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Look for Paradise on Earth



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Week 44

Look for Paradise on Earth (Revelation 20:1-10)

As the end of days approaches, you can find hope as you look for Paradise on earth!

SUNDAY: The Real Utopia

*"The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust shall be the serpent's food. **They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,** Says the LORD" (Isaiah 65:25, Emphasis added).*

We now come to the incredible part of the Book of Revelation! So much of what we think about this book will now be covered—heaven and the perfections of a restored earth.

I grew up in a church where we often recited the Lord's Prayer. Part of it prays: *"Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven"* (Matthew 6:10). Recitation of that prayer is not common today. Yet, from God's perspective, everything related to the coming of His kingdom is right on schedule, and in this week's devotionals we will see what is going to happen.

It is time to focus our attentions on the new world God has planned, because this old one is dying. Although this old world is doomed, He has some great plans for the future of this planet. God has planned for a whole new world—far beyond anything we could ever plan or do. The Lord is preparing to restore an Eden-like paradise on earth again! There are dozens of promised changes until the world blossoms like a rose garden—yet with no blight and no bugs! When will all that happen? It will occur in the Millennium.

Revelation 20 is the step between Earth, as we know it, and Heaven for Eternity. It declares that the golden age will arrive. The armies of the nations have been disbanded, and the great military academies have fallen into ruin and decay. The machinery of war has all been smelted down and converted to the implements of peace. Jerusalem has become the world's capital. The throne of David is there, and the twelve apostles are there judging the twelve tribes of Israel, for Israel rules the World. The millennial Temple has been built to crown Moriah's brow, and the nations of the Earth come there to worship the living God. Prosperity is evident from pole to pole. Poverty is unknown. Every man has all that his heart can desire. There are no prisons, no hospitals, no mental institutions, no barracks, no saloons, no houses of ill repute, no gambling dens, and no homes for the aged and infirm. Such things belong to a past and lesser age. The bloom of youth is on everyone's cheek, for a man is a stripling at a hundred years of age. Cemeteries are crumbling relics of the past, and tears are rare. The wolf and the lamb, the calf and the lion, the cow and the bear, the child and the scorpion, all are at peace. Jesus has come, and the millennium is here. The golden age, so frequently heralded by the prophets of Israel's past,

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has dawned at last, and the Earth is filled with the knowledge of God. Jesus is Lord, and He rules the nations with a rod of iron. His reign is righteous, and the nations obey. The principles of the Sermon on the Mount are the laws of the Kingdom, and men obey them because infractions are not allowed. Sin is visited with swift and certain judgment. The era lasts for a thousand years. [1] [1]

As you read that description of what it will be like in the Millennium, didn't your heart respond with joy at the very thought of what God has planned?

My Prayer for You This Week: Oh Lord, as we think about this twentieth chapter in Your Revelation, we are reminded of what so many in our world are longing for—to preserve the beauty of Your Creation. But it is so sad because they do not know the Creator! They want to preserve the wonder of life that You breathed into this planet, but they have never met the Lord of Life. They want to see Paradise restored, but they do not understand why Paradise was lost in the first place. Help us to better comprehend Your plan for bringing about the temporary abatement of the curse on this earth. And yet, it will only further reveal that human hearts are not influenced by their environment. Oh God, only the blood of Jesus can deal with and cleanse away the deep dark stain of sin that all of us were born with! For even on a *perfect* earth, the whole planet and the population will once more turn against You in the end. Oh, how we want to be numbered among those who say YES to You, Lord, and be among those who want to do Your will every day. Thank You for this glorious chapter! We pray that we will rejoice in Your Word, and rejoice in the future of this world, by laboring for those things which shall never perish. Thank You for illumining our eyes as we look into Your Book. In Jesus' name, Amen.

MONDAY: The Return of Christ—the King of Kings

"Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God" (Revelation 19: 11-13, Emphasis added).

To best understand chapter 20, we need to first look at [Revelation 19: 11–20: 10](#) where we see God's mighty plan in three distinct strokes: **1.** the **return** of Christ—the King of Kings (19: 11-21); **2.** the judgment of Satan—his **restraint** (20: 1-3); and **3.** the Millennium—the **rule** of the Messiah (20: 4-10). Those are the three general divisions of this Scripture passage that we will be learning about this week.

The Apostle John and others vividly show us Christ's re-entry. Here are the biblical elements that burst forth in this moment as Christ returns.

Christ returns in judgment—seen by everyone on the planet. As heaven opens, Jesus enters the sky, and the sign of the Son of man appears ([Matthew 24: 30](#)). He rides on a white horse, accompanied by the armies of heaven. Out of His mouth goes forth a sharp two-edged sword, and He Himself treads the winepress of the wrath of God Almighty ([Revelation 19: 11-16](#)). Jesus wears blood-dipped garments ([Revelation 19: 13](#)), and holds a ruling rod of iron ([Revelation 19: 15](#), which is a response to [Psalm 2: 9](#)).

Jesus pours out His wrath on sin as One who treads the winepress ([Revelation 19: 15](#), which refers back to [Isaiah 63: 1-6](#)). The "*robe dipped in blood*" makes us think primarily of Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross. Isaiah says that He is the One who is trampling the earth in His wrath, and the grapes squirt up on His white robe. The blood of Him trampling out the winepress of His wrath is why His garment is spoken of as "*dipped in blood*."

Jesus gathers all the rebels as One who threshes the harvest floor ([Micah 4: 12-13](#); [Matthew 3: 12](#)). He reaps the earth with the sickle of Divine Judgment ([Joel 3: 13](#); [Revelation 14: 17-18](#)).

Christ returns in judgment—feared by all rebels. No one can escape, even though some will have dislocated the bats out of caves during the Tribulation in an effort to hide from God ([Isaiah 2: 19](#)). Jesus is recognized by the earth dwellers when the despised Jesus of Nazareth appears on earth again, and all the families of the earth will wail ([Matthew 24: 30](#))! The Day of the Lord that was spoken of by Joel and Amos will have arrived ([Joel 1: 15](#), 3: 14; [Amos 5: 20](#)). Jesus is visibly angry: this is the "*day of His fierce anger*" ([Isaiah 13: 13](#)) and the "*great and terrible*" day ([Malachi 4: 5](#)).

Jesus' return is like the worst storm imaginable. This will be a "*day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness*" ([Joel 2: 2](#); [Zechariah 14: 6](#)). Jesus terrifies the earth: in horror, the earth dwellers will creep into the clefts and ravines ([Revelation 6: 15](#)) or hide in the caverns of the rocks and the holes of the earth ([Isaiah 2: 19](#)). They will cry out to the mountains, "*Fall on us! And to the hills, cover us!*" ([Luke 23: 30](#); [Revelation 6: 16](#); 9: 6). But, it will be impossible to escape from God's judgment.

Christ returns in judgment—poured on all rebels. His arrival will be like the swift and blinding flash of lightning ([Matthew 24: 27](#)). All the chariots of His army will sweep the earth as a tempest ([Isaiah 66: 15](#)). His eyes are as flames of fire ([Revelation 19: 12](#)). His voice is as the voice of a lion ([Joel 3: 16](#); [Isaiah 30: 30](#)), and the slain of the Lord will be many ([Isaiah 66: 15-16](#); [Psalm 110: 6](#)).

Jesus' vengeance is as a flaming fire ([2 Thessalonians 1: 8](#); [Isaiah 66: 15-16](#)). His day is as a fiery oven ([Malachi 4: 1](#); [Matthew 13: 41-42](#)) and is an inescapable snare ([Luke 21: 35](#)). His fear is a sudden destruction that will "*seize all*" ([1 Thessalonians 5: 3](#)). Jesus' wrath is as inescapable as the Flood in the days of Noah

(Matthew 24: 38-39), and as the fiery judgment that overtook Sodom and Gomorrah (Luke 17: 28-32).

Christ returns in judgment—glorified by all rebels. The Lord will first appear on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4), where He formerly ascended (Acts 1: 9, 12). Every eye will see Him (Revelation 1: 7; Matthew 24: 30). All the people will be so terrified and transfixed that they can't hide. Every contradiction will be silenced (Matthew 22: 12; Job 9: 3)—everything they have ever spoken against God. Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord, to the honor of God the Father (Philippians 2: 11). This will include everyone who has ever lived! The KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS has returned! Hallelujah!

TUESDAY: The Judgment of Satan—His Restraint

*"Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. **He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while"** (Revelation 20: 1-3, Emphasis added).*

In this passage, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords has now returned. He has squelched the rebellion, terrified the inhabitants of the earth, and He has slain the rebels.

What the Apostle John started seeing in chapter 19 takes us from the earth to the end of the earth, into the Millennium to the end of the Millennium, and then into the eternal state. These events happened in chronological sequence to show that the Millennium is actually a literal 1,000 years. Up until St. Augustine (A.D. 354-430), everyone believed that the return of Christ was to be followed by a literal 1,000 year reign. But when he wrote *The City of God*, confusion entered in. St. Augustine viewed the city of God as the church on earth; thus the 1,000 years was merely figurative. That would mean that we would be fulfilling God's kingdom here on earth, and thus people ought to invest all they have on earth—and not in heaven. But St. Augustine's interpretation was mistaken, and it has confused people ever since.

Some people have felt that the twentieth chapter of Revelation isn't actually going to happen—even though Scripture specifically says "*thousand years*" five times in verses 2 through 7 of chapter 20. According to Scripture, the Millennium is a literal event, and this is a chronological sequence. The only way that God can fulfill all the millennial passages is through this literal event. Not only is there a sequence that shows the literal event, verse 3 states that Satan is placed in the bottomless pit. If you recall, this bottomless pit (or abyss) was last opened by Satan in chapter 9. He had a key, so he let out all those monsters! But now the angel has the key, opens the pit, and throws Satan in.

In **Revelation 20: 2**, notice the names that are given in this biography of the devil: "*the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan.*" That is basically the history of Satan's career. He is the dragon that took the heavenly hosts with him; he is the serpent that tempted Eve who then led Adam into the rebellion; he is the devil who has been seeking to tempt and pervert humanity; he is Satan, the adversary, who has always stood against God's plan and God's people.

Satan gets true justice when he is bound and placed in the bottomless pit.

John says that the angel "*cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him.*" There is a poetic justice in God's dealings with Satan. Centuries ago, the evil one saw to it that the mortal remains of God's beloved Son were shut up in a tomb and sealed. So it is interesting that God has Satan put in a tomb and sealed just like the Son of God. But that is where the similarity ends: the Son of God rose triumphantly, and Satan is held captive.

Look at what John Phillips has to say on this subject: "Throughout the tribulation era, Satan has opened the abyss to plague mankind, once with horrible demons and once with the recalled soul of the beast. Now he himself is consigned to that dark hole and sealed in by an act of God, and there he rages in the most secure prison cell in the universe. It is the condemned cell, and he knows it.

"He has his thoughts to keep him company, and terrible thoughts they are—Thoughts of the day of his creation when he sprang mature, magnificent, and mighty from the hand of God; ... as the anointed cherub ... once he led the worship of the angel hosts; Thoughts of God's throne and his attempts to seize it for himself; Thoughts of his fall, of his entrance into Eden, of his short-lived triumph over the first human pair; Thoughts of the sentence passed upon him by God and of his futile efforts to prevent the coming of the promised Seed; Thoughts of Calvary and of his utter defeat; Thoughts of the fleeting moments when he brought the World to the foot of his incarnation, the beast, and had seemingly triumphed at last; Thoughts of the lake of fire just ahead. He is given a thousand years in confinement to think of his own eternal destruction."^[2] [2]

Tomorrow, we will see the millennial blessings ahead for those who love the Lord!

WEDNESDAY: The Millennium—The Rule of the Messiah

*"And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark And **they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.** 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, Emphasis added).*

But what is the final state of earthly history? It is the rule of Christ. Let us now note these views on the Millennium.

The Millennium is God establishing what He promised in [Daniel 2:35](#): "

³⁵Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.' This is the millennial kingdom. The insignificant stone, which shatters Nebuchadnezzar's imposing colossus (comp. [Matt. 21:44](#)), but afterwards it increases to a great mountain and fills the whole earth ([Dan. 2:35](#), 44, 45). The stone cut without hands is divine, it is Jesus Christ coming and crushing this image that is a representation of the kingdoms of the earth—Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome.

"The image—all earthly government—is crushed by the Rock—[Dan. 2:44](#),

⁴⁴And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. ⁴⁵Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.' What we are seeing here is the Millennium—Rev. 20—the establishment of this kingdom that God cut without hands out of the rock and crushes all the kingdoms of the earth and this rock grows into a Kingdom that will never cease."[\[3\]](#) [\[3\]](#)

The Millennium is God confirming the kingdom of the Son of man which prepares an end for the bloodthirsty beasts of Daniel's world empire. For the first time, it exalts to the throne of international history true humanity in the sense of Holy Scripture—humanity in the image and likeness of God ([Genesis 1:27](#); [Daniel 7:13](#), comp. 2-7; [Matthew 26:64](#)).

The Millennium is God revealing the kingdom of heaven, which comes down from heaven, and therefore brings into this earthly world heavenly nature and heavenly happiness (comp. [Daniel 4:23](#)). Don't confuse the Millennium with heaven. Sin is only held in abeyance; it is not removed. That is why people can still sin during the 1,000 years. Much of Isaiah is about the Millennium, and he says that if someone dies at the age of 100 they are considered a mere child. People live the whole 1,000 years—unless they are in rebellion, and then God cuts them off. We will be here on earth reigning and ruling with Christ. And Jesus will be here literally. There will be a massive temple in Jerusalem which is so big that all the inhabitants of the earth will come through regularly to observe what is going on in there. Literal sacrifices will even be offered. Just as the Lord's Supper looks forward until Jesus comes, the sacrifices will be reinstated to atone for people, but they will look back on the sacrifice of Christ. Like the Old Testament covenant that pictured Christ for the Jews, so in the Millennium they are going to have the same thing pointing back to His sacrifice on the cross. No one was saved in the Old Testament by killing a lamb, and no one will be saved in the Millennium by killing a lamb. No one is saved by taking part in the Lord's Table either. They are all pictures to illustrate a biblical truth. It will be a very fascinating time when God reveals His kingdom and brings such heavenly joys!

The Millennium is God fulfilling the kingdom of God, which was planned from the very beginning—"Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world' " ([Matthew 25:34](#)). This kingdom was striven for through the ages ([Matthew 6:10](#)); founded by Christ ([John 18:36-37](#)); preached by His followers ([Acts 20:25](#); 28:31); expected by mankind ([Romans 8:19](#)); and set up on the old earth ([Revelation 11:15](#); 19:6), after the final catastrophe of the hitherto existing world ([Revelation 20:7-15](#)), to run on into the new eternal creation ([Revelation 21](#) and 22).

What will planet Earth be like during the Millennium? The sky will change ([Isaiah 4:5-6](#); 30:26; 60:19). The earth will apparently be surrounded by a new kind of atmospheric light that will accelerate productivity. It will be like living in a greenhouse again. Harmful solar radiation will be gone, and there will be a global tropical climate.

The world of nature will change during the kingdom—the curse will be removed! The animal kingdom will find compatibility with human life. There will be no more predators or scavengers. ([Isaiah 11:6-9](#); 65:25). Agricultural production will be abundant ([Isaiah 30:23-25](#); 35:1-2; 55:12-13).

The threat of disease will change as there will be no sickness or deformity of any kind ([Isaiah 29:17-19](#); 33:24; 35:3-6). There will be exceptionally long life ([Isaiah 65:19-23](#)).

The political climate will change as Jesus brings real peace and justice to the earth during His reign ([Isaiah 2:4](#); 42:6-7; 54:14-15). Christ will be the perfect ruler: no lawsuits, no crime, no political machinations, and no unfulfilled promises.

The spiritual climate will change as earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord and His Word ([Isaiah 2:3](#); 11:9; 12:4-5; 52:6-10). Everyone will go to Jerusalem to see the King on His throne, the temple, and all that points to God. In fact, if you don't come to the temple, it won't rain on your part of the world. God will rule and show His power!

THURSDAY: The Release and Doom of Satan

"The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And

they will be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Revelation 20:10, Emphasis added).

Now that we have seen that the King of Kings will return, Satan will be restrained, and Christ will rule in the Millennium, what is next? Look at [Revelation 20:7](#): "*Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison*"

When will that happen? Satan's release will occur immediately at the end of the thousand-year reign of Christ. It is almost like a meter: God puts in a thousand-year quarter, turns the knob, and the timer starts. Satan will have been raging, and thinking about everything, but then he gets one more chance to afflict the earth: "... [Satan] *will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea*" ([Revelation 20:8](#)).

It is mind boggling to think that people could sink so low as to listen to Satan after 1,000 years of seeing Jesus and what the world was like under His rule! There was perfect justice, perfect peace, perfect health, and perfect agricultural production. But then the old dragon gets out—and he has a huge following once again. "*Gog and Magog*" is just another way of saying "all the peoples of the world." There will still be nations, but this is not identifying Russia as the evil ones. "*Gog and Magog*" is a euphemism for the people who are in rebellion against God.

So then, Satan gathers them to do battle. He gets the whole planet to rebel and try to attack the Beloved City. Look at verse 9: "*They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.*" God didn't say a word. Remember the rebellion of Korah in the Old Testament where Nadab and Abihu disobeyed and fire came? Satan gets the same fate in [Revelation 20:10](#): "*The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*"

Let's go back to [Revelation 19:20](#) because I want you to be aware of a terrible theological error called "annihilationism." That view says that God is too good to keep anyone burning in hell, so He simply evaporates them and they cease to exist. Here is what really happens to people who are in the Lake of Fire: "*Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.*"

Now look at the end of [20:10](#): "... *They will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*" Those two characters were thrown alive into the Lake of Fire—the first ones in there. What are they like after 1,000 years in the fire? Are they consumed? No, they are still alive and conscious and experiencing the horrors of hell.

Why is Satan being released again? He will be released to demonstrate once and for all that a perfect environment does not change man's sin problem. This will illustrate the incurable wickedness of Satan who returns immediately to his deceptive ministry. It will justify eternal punishment and show that man, even though exposed to righteousness for an extended period of time, when given the opportunity to accept Christ, will still reject Him.

Where will Satan go after his release is over? He will be cast into the Lake of Fire where he will be tormented day and night forever.

Mankind was tried—and found guilty on every count. In this brief moment, as all of history flashes before us, man is found to be absolutely guilty! In the Millennium his sin is absolutely inexcusable. Mankind was tested in the Garden of Delight, but he broke the only prohibition laid upon him, and sinned. He was tested under conscience (pre-Flood); corruption and violence filled the earth, which had to be cleared by the deluge. He was tested again under the restraining influence of divinely appointed (post-Flood) government, but man went into idolatry, thus turning his back upon his Creator.

Mankind was tested under Israel's law, but he cast off all restraint and crucified the Lord of Glory. Mankind was also tested under grace (the church). In this present dispensation of the Holy Spirit, he has shown himself utterly unable to appreciate such mercy, has rejected the gospel, and gone ever deeper into sin.

Mankind was tested under the personal reign (the Millennium) of the Lord Jesus Christ for a thousand years. While He is here on earth in all His glory and power, personally meting out judgment and revealing Himself, He will stand in the millennial temple and say, "This points to Me." Yet the whole world refuses to hear Him. So Satan will lead the whole world astray moments after his release. In conclusion, mankind will have been tested and found guilty at every level!

God cares. (See [Hebrews 4:14-16](#).) He is genuinely interested in this world, its needs, and its inhabitants—now as well as in the future. God cares so much that He has warned us that all of this is coming. That is why President Johnson's Great Society programs in the 1960s did not work. If you clean up every city and slum, and remove every bad influence, the problem still exists because it is inside of us. Therefore, God says, "You don't need a new city, house, job, or clothes. You need a new heart." Even the perfect world with no sin and rebellion, and a perfect Paradise, is polluted by the sin of man's heart, the sin nature that man is born with. By nature, by choice, by God's divine decree we are cursed, but Jesus Christ can remove it.

God controls. (See [Daniel 4:35](#).) He has not lost control. Satan is on a time schedule and he can only go so far before God will shut him up in the pit. God is sovereign, and He is working all things together for good now as well as in the future. All the way through the millennial time, He sovereignly offers the temple to the people. You can read about it in Ezekiel chapters 40-48. It describes the temple in detail (how big it is, the rooms, the courtyard). There is a life-giving river flowing out from under the altar that goes to the Dead Sea, and makes that area one of the most fertile areas in the world. Everybody can see it. God is in total control, yet people still reject Him.

God communicates His Way to us. The God we serve is not a God of silence. He does not want to leave us in the dark. He lets us know what is going to happen —

right down to some very minute details. We can have great confidence from knowing what is going to happen. Are you obeying Him? As Christians, we shouldn't spend our time trying to save the earth; we need to focus on saving souls. Give people the good news that God offers a new heart and a new spirit—that He will take away their stony heart and replace it with a soft heart.

It is interesting to live in a world where the enemies of God are getting the most powerful technology. That will lead so fast to Israel being surrounded, and without hope, until they look up. But until that moment happens, we are supposed to be opening people's eyes to God's Word. Are you faithfully sharing the Word with those who so desperately need to hear it?

FRIDAY: A Summary of Old Testament Millennial Promises

*"Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And with this **the words of the prophets agree**, just as it is written: "After this I will return And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up; So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, Says the Lord who does all these things." "Known to God from eternity are all His works" (Acts 15: 14-18, Emphasis added).*

How does what we've been learning so far in Revelation 20 compare with Old Testament millennial promises? Various prophetic commentators have traced it like this.

Isaiah describes the kingdom in such glowing terms. Throughout his entire prophecy Isaiah sees, through faith's telescope, the glorious time when Israel and Judah shall be one people in their own land, restored in soul to God, dwelling in peace every man under his own vine and fig tree, and the glory of the Lord covering the earth as the waters cover the sea. He tells how even nature itself shall respond to Messiah's rule, and the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. The brute Creation too shall be delivered from the curse. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain. The lion shall eat straw like the ox. The lamb shall lie down with the wolf, and *"a little child shall lead them."* All nations will then ask the way to Zion; and Jerusalem shall become the metropolis, not only of a rejuvenated Palestine, but also of the whole earth.

Jeremiah takes up the same happy strain, and foresees the God of Israel sending *"fishers"* out into the sea of the nations, fishing out His people no matter where they may be hidden, and bringing them back to the land of their fathers. He sees the city built again and inhabited by a peaceful, happy nation under the reign of the righteous Branch whom God has promised to raise up unto David, and *"in his days, Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."* Then they shall no longer need to *"teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know Him, from the least to the greatest of them."*

Ezekiel adds to the wondrous story, and tells of the Spirit being poured out from on high, and describes the services of the regenerated Israel, a priestly nation, through whom the law of God goes forth to all the lands of the nations. He depicts the millennial temple, and even tells us how the land is to be divided among the tribes, and does not close his remarkable book until he can say, *"The name of the city from that day shall be Jehovah—Shammah—THE LORD IS THERE."*

Daniel's companion-apocalypse visions conclude with the bringing in of the fifth universal kingdom, and this he tells us is the Kingdom of the Son of Man, which is to displace every other, and is to stand forever. This is the Stone cut out without hands that falls upon the feet of the Gentile image and grinds it to powder, and then becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth. This is the Kingdom conferred upon the Son of Man by the Ancient of Days, when the bodies of the beasts (symbolizing the four great empires that have borne rule over all the civilized earth) shall be cast into the burning flame.

Hosea shows that Messiah would come in lowly grace, be rejected by Israel, and return to His place until they acknowledge their sin and seek His face. Then He would come back to restore their souls and to ransom them from the power of the grave, bringing in everlasting righteousness, and making them a blessing to all nations.

Joel sees the Great Tribulation in all its intensity, but beholds the glory that shall follow, and predicts the outpouring of the Spirit, not on Israel only, but on all flesh.

Amos bears witness to the gathering again of the outcasts of Israel, and their re-settlement in their land under Jehovah's perfect rule.

Obadiah wrote the shortest of all the prophecies, and he speaks chiefly of judgment upon Edom, declaring triumphantly, *"The Kingdom shall be the Lord's."*

Jonah alone, of all the prophetic brotherhood, seems to have no reference to that day of Jehovah's power; yet, we may learn through him how wonderfully God will own the testimony of Hebrew missionaries in the beginning of the Kingdom Age, as they go forth to spread the gospel among those who have not heard His fame, nor seen His glory.

Micah joins with Isaiah in describing the time when *"the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and all nations shall flow to it,"* when *"the law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."* Then *"the nations shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks, and shall learn war no more."*

Nahum predicts the judgments that shall befall the enemies of Jehovah in the day of His preparation; while **Habakkuk**, standing on his watch-tower, sees the coming King bringing in the glory.

Zephaniah and Haggai point onward to the restoration of Israel, and through them the blessing of the whole world, when the Lord their God is enthroned in the midst of them, and they serve Him with one consent.

Zechariah, the prophet of glory, gives minute details that no others have touched upon, and even tells of the provision to be made for children's playgrounds in the restored capital of Palestine, for he says, "*The broad places of the city shall be full of boys and girls, playing in the broad places thereof*" (literal rendering). He sees every spot in Jerusalem holy to the Lord, and all Nations wending their way thitherward from year to year to keep the feast of tabernacles.

Malachi completes the series and announces the soon-coming of the King, heralded by the prophet Elijah, to tread down the wicked and sit as a refiner of silver to purify the sons of Levi, and to make His name great from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same.

Thus "*to Him give all the prophets witness,*" not only that through His name remission of sins is now to be proclaimed among all nations, but that He is to reign in righteousness over all the world, when He comes the second time to claim the inheritance which is His by divine fiat, as Son and Heir of all things. Then all the earth will rejoice for the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the tongue of the dumb shall sing, the lame man shall leap as the deer, sorrow and sighing shall flee away, and the Lord alone shall be exalted for a thousand glorious years!

SATURDAY: Truths That Bring Hope

*"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, **that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil ...**" (Hebrews 2:14, Emphasis added).*

The following are truths that you are not likely to ever hear, except from the Book that only tells the Truth—the Word of God!

Satan is stoppable and vulnerable ([Revelation 20:1-3](#)). We can overcome him by: the way of goodness—a fruit of the Spirit ([Romans 12:21](#)); the Word of God ([1 John 2:14](#)); the walk of faith ([1 John 5:4](#)); and the blood of Jesus and the word of our testimony ([Revelation 12:11](#)).

Suffering is valuable ([Revelation 20:4-6](#)). Suffering for Jesus partners us with the Holy Spirit ([Romans 8:17-24](#)), and suffering for Jesus is God's plan: "*For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake ...*" ([Philippians 1:29](#)). Suffering for Jesus allows us an intimate sharing with Christ's sufferings that we "*... may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death ...*" ([Philippians 3:10](#)).

Suffering for Jesus strengthens our walk in the Lord: "*... We ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure ...*" ([2 Thessalonians 1:4](#)). Suffering for Jesus prepares us for future service for the Lord in heaven: "*If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us*" ([2 Timothy 2:12](#)). We can share in His sufferings ([1 Peter 4:13](#)), and be strengthened by persevering through the trials ([1 Peter 5:10](#)).

People are so deceivable and gullible ([Revelation 20:7-9](#)). Christ has therefore warned us to beware of deceptions, especially in the last days: "*... Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many*" ([Matthew 24:4-5](#); see also [Matthew 24:11, 24](#)).

May Christ's kingdom come! Now let us turn our focus to Christ's coming and the Lord's Prayer. Although I touched on this verse a little earlier, I'd like to develop it a bit more: "*Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven*" ([Matthew 6:10](#)). These are familiar words in our Lord's giving of a model prayer to His disciples. What kingdom is He talking about? We know that it is not the universal, providential, sovereign rule of God because that is occurring right now.

David had this to say about God's kingdom in this present age: "*The Lord has established His throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all*" ([Psalm 103:19](#)). Paul affirmed God's rule in [Ephesians 1:11](#): "*In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will ...*"

We do not pray for that which already exists. No, the key is in the clause that qualifies all three petitions: "*On earth as it is in heaven.*" So then, what is the petition Christ desired to ever be on the hearts and lips of His own people—we Christians? He wants us to earnestly pray: *Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth just like it is in heaven.* Therefore, Christ must come to put this rebellion down—and for *that*, we are to pray!

Make a Choice to Live in Hope: Since God will keep His Word about the kingdom, we can count on Him to also keep His Word about today. Perhaps your life presently seems miserable and difficult, and you long to escape whatever is weighing you down. Sometimes people think that if they could only change their circumstances that they would be happier or better off in some other way. But did you know that external change is powerless?

A change in outer circumstances can effect no real inner transformation. Christ's visible presence on earth during the Millennium proves that even an outward Paradise does not produce godliness within. No, the solution to living in enduring hope is to choose to let Him reign within your life.

God therefore wants you to believe: "My presence is always with you, and I will give you rest!" He wants you to cling to Him in hope because He has promised to bring you victoriously through whatever trial(s) you may be experiencing. For God works in all things for the good of those who love Him ([Romans 8:28](#))!

The following song is one of my favorites. It makes a wonderful prayer for how to walk triumphantly in Christ. Read the words carefully, and then worshipfully talk to the Lord about areas where you sense He wants you to yield to His direction in your life.

Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord

*Show me Your ways, O Lord;
Teach me Your paths. —Psalm 25:4*

*Teach me Thy Way, O Lord, teach me Thy way!
Thy guiding grace afford—teach me Thy way!
Help me to walk aright, more by faith, less by sight;
lead me with heav'nly light—teach me Thy Way!*

*When I am sad at heart, teach me Thy Way!
When earthly joys depart, teach me Thy Way!
In hours of loneliness, in times of dire distress,
in failure or success, teach me Thy Way.*

*When doubts and fears arise, teach me Thy Way!
When storms o'er spread the skies, teach me Thy Way!
Shine thru the cloud and rain, thru sorrow, toil and pain;
make Thou my pathway plain—teach me Thy Way!*

*Long as my life shall last, teach me Thy Way!
Where'er my lot be cast, teach me Thy Way!
Until the race is run, until the journey's done,
until the crown is won, teach me Thy Way!*

—Mansell Ramsey, 1849–1923 [4] [4]

[1] [1] These are the headlines of Revelation 20 through the eyes of John Phillips, a noted Bible teacher, as he blends dozens of OT prophecies into a picture for us in *Exploring Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publishing, 2005), p. 251.

[2] [2] Phillips, p. 253.

[3] [3] Erich Sauer, *The Triumph of the Crucified* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), pp. 154-165.

[4] [4] Kenneth W. Osbeck, *Amazing Grace—366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1997).

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