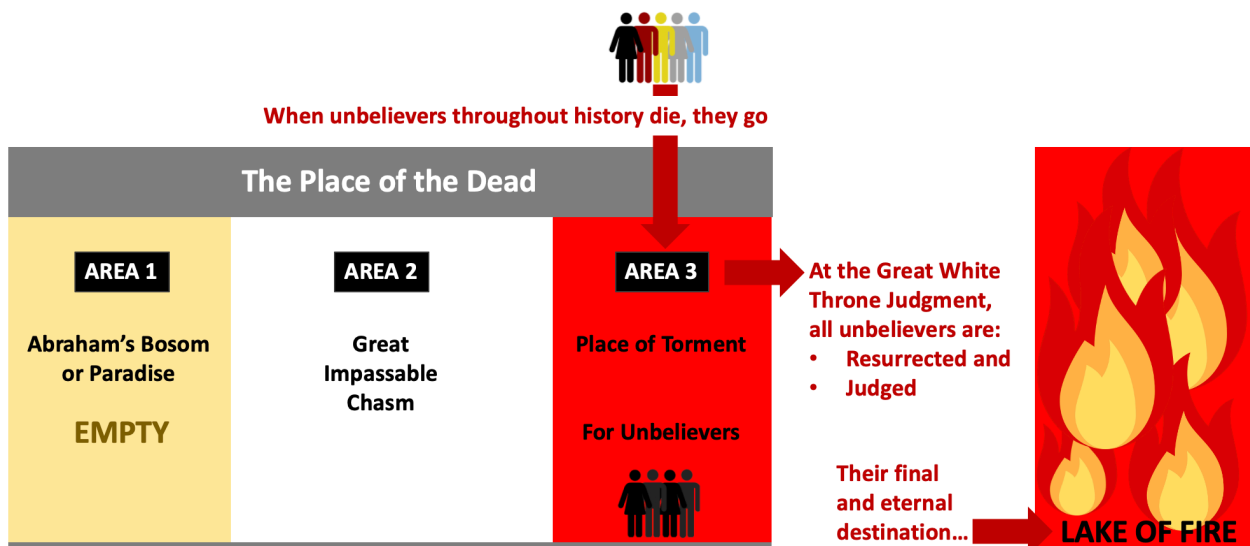
The Great White Throne Judgment

Next, all unbelievers from throughout all history will be resurrected with new bodies. They will then face Jesus at the Great White Throne judgment meant only for unbelievers.



Jesus will sentence all of them to the lake of fire, but they will each suffer different degrees of punishment based on how badly they had lived their lives on earth. Their punishment is for eternity—it never ends.

This final judgment of the world happens in God’s heavenly courtroom. This is the most sobering event in the Bible.

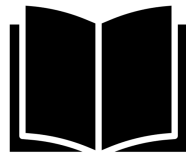


This is how the Bible describes this event.

Revelation 20:11–15

¹¹ And I saw a great white throne and the one sitting on it. The earth and sky fled from his presence, but they found no place to hide. ¹² I saw the dead, both great and small, standing before God’s throne. And the books were opened, including the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to what they had done, as recorded in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up its dead, and death and the grave gave up their dead. And all were judged according to their deeds. ¹⁴ Then death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire. This lake of fire is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.

Yahweh opens “the books”. What are these?



The Books

Contains the record of the deeds of unbelievers



The Book

The Book of Life—
Contains the names of believers

“The books” are records of the deeds of each unbeliever. Just as there are different levels of rewards for believers based on how they had lived their lives, the Bible indicates that there will be different levels of punishments in the lake of fire, based on how evil and wicked each unbeliever had been in life.

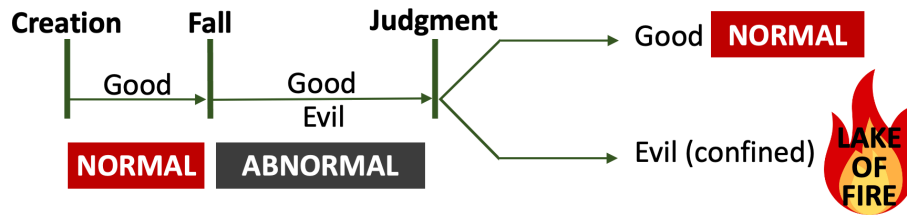
Yahweh also opens the “Book of Life”. What is this? This is a book that contains all the names of believers in Yahweh. Everyone whose names are not found in the Book of Life will not live eternally with Yahweh. They will go to the lake of fire.

After the Great White Throne judgment, there will be no more use for death and the place of the dead. So Yahweh will throw them into the lake of fire as well.



The lake of fire is the final destination for Satan, his demons, the Antichrist, the false prophet and all unbelievers. They will remain there, alive and in punishment for eternity.

This final set of events will be how Yahweh restores His normal, perfect world.



THE ETERNAL STATE

The Bible ends by describing the final state of history known as the Eternal State.



Yahweh will bring in a new heaven and a new earth. It will be a completely brand-new universe. And Yahweh Himself will live on earth with immortal mankind.



In the Eternal State, many things will not be present in this new heaven and earth. There will be no tears, death, mourning, crying, pain, thirst, wickedness, night, closed gates, or curse.

There will only be God’s goodness, perfect fellowship between God and immortal mankind, and an eternity in which to enjoy God and His creation.



HOW THE BIBLE CLOSES

This is what Jesus says in the last book of the Bible. He makes an invitation to all people to turn to Him for eternal life.



Let's turn to our Bibles and read Revelation 22:12–21.

(The leader reads aloud. For reference, the verses are also here.)

Revelation 22:12–21

¹² “Look, I am coming soon, bringing my reward with me to repay all people according to their deeds. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.”

¹⁴ Blessed are those who wash their robes. They will be permitted to enter through the gates of the city and eat the fruit from the tree of life. ¹⁵ Outside the city are the dogs—the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idol worshippers, and all who love to live a lie.

¹⁶ “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this message for the churches. I am both the source of David and the heir to his throne. I am the bright morning star.”

¹⁷ The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” Let anyone who hears this say, “Come.” Let anyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who desires drink freely from the water of life.

¹⁸ And I solemnly declare to everyone who hears the words of prophecy written in this book: If anyone adds anything to what is written here, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book. ¹⁹ And if anyone removes any of the words from this book of prophecy, God will remove that person's share in the tree of life and in the holy city that are described in this book.

²⁰ He who is the faithful witness to all these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon!”

Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

²¹ May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's holy people.

The message of the Bible

In the final two lessons, we will look at the overall message of the Bible.



Bible reading for review

Revelation 20–22

Why does Yahweh want to tell mankind about the future?

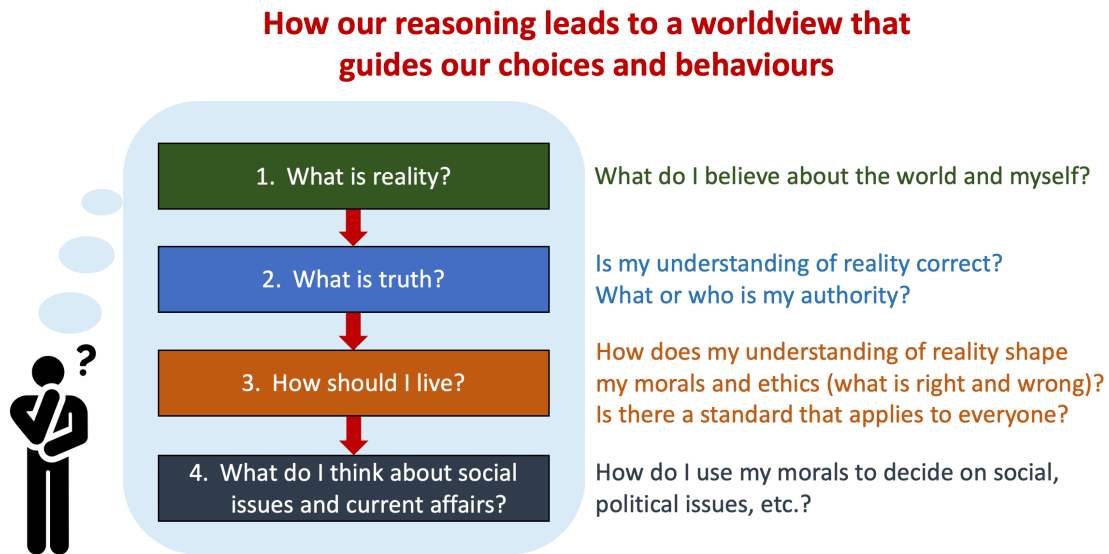
In the Bible, God has revealed a lot of information about the future of the world. Why did He do that? To understand His purpose, we first need to realise that every person needs enough information about the world in order to understand and interpret reality correctly.

All people, in one way or another, ask themselves questions to figure out what reality is. For example, consider the following:

1. Where did mankind come from?
2. Who am I?
3. What is the purpose of life?
4. What happens after a person dies?
5. Is there life after death? If so, what is it like?

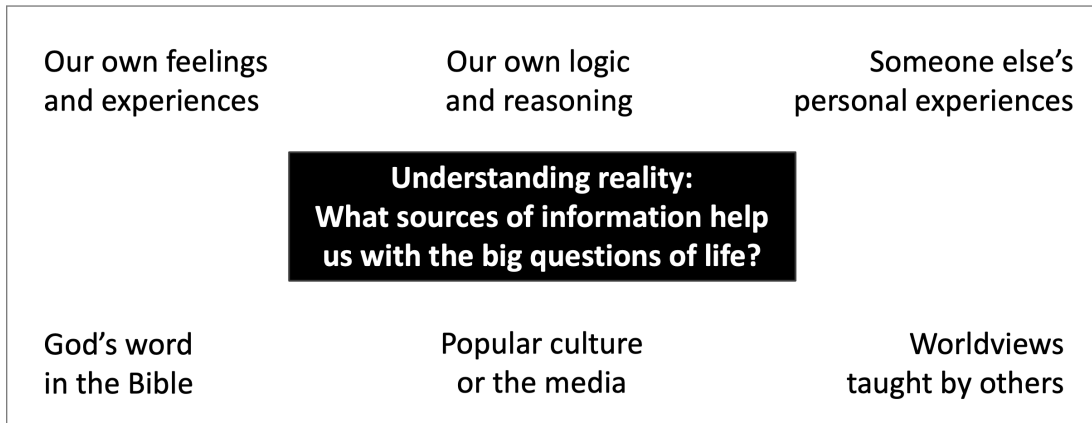
These are the big questions of life. The answers to these questions will form a person's understanding of reality, or worldview. And a worldview guides a person in making decisions on how to live. What a person believes, determines how they will behave.

Here is a simplified explanation of what goes on in a person's mind to build a worldview.



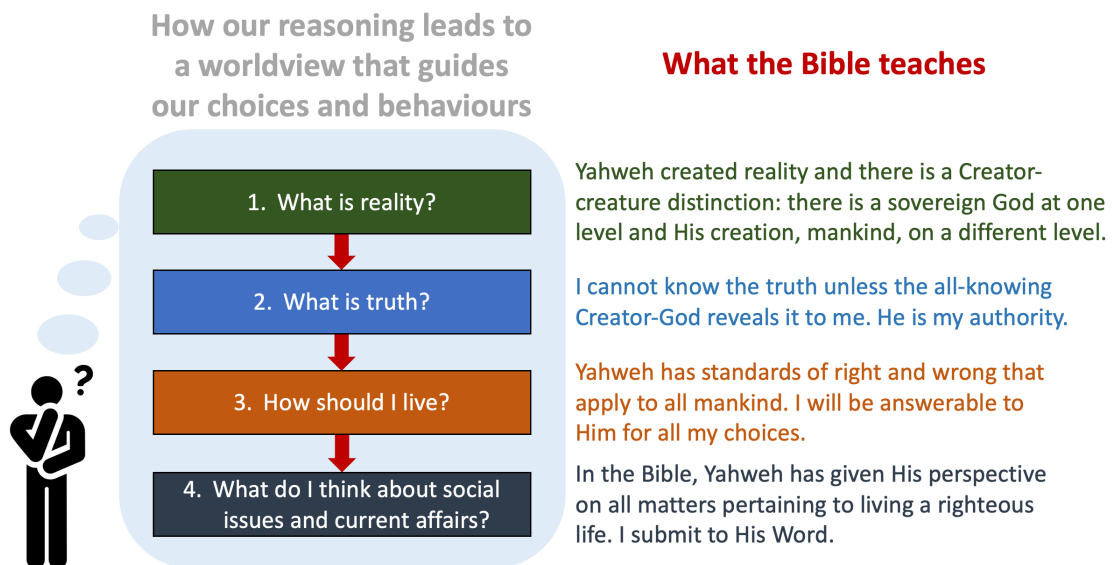
The sum total of answers to these questions will form a person's worldview.

The question is: what sources of information do people turn to when they think about reality? What informs their worldviews? Here are some common sources.



Does God's Word, the Bible, say anything about reality? Yes. Yahweh recorded His history and truth in the Bible so that mankind would be able to understand and interpret the world from the Creator-God's perspective. Yahweh meant for His Word to shape mankind's understanding of reality.

This is how the Bible answers the worldview questions.



The God of the Bible is a communicative God who has chosen to reveal Himself to mankind and to engage in genuine relationships with people. He is not a silent, uncommunicative, unaffected, unconcerned God who is uninterested in the lives and affairs of mankind.

In fact, it is just the opposite. Yahweh wants mankind to have a holistic and comprehensive understanding of the reality He made. He wants mankind to know who they are and where they came from.

He also wants mankind to know where they are going. He wants people to know what happens at the end of mortal history. All this important information will give mankind the information they need to answer the worldview questions and come to a correct and true understanding of reality. This will lead them to know how they should live.

In other words, knowing where God is taking world history is to understand what will happen in the future. And understanding what will happen in the future will help us know how to live today. Information about the future helps to shape our values, our priorities and our choices on how to live right now.

This is why God chose to put into the Bible information about the future. Yahweh is never random and what He chose to include in the Bible is not random. He specifically told mankind how this world would end and what would happen after that. This is to assure mankind that He will deal with the abnormal world they find themselves living in—a world filled with evil, pain, suffering and death.

With all this information, He is explaining reality from beginning to end, and explaining how mankind should live. And He gives everyone the choice to believe or reject the comprehensive reality, the biblical worldview, that He has recorded in the Bible.