

The Coming Earthly Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, Part 3

Revelation 20:6-8

66-75

For tonight we are in chapter 20 of the book of Revelation. And I would invite you to turn there, if you will. Revelation chapter 20, this is our third message on this chapter, The Coming Earthly Kingdom of Jesus Christ. And I want to remind you if you haven't heard the prior ones, you should, so get a hold of those tapes, it's such a wonderful, wonderful reality. It is our great hope for the future that God has prepared for them that love Him.

Just imagine a world where righteousness and goodness dominate. A world where there's absolutely no injustice, a world where everybody is treated fairly, a world where no court ever renders an unjust or undeserved verdict. Imagine a world where everything is true and right and everything is noble. Every area of life and society and commerce and education and everything else is under complete control and directed toward what is right. Imagine a world where there is total and lasting and enforced peace, where joy abounds, where health is widespread, where people live for hundreds of years, a world where there are lions and lambs lying down together and children can play in snake pits, where bears and cows walk together led by a child. Imagine a world where food is profuse and well-being is common to everyone. Imagine a world ruled by one perfect person, one world ruler and where under that world ruler only glorified perfected people are the agents who carry out His will and His purpose so that perfection reigns from the top right on through the whole system. Imagine a world where sin is dealt with instantly and firmly.

Well if you can imagine that kind of world you're headed toward understanding the character of the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ...the Kingdom to come on a restored and radically reconstructed earth. It is coming because He is coming. And the chapter before us presents the general character of that glorious paradise regained.

As I said a couple of weeks ago, until Revelation 20 everything has been premillennial, pre-kingdom. Now we have a vision of the Kingdom. There to any Bible student has been a significant preview of this Kingdom, even though everything up to here has been premillennial, we've gotten a glimpse of this Kingdom and that glimpse came in the incarnation of God in the form of Jesus Christ and in His life and ministry on the earth. We saw glimpses of the Kingdom.

For example, we saw Jesus cast out demons. We saw Him heal, bring well-being to people. We saw Him performing miracles. We saw prophecy and revelation take place. We saw the overruling of normal natural law. We saw the demonstration of the Spirit's power bringing salvation. And we saw Christ ruling in the domain of His spiritual influence over the souls of those who placed their trust in Him. And all of those were a foretaste of Kingdom glory. Even on the day of Pentecost when the Spirit of God came, Peter says, "This is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel." And the prophecy in Joel 2 was a prophecy of the Kingdom and Peter was saying...this is a foretaste, this is a preview.

Perhaps no place is there a better preview of the Kingdom, however, than in Matthew chapter 16. Let me read you starting in verse 28. Jesus says this, actually in verse 27, "The Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels." Then verse 28, "Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom." Now that's a long time ago He said that. In what sense could Jesus mean this? How is it that there were some people standing there that day when He was talking to His disciples who would not die until they saw the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom? It wouldn't be all of them because He said it would be some of them. Some of the disciples would live until they saw the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom? How is that?

Keep reading, chapter 17, six days later. Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and brought them up to a high mountain by themselves and He was transfigured before them, or He was transformed before them. His face shown like the sun and there was the glory of God really shining in the face of Jesus. His garments became as brilliant, as dazzling as light. and behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them talking with Him, and Peter answered and said to Him, "Lord, it is good for us to be here, if You wish I'll make three tabernacles, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking behold a bright cloud overshadowed them, behold a voice out of the cloud saying, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased, listen to Him." And when the disciples heard this they fell on their faces and were much afraid. And Jesus came to them and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid." And lifting up their eyes they saw no one except Jesus Himself alone.

I believe this the fulfillment of the promise at the end of chapter 16. This is the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom glory. There He was transfigured and like the Kingdom, the Old Testament saints are represented by Moses and Elijah, and the New Covenant saints are represented by Peter, James and John. And as in the Kingdom, Christ takes the preeminent place. He takes the place of shining, blazing glory, the ruling place. I think this was the remarkable preview of the Kingdom that Jesus promised some would see before they died.

So we have seen some previews of the Kingdom and the character of the Kingdom, both in the prophecy of Joel chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost, in the ministry of Jesus Christ as well as in the very transfiguration which we just read. But here it is in its fullness and in its reality.

As I noted for you a couple of weeks ago, it's only a general framework. I mean, you can't cover all the character of the Kingdom in just these ten verses. So what you're looking at here is really the general framework, sort of the skeleton outline on which you can hang a lot of other passages and many of them from the Old Testament, as we'll see in a few moments.

But as the structure of the Kingdom unfolds, remember that in chapter 19 is the return of Jesus Christ. He comes back. He comes back to the great battle of Armageddon which He engages in, it lasts a very brief time. He destroys all the ungodly remaining on the world as the end of chapter 19 tells us. And then in chapter 20 He sets up His Kingdom.

And the first thing we saw in the setup of the Kingdom is the removal of Satan...the removal of Satan, verse 1. "I saw an angel coming down from heaven having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand and he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old who is the devil and Satan, and bound him

for a thousand years, and threw him into the abyss and shut it and sealed it over him so that he should not deceive the nations any longer until the thousand years were completed. After these things he must be released for a short time."

One of the first things that we are to learn about the Kingdom, of course, is that Satan's not going to be around. The one who is the God of this world, the prince of the power of the air, the ruler of this age will not be the ruler of that age. He will not be the prince of that age. He will not be the dominating force. He will not run the world system, Jesus Christ will and Satan will be incarcerated, confined in the abyss and held there by unbreakable chains. He will be there until he is released for a little time and then cast into the hell that is the final hell as noted in verse 10.

So Satan is removed. That gives us a very, very great insight into the character of the Kingdom. Those who would tell us we are now in the Kingdom which is the Amillennialist's view and also the view of many Postmillennialists, that is to say Amillennialists say there's no Kingdom other than this church age now, a spiritual kingdom. Postmillennialists say Christ comes at the end of the Kingdom so we might be in it, or it might be yet to come. They have a problem. How can you say this is the Kingdom when in fact Satan is not bound? He goes about, Peter reminds us, as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, 1 Peter chapter 2...chapter 5 rather and verse 8. In 2 Corinthians chapter 2 and verse 11 it says that Satan can take advantage of us and we're not ignorant of his schemes. So we have a scheming, roaring lion moving around devouring everyone he can. He is involved in our world. He is not bound and that characteristic belongs to the future, not the present. That's one reason why we don't believe the Kingdom is here.

So the first thing we have then is the removal of Satan. And we've gone into that. The second thing that I noted for you in our previous study is the reign of the saints. Look at verse 4. This is another characteristic of the Millennial Kingdom, the thousand-year kingdom, not only will Satan be bound and consequently the world will be run by Jesus Christ Himself who imparts that rule through His glorified saints from the Old Testament, the time of the Tribulation and the New Testament as well. But we see here in verses 4 through 6 the reign of the saints. "And I saw thrones, they sat upon them and judgment was given to them. I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the Word of God and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received this mark upon their forehead, and upon their hand, and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years." In that verse you have Old Testament saints, you have those who lived during the time and ministry of Christ, you have the New Testament saints, the Tribulation saints, all of them coming together. "And the rest of the dead didn't come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection."

So you have all of the godly resurrected before the thousand years, as we noted, and you have the ungodly resurrected after the thousand years is over. The first resurrection involves only the godly, so he says in verse 6, "Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection." Over these, the second death, that's eternal death, has no power, they will be priests of God and of Christ's and will reign with Him for a thousand years. Daniel chapter 7 tells us the Old Testament saints will reign. Matthew chapter 19 verses 28 and 29 says the Apostles and those who followed Christ in His life will reign. First Corinthians 6:2 and 3 says New Testament saints will reign. And here in the book of Revelation we are told right there in verse 4 that Tribulation saints will reign as well. So all the saints of all those periods will come in glorified form into the Kingdom to reign with Christ.

And that's the character of the Kingdom. As far as the reign of the saints is concerned. A reminder

that Philippians chapter 3 and verse 21, we're still reviewing, says that we will be transformed into conformity with the body of His glory. So when we come into that Kingdom we will have our glorified form. New Testament believers are raptured and transformed at the Rapture. Old Testament believers and Tribulation believers are transformed at the end of the time of the Tribulation in the resurrection Daniel talks about in chapter 12 and verse 2. So we all come in that new glorified form into the Kingdom. And so you have Christ in His resurrection glory ruling and then you have all the saints of all the ages in their resurrection glory as His co-rulers, as it were, those under Him carrying out His rule.

You say, "Well what are we going to be like? I mean, how are we going to be different?" Well 1 Corinthians tells us as much as we can know, starting in verse 35 of chapter 15. First Corinthians 15:35, "Someone will say, 'How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?'" What are we going to be like? "You fool, he says, that which you sow doesn't come to life until it dies, and that which you sow you do not sow the body which is to be but a bare grain perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body just as He wished and to each of the seeds a body of its own." Now that's a very good analogy.

What he is saying is the seed that goes into the ground doesn't look like anything that comes out. I mean, there's no way to know by looking at a little seed going into the ground, unless you're some kind of expert, what is going to come out of that little seed. And that's really in a sense the answer to the question. "How in the world can we who all look like common seed know what we're going to look like when we can't see it until we experience it?" But it's going to be different. You put a little tiny seed in the ground and out comes this magnificent flower, or out comes this blooming plant, or out comes this glorious tree, and you have no way to see the majesty of that tree, the beauty of that plant, the glory of that flower when you look at the seed. And so he says it's a foolish thing to ask. You're but a bare grain. You go into the ground and God alone what's going to come out. But you're going to be different. All flesh is not the same flesh, verse 39, there's one flesh of men, another flesh of beast, another flesh of birds, another of fish. And just like there are those different kinds of bodies, there are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies and the glory of the heavenly is one and the glory of the earthly is another. In other words, there's a difference between a mountain and a star, the difference between a rock and comet. And there's one glory of the sun and another glory of the moon. And another glory of the stars. And stars differ from star to star. So it is in the resurrection. You're sown a perishable body, you're raised an imperishable. You're sown in dishonor, raised in glory. Sown in weakness, raised in power. Sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body.

And that's really all you can know. You're going to be heavenly, verse 48 says. As is the earthy, so also those who are earthy and as is the heavenlies, so also are those who are heavenly. And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

I don't know what we're going to be like. I don't know what those glorified forms will be like. But they won't be like we are now, and yet they'll be some connection, some similarity. And so the saints are going to come forth in resurrection glory. And it says in verse 4 they're going to reign with Christ and they're going to sit on thrones, the verse begins. "I saw thrones." At the end of the verse, "They reigned with Christ a thousand years." Again at the end of verse 6, "They'll reign with Christ a thousand years."

It's going to be on earth, the very place Satan ruled and from which he was expelled. And what's it going to be like? Well we talked about something of the physical character of the earth at that time. I

took you through a little bit of a perhaps scientific scenario of what the restored earth is going to be like. I don't want to talk about the physical earth, let me talk about the character of the rule of Christ and His saints for a moment.

It's going to be a...it's going to be a universal rule. That is the Lord Jesus Christ through His saints is going to rule the whole world. It's going to be totally ruled by Christ. It's comprehensive. Psalm 2 tells us, "I have installed My King upon Zion My holy mountain. Ask of Me, I'll give Thee the nations as Thine inheritance and the very ends of the earth as Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt shatter them like earthenware."

In other words, it's a comprehensive global rule by the Lord Jesus Christ. Nobody is going to be outside that rule. He will rule everywhere on this globe. In fact, it says in Daniel 2:35 that, "When Christ comes into this world, He is the stone that strikes the statue that represents all the kingdoms of men, and that stone becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth." Again in the seventh chapter of Daniel you see the comprehensive or universal character of His rule, "And to Him was given dominion, glory and a Kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away. His Kingdom is one which will not be destroyed." It is comprehensive, it is indestructible.

In fact, even in the New Testament we get some insight into that. I think it's the nineteenth chapter of Luke, there are a couple verses of interest there. Verse 17, "Well done, good slave, you have been faithful over a very little thing, be in authority over ten cities." And to the next He said, "You too have been faithful, you may be over five cities." And there's a little insight into the comprehensive rule that Christ has over the world and how He dispenses it to those who are faithful. He gives one ten cities to rule over, and one five cities to rule over, depending on their faithfulness. It is universal rule and it is mediated through the saints.

It is also absolute rule. That is to say there are is quick judgment on those who oppose it. It is absolute. It is a rule with a rod of iron, as it said in Psalm 2. Psalm 72 verse 9 adds, "Let the nomads of the desert bow before Him and His enemies lick the dust. Let the kings of Tarshish and of the islands bring presents, the kings of Sheba an Seba offer gifts. Let all kings bow down before Him, all nations serve Him." And it's kind of like an "or else" threat.

It is also going to be a righteous rule. It is going to be benevolent, it is going to be right, fair, just. It says in Isaiah 11:3, "And He will delight in the fear of the Lord and He will not judge by what His eyes see nor make a decision by what His ears hear, but with righteousness He will judge." In other words, He is going to judge rightly, not because of what He hears from somebody, not because of what He thinks He sees or what someone reported has been seen, but He will judge righteously because He knows everything. "He will decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth. With the breath of His lips He'll slay the wicked. Righteousness will be the belt about His loins and faithfulness the belt about His waist."

And so you have the political or the social rule of Christ's universal comprehensive, absolute, righteous, just, fair rule. But He will rule not only politically and socially, He will rule spiritually. That is to say, when the Kingdom begins the only people in the Kingdom are going to be converted people. Jews and Gentiles who survived the time of the Great Tribulation are the subjects of the King. In fact, as we read in the Scripture about the character of the Kingdom, here are the things that we read about. Israel, first of all, will be converted and restored to the land and that's in a lot of places.

Jeremiah 30...Jeremiah 23:5, she will have the land that was promised to Abraham in Genesis 13, and Genesis 15. According to Jeremiah 30, Jerusalem will be rebuilt. According to Ezekiel 40 to 48, a temple will be rebuilt on the proper site and memorials will be held there to remember God's marvelous redemptive work.

And the prophet Micah in chapter 4 and verse 2 says this. "Many nations will come and say, "Come up and let us go to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach about His ways that we may walk in His paths, for from Zion will go forth the law, even the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He will judge between many peoples, render decisions for mighty distant nations, hammer their swords into plowshares, their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they train for war. Each of them will sit under his vine, under his fig tree with no one to make them afraid, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it. And all the people each in the name of his God, as for us we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever. In that day, says the Lord, I'll assemble the lame and gather the outcasts," and so forth. There's a spiritual movement.

Not only are all of those coming in believers, but they'll have children and of those that are born, many will come to faith in Christ, many will be led to the knowledge of Christ. In fact, there will be ten Gentiles, says the prophet, hanging on the garment of the Jew, asking to please be taken to see the Messiah.

Israel will be blessed. The land of Israel, the city of Jerusalem will come back to its glorious prominence. And the time of God's promise to them will be fulfilled. There will come about, Zechariah 14:16 says that any who are left of all the nations that went up against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and celebrate the feast of booths, and it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, there will be no rain on them. Instant judgment on people who don't worship.

Now that will do two things. Now that will be a very good motivation for them to go and worship, and the ones who don't will become more and more agitated and irritated and hostile. And that's important, too, because they're ready for war at the end of the thousand years, those rejecters. Isaiah 61, Isaiah 62 also talk about the blessing that's going to come to Israel.

So there's a special time for Israel and a special time of salvation for the nations as well. Beyond that there are some other spiritual characteristics I won't go in to in detail, just to mention them. The presence of Christ will be there. That's very clear according to Psalm 2, Psalm 72 and the book of Revelation. The presence of truth will be there, Isaiah 11:9. Righteousness will flourish, again Psalm 72. Peace will reign, Isaiah 2:4, Isaiah 32:17. Joy will about, Isaiah 12 and Isaiah 61. The Holy Spirit will release immense power, Joel chapter 2 verses 28 and 29.

So spiritual life is going to be glorious during that time. And people are going to come and worship the Messiah and those that are born are going to come to faith in Him. And the rebels are going to feel the heat of His judgment immediately. Obviously they aren't slain immediately, some will be but not all. There will be enough left to gather a rebellious force at the end.

Now looking at the Kingdom then politically and spiritually, we can see how the Lord Jesus dominates it. What about physically? What kind of life is going to be going on? First of all, the curse

will be lifted. Isaiah chapter 11 verses 7 to 9, chapter 30 verses 23 and 24, then again in chapter 35. It talks about how the curse will be lifted and it will be Eden all over again in some measure. Joel 2:21 to 27 says there will be plenty of food for everyone. Isaiah 29:18, 33:24, 35. Isaiah 65, all of that section of Isaiah talks about health and healing. Isaiah 30 talks about a high birth rate. So it's going to be a remarkable, remarkable time every way you look at it. And the saints, that's all of us, are going to reign there. It is for that that we long and wait and hope for. This world is a beautiful place, this world is a wonderful place, even though it's cursed and even though it's so troubled. Imagine what it will be like when the curse is taken away, the topography is altered and righteousness and peace rule everything. Imagine what it will be like when we come back and the Lord Jesus mediates His rule over this world through us. Tremendous anticipation.

A little note in verse 5.. The unsaved sinners aren't included in the Kingdom. The rest of the dead don't come to life till the thousand years are completed. The rest of the dead don't come back until the thousand years are over and they come back, according to verse 11, for the great white throne judgment. They will be raised, even the ungodly, even the unsaved through all the ages will be raised. They will have resurrection bodies, bodies suited to suffer forever in hell. We'll examine all of that when we get down to verse 11.

This first resurrection then is the resurrection of the just, the resurrection of the godly. This is the resurrection that those who believe participate in, whether they are Old Testament saints, New Testament saints, or Tribulation saints. We are all in the first resurrection. It starts with the resurrection of Christ and then comes to the resurrection of the church, then the resurrection of the Old Testament saints and the Tribulation saints, but it's all the first resurrection. It is called in Luke 14:14 "the resurrection of the righteous."

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

The resurrection of the righteous and it has several parts but it's all the resurrection of the righteous. In Luke chapter 20 verse 34, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage, for neither can they die anymore for they are like angels and like the sons of God being sons of the resurrection." It is a resurrection that's going to put us into a different form where there's no marriage anymore. It is what Jesus called in John 5:29 "the resurrection unto life." All of it is the same resurrection. Wherever the righteous are involved, it is the same resurrection.

Acts 24:15 talks about it. Hebrews 11:35 I would just remind you, there's a verse there that's kind of definitive. It says, "Women receive back their dead by resurrection and others were tortured, not accepting their release in order that they might obtain...here's the key word...a better resurrection." It is the resurrection of the just, it is a better resurrection.

All the righteous, all who have died through all of redemptive history will be resurrected and brought into the Millennial Kingdom. We will all be transformed and we'll have a body like unto His body, a body of glory. We will be transformed and changed and made like Jesus Christ. This is that of which Peter said when he says, "We are begotten unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade

away." It is this to which we look. We look for *anastasis*, that's a noun used over forty times in the New Testament, it always refers to a dead body coming out from the grave. We're looking for the rising again of our dead bodies. So when they bury us, we'll be back. People always ask silly questions like, "Well if you've been there a long time, you're sort of disintegrated, aren't you?" Yes, but if God can raise the dead, the form they're in is a minor detail. Some people have even said to me, "You know, I don't want to be cremated and then scattered over the sea for fear God can't find all the right parts." Don't worry about it. Don't worry about it. You're going to be different, you're going to be new.

And so it says in verse 6, "Blessed and holy is the one who has part in the first resurrection." We are blessed and we are the holy. "And the second death has no power over us." What is the second death? It's the dead described down in verse 14. "This is the second death, the lake of fire." It's eternal hell. But we will be priests of God and of Christ's and will reign with Him for a thousand years. What does a priest do? A priest brings people to whom? To God. That will be our worldwide function. We'll be bringing people to God, bringing people to the Lord, bringing people to the knowledge of Christ, ushering them into His glorious presence, bringing them to the truth. That will be our function. We will be ruling as well. We will reign with Him for a thousand years. We will be bringing people to the knowledge of Christ, bringing people to salvation, at the same time we will be ruling and reigning and executing the King's wishes. We will be combination priests and kings...rulers and priests. That's a tremendous thing.

So the word is *anastasis*, my friend. When your body dies your spirit goes immediately to be with the Lord. Your body stays in the grave until the resurrection. Just like Jesus said to the grieving sisters, in John 11:23, "Your brother shall rise again." And three times in John chapter 6 Jesus said, "I'll raise him up on the last day." Philippians 3:11 says, "The out resurrection from among the dead." So a literal, physical, bodily resurrection into a new eternal form like a seed that goes into the ground and dies, and out of that dying seed yields life. We will escape the second death, hell, the lake of fire, eternal death and we will enter into the Kingdom. And after the Kingdom is over, we will live forever in eternal glory. It's a tremendous thing to realize what is in store for us.

Well, that takes us to the third point. The removal of Satan, the reign of the saints, is the character of the Kingdom. But there's a third thing and that's the return of Satan. We come down to verse 7...very important. "When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison." The return of Satan. Now I remind you again that during the Kingdom Satan has no part, he plays no role, he's not there and his demons aren't there with him. I think it's fair to assume that it wouldn't do much good if our Lord bound Satan and didn't bind all his millions of minions who are running loose in the earth. I think the whole system is bound.

Satan's binding ends, however, at the close of the Kingdom. And it doesn't tell us how. It just says when the thousand years are completed, Satan is released from his prison. We don't know how he's released. It doesn't matter how he's released. The next question would be...why is he released? And that is the fair question. Why would God release him?

Well that's more evident. Let me give it to you. No unsaved person will enter the Kingdom. It appears if you take all of the prophecies with regard to the day of the Lord, the day of the Lord is exhaustive against the wicked and all of them die. And that means the only people going into the Kingdom are the people who are believers....Jews whom the Lord has spared and you know that He's going to do that, Revelation 12 tells us how He hides them in the wilderness so that the Antichrist can't destroy

them. And Gentiles who have come to faith in the true Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who escaped the treachery of Antichrist and all the rest of the judgments that are going on. They go in in physical bodies just like we have right now, they'll be no different than us. They'll go into the Kingdom in their normal physical form. All the ungodly will be destroyed and so all you have in the Kingdom then are believers. All you have are the godly, those who belong to the Lord.

If you need a word on that from Scripture, you might listen to Isaiah 60 and verse 21. "Then all Your people will be righteous, they will possess the land forever." It is only the righteous who go into the Kingdom. Verse 21 of chapter 19 after the slaughter of Armageddon says, "The rest were killed with the sword." And that's all of them. There is nothing in the Scripture that says any unbeliever survives the day of the Lord.

You say, "Well then they come into the Kingdom and they have children." Sure, and remember the conditions are perfect, so they proliferate. And they live long and they are productive for a long time. But they produce...guess what?...sinners, because that's all we can produce, right? Even in Millennial conditions we're going to produce sinners because we're fallen people. So their children are going to be sinners and they're going to need to be saved. And amazingly while many of them will come to faith in Christ, and many of them will believe, many will not. In a thousand years there can be millions of people on the globe. The exponential reproduction growth will be rapid. And many of them, sad to say, will love their sin. And they are the ones that the Lord will judge in some cases by killing them, in some cases by some other kind of swift judgment, in some cases by holding back the rains so that they have to experience harsh living conditions, as we read earlier. They will love their sin. They will refuse His grace and they will refuse the Lordship of the King of all the earth.

It's an amazing thing to think about, actually. Though Jesus Christ reigns in a totally renewed universe, though He has absolute power over everything and everyone, though it's a perfect world, His glorious perfections are manifested through His person and His will, and through all of the glorified saints who carry out His will, even though everything is exactly the way it ought to be, everything is right, everything is peaceful, there aren't any wars, everybody's weapons have been pounded into plowshares, everything is flourishing, all the economies of the world are doing very well, everything is prosperity on every front, everything is bliss, utopia has arrived, people will reject Christ. And it's important to make this reminder, that people reject Christ because they love...what?...sin. They are rebellious sinners and they love their sin. And it really is not an issue what kind of world they're living in. I daresay there are people in this society today, many of them, millions of them who would choose this kind of society or a worst kind of society over a society ruled by Jesus Christ, would they not? They have no particular love for righteousness.

In Romans 8:7, it says, "The mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God." The mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God. They will have ample proof all around them that Jesus is God. They will have ample proof all around them that He is the Savior. They will have ample benefits by His loving kindness and generosity and mercy and grace toward them. But in spite of all of that, they will reject Him, they will have all kinds of evidence of His miracle power, and of His swift judgment, His equity. But like the willful sinners on the earth when Jesus came the first time, they will reject Him. The Pharisees, according to Matthew chapter 12, said about Jesus, "He cast out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons." They said He's demonic, we hate Him, kill Him.

How could they conclude that? Cause they loved their sin. They loved their sin. And so it isn't the environment that saves people, whether they're in a terrible one or a good one. They rejected Jesus

the first time He came. And He showed them a glimpse of what a perfect world would be like. He basically banished disease from Palestine. He forgave sin over and over, day after day. He taught truth. He demonstrated loving kindness, generosity. He created food for them to show them a little taste of what it was going to be like in the Kingdom. He fed them fish and loaves on the side of the sea. He gave them principles to make their life rich and rewarding and when they had their chance, they screamed for His blood because they loved their sin. And that's the nature of depravity. And no matter what the environment is, it doesn't change that.

So Satan is loosed to offer cohesive leadership to bring all the rebels together so that what is latent can break loose. You say, "Why does God want it to break loose?" So He can destroy it. You see, Satan is loosed in order to pull together all of the rebels to reveal the true character of these Christ-rejecting sinners, to bring it into the light so that the destruction is manifestly just. Do you see that? I mean, God could just kill them all but that's not the way He does it. Before they are executed, before they are killed, their rebellion is manifest so that all the universe knows that the execution that God brings upon them is a righteous one.

So Satan is loosed to bring the rebels together, provide a cohesive leadership in the demonic force, to pull them together to fight against Christ so that their latent opposition can be made manifest to the whole universe and therefore God's devastation and destruction of them is seen as just and righteous.

But a footnote here is appropriate, I think. The issue regarding salvation is never a lack of information...I want you to get that, it's not a lack of information...Romans 1 says everybody has enough knowledge of God to be without...what?...excuse. It's not information. It's not a failure to have enough evidence presented to you to make a convincing enough case, or to make Jesus lovely enough or to make the gospel winsome enough, or convincing enough, or to make it attractive enough. The issue in evangelization is that sinners love sin. John 3, "Their deeds are evil, they love sin." Men love darkness rather than light, He says, because their deeds are evil.

All these...these modern postmillennialists that we call Reconstructionists, all of these who are trying to bring the Kingdom by capturing the institutions of men through political power, all these Christian political activists who keep saying, and I hear this over and over and over again...We have to get control of this country, we have to get our people in power if we want to have the freedom to preach the gospel and if we want to continue to see men come to Christ. And I want to say to them, that is not the issue...that is not the issue. Spending all your energy and all your time and all of your money to seek to create a cultural morality as if it somehow enhances the gospel betrays a failure to understand the depravity of man. It doesn't matter what the environment is. And when I read that some politician spends twenty-five million dollars, or thirty million or whatever amount of million they spend to get them into political power for some noble spiritual purpose, my conclusion is that that's a kind of obscenity. That's irrelevant to the advancement of the Kingdom of God. And I can only imagine what that same amount of money might do were it directed toward the gospel proclamation.

We do well to consider that in the most moral culture this earth will ever know, man will love sin. Unless you think that's shocking, go back to the perfect environment in the Garden of Eden and remember there were only two people and they both chose sin. And they did it from innocence, what will humanity do from depravity? It doesn't matter what age, it doesn't matter what kind of world they live in, depraved people love sin. And it shows you something else, too. It doesn't take Satan. Whether Satan's present or absence has nothing to do with depravity. People say, "Well, you know,

the devil's after me, and you know, I fell into sin." I don't think so. If the devil was bound, you'd fall into sin. It's not the devil that makes you sin, it's the devil that creates the system that tempts you. It's not like the devil runs into your mind and says, "Do this, do this, do this, do this." I wouldn't know if he does, frankly, I don't...I've never heard him. I wouldn't know if he was there saying anything, I wouldn't know how I would if he was saying anything. But I do know this system which he has designed throws temptation at me from every angle.

So you can take Satan out of the system and you've still got depravity. And you can put the man with depravity in a perfect environment and he's still going to love sin, cause that's his nature. That's what depravity is. It's not that everybody is as bad as they could be possibly, but it's that everybody loves sin. Sin blinds sinners in every age. You can work all you want to make cultural morality in this country, it's not going to redeem anybody. It's not going to change sinners, they love their sin. In fact, it will just make sinners mad. And haven't you see that happen? Wherever there is the rise of some Christian in politics, or whether it appears as though someone who has a high standard of morality is about to get elected, the battle gets really heated because sinners don't want any encroachment on their freedoms.

So you have in the Kingdom a generation of Christ...would-be Christ murderers rise. So man's depravity is not affected by environment. Satan's desperate wickedness and hatred of God in Christ are not at all altered by being in prison for a thousand years. He doesn't get any better, he gets worse. Now he's madder than he's ever been. And when he's released from the pit after this thousand years, he comes out as evil as always and more hostile than ever. He doesn't change. Hell doesn't change people. Punishment doesn't change people, it's not meant to do that. So you have the same wicked, vile, hostile fallen angel and you have depraved people and they get together at the end of the thousand years with the view of killing Christ.

That takes us to verses 8 to 10, the revolt of society...the revolt of society. And I'm just going to kind of introduce it cause our time is really gone. But in verse 8 it says that Satan when he's released from his prison, "Will come out to deceive the nations." Now as I said, nothing external can change men. Their environment doesn't change them. It's like a pig, you can give him a bath and put a ribbon around its neck and he's still a pig. It's not going to change his nature. You can put him in the purest environment and he's still going to be what he is.

And so now you've got Satan coming out and he's hating Christ more than he ever hated Him. And you've got man who is unmoved by peace and the rule of righteousness cause he loves his sin. And the combination leads to this revolt. Satan comes out to deceive the nations. Obviously he is a deceiver, he is a liar, and that's what he always does and this is no different. He's got to get them all to battle and he has to do it by deception. He's got to convince them that it's going to make sense. I mean, look, these people know the power of Christ, they've been experiencing it for whatever length of time they've lived in the world. They've seen the rod of iron work. They've seen the swift and hasty judgment. They've seen Him crack down on sinners. They've seen what happens to those who don't bow the knee to Him. They know who He is. They've seen His miracle power. There's not a question about that. There's no big debate about...is Jesus really the King? Is He really God? That is not a debate. It isn't a question of information. They know who He is. They have ample information.

And there would be a natural hesitancy on the part of these people to just go tackle Him. Take Him on. And that's why it doesn't happen until Satan is released and can go out and by some means deceive them that this is a worthwhile enterprise. He has the ability to do it. Back in chapter 12 verse

9 the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world. He is a deceiver. He's always been a deceiver. He's always portrayed as a deceiver.

Somehow he goes out and pulls off this incredible deception. Now back in verse 3 we saw that he had been deceiving the nations all along. He hasn't deceived them for a thousand years. Now he comes back in verse 7. He's released in verse 8. His deception begins again. His primary function is always to lead people astray. Always to deceive them. But, you know, just to remind you and it's...it's an amazing thing to go back to this point, that no matter what Satan does, he's just kind of carrying out God's purposes.

Listen to what it says in Ezekiel 38:16, we're going to go back to Ezekiel 38 next week in one of the most fascinating studies in the Bible of Gog and Magog, but let me just read you verse 16. Here God says, "Say to Gog, thus says the Lord God, on the day that...verse 14...that My people and Israel are living securely, will you not know it? And you will come from your place out of the remote parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great assembly and mighty army, you'll come against My people Israel like a cloud to cover the land. It will come about in the last days that I shall bring you against My land." It's all within the framework of God's will, like in the sermon that Peter preached on Pentecost when he said, "You by the determinant foreknowledge and counsel of God have crucified Christ." You did it but it was in the plan. The plan is that Satan is going to be released and Satan is going to go out and deceive the nations but it's God who brings them to Jerusalem against Christ.

Notice again in verse 8, these nations are in the four corners of the earth. All four points of the compass...east, west, north and south. And Satan brings them all to this tremendous revolt.

They are called Gog and Magog and we'll stop at that point and find out the incredible significance of that next time and how the battle goes. And then we'll be at the end of this great section on the Kingdom.

Let's bow together then in a final word of prayer.

What an amazing truth, Lord, it is that we are already citizens of the Kingdom, we are already subjects of the King by faith, that even right now in our hearts we enjoy peace and righteousness, joy, power, truth and wisdom. Lord, we are living in the Kingdom now spiritually. O how marvelous and wonderful it is to think about what it will be like to live in the Kingdom in a glorified form literally. What a glorious future awaits us. What an amazing glimpse into the coming Kingdom.

Father, we thank You, we're literally overwhelmed on the one hand that we have been chosen to such glory and we are deeply grieved on the other for those who do not enjoy the first resurrection but experience the second resurrection and the second death, who will never know Your Kingdom and Your rule either spiritually or literally or eternally, but shall be cast into outer darkness where there's weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth forever. Father, thank You for Your mercy and Your grace, give us hearts of compassion, may we like Paul plead with men and women to come to Christ and escape the coming judgment.

O Lord, we thank You for that day in which You will remove Satan, in which the saints will reign, in

which Satan coming back and leading a revolt will be finally and eternally defeated and we'll enter into eternal glory. Lord, we don't need to go through life wondering about the future, You've laid it out so clearly. Thank You that by Your mercy and grace You've made us a part of it, for the glory of Christ in whose name we pray. Amen.

Available online at: <http://www.gty.org>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2017 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (<http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright>).