The Coming Earthly Reign of the Lord Jesus Christ
Revelation 20:1–10

Man has dreamed of a utopia on earth. There are people who worship science as god; they believe given enough time, science will eradicate all disease and death and bring to this earth a utopian world of prosperity, health, and worldwide peace; but such a dream will never be accomplished by man; however, a utopian age is coming when Jesus Christ returns and sets up His Kingdom on earth.

God has always promised a kingdom, both an earthly one and then a heavenly one; the earthly kingdom is the Millennial Kingdom and it is part of the eternal, heavenly kingdom that will follow the one-thousand-year reign of Christ on earth.

One might wonder why there will be an earthly kingdom before there is a heavenly kingdom; God has some promises to fulfill that will only be realized during Christ’s earthly reign.

To the Jews… God made a promise to the Jews that He will gather to the land of Israel the remnant of Jews who accept Jesus as their Messiah at the end of the Tribulation (Ezekiel 36:22–28; Zechariah 10:6–9); He will pour out His Spirit on this remnant (Isaiah 32:15; 44:3), greatly expand their numbers and their land (Ezekiel 36:10–11; 48:1–29), and make them the prime nation in all the world (Isaiah 60–62).

To the Church… God made a promise to the Church that the redeemed in Christ will reign over the nations of the earth; this promise was first given to Daniel (Daniel 7:27); it was a promise given to Paul (2 Timothy 2:12), and it was affirmed by Jesus in His letter to the church at Thyatira (Revelation 2:26–27). When John was taken to heaven for a visit to the throne room of God, he heard the heavenly host of angels singing “You have made them [the redeemed] to be a kingdom and priests to our God, and they will reign upon the earth” (Revelation 5:10).

To the nations… God made a promise to the nations that there will be a time of worldwide peace (Isaiah 2:4), and that He will flood the earth with righteousness,
justice, and holiness and the knowledge of the Lord (Isaiah 11:9; Zechariah 14:20, 21).

To the creation... God made a promise to His creation that was cursed when Adam sinned that He would deliver it from the bondage of decay and restore it to its original beauty (Romans 8:18–23); carnivorous animals will become herbivorous (Isaiah 11:6–7); deadly animals will cease to be poisonous (Isaiah 11:8–9); the plant kingdom will flourish and produce bountifully (Isaiah 35; Ezekiel 34:25–31).

To Jesus Christ... God made a promise to His Son Jesus that He will be glorified in history to compensate in part for His humiliation in history; when Jesus returns, He does so to manifest His glory (Isaiah 24:23, 66:18–19; 2 Thessalonians 1:7–10); God promised that He would give Jesus dominion over all the world and He will reign over the nations from Mt. Zion in Jerusalem (Daniel 7:13–14; Isaiah 2:2–4; Zechariah 14:1–9); one day, God will install Jesus as “King upon Zion” (Psalm 2:6).

Yes, Jesus is coming back to set up an earthly kingdom that will precede His heavenly kingdom.

The Binding of Satan (20:1–3)

*The release of an angel...* “Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand” (20:1). An angel from heaven has a key to the bottomless pit; you may recall when the fifth angel sounded the fifth trumpet that Satan was given the key to the bottomless pit and out came a swarm of demonic locusts with scorpion-like tails that stung people for five months; they were in such pain that the people wanted to die but they could not; the bottomless pit is a hollow inferno that goes to the center of the earth; the worst of all the demons are said to reside there; now an angel from heaven has the key to open that pit.

*The retention of Satan...* “He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years” (20:2). This angel must be a very powerful angel as he binds Satan and casts him into that pit where he will be locked up for one thousand years; to remove Satan and his demons from the earth is going to dramatically change the world; we already saw with the coming of Christ to earth that the two beasts, known as the Antichrist and the
False Prophet were captured and were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone (19:20); now Satan is captured and cast alive into this bottomless pit.

God is taking care of all those who have rebelled against Him; fallen, sinful men have been slain in the process of judgments throughout the Tribulation; many of those who survived those judgments perished in the battle of Armageddon; the Antichrist and the False Prophet have been cast into hell; now Satan is seized and thrown into this fiery inferno called a bottomless pit.

The bottomless pit is not hell; it is not the final place of torments where Satan will ultimately be cast; when Jesus cast the demons out of a man from the region of the Gadarenes, the demons pleaded with Jesus not to send them to “the abyss,” or bottomless pit (Luke 8:31); so the bottomless pit is an intermediate, temporary place of punishment where Satan and his cohorts are held until they are finally cast into hell.

The incarceration of Satan and all the demons is critical to the reign of Christ and the saints during the Millennial Kingdom; we might think, “Wow, with all those evil critters bound up and locked away, there will be no more sin.” That is not the case; humans don’t need the Devil and his demons to sin; as far as the redeemed Church and all the saints of God that come with Christ and assist Him in setting up His Millennial Kingdom, such will not be capable of sin, for we will have redeemed bodies; however, there will be many mortals who survive the Tribulation that will enter the Millennium; they will be capable of sin for they will have a sin nature; they will be of the flesh; the flesh is a term that refers to sinful man; it tempts man to lust after those things that are not of God; John tells us how the flesh can lead us to sin: “For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world” (1 John 2:16).

Not only will people sin during the Millennium, and justice will come quickly, but people who reject Christ will ultimately die; the environment will be so different during this time that people born into the Millennium can live a thousand years; there will be a return to the days before the flood when people lived 800 to over 900 years; the prophet Isaiah says in this future golden age of the Messiah, “No longer shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not yet fulfilled his days, for the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed” (Isaiah 65:20); it seems a person who is one hundred years old is still considered a child, and they will be given one hundred years to submit to the Messiah, or face the consequences of dying.
The reasons for binding Satan... “and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished...” (20:3a).

There are two reasons for binding Satan:

1. To stop him from deceiving the nations... His deception is over; if people reject Christ it is not because they have been deceived; it is because they love their iniquity.

2. To satisfy the demands for the Millennial reign of Christ... Satan has been the god of this world, but that will not be true when Christ comes to reign; God wants to show what a different world it will be when Christ reigns; now Christ reigns and not Satan; Satan was cast out of heaven (12:9); now he is cast out of the earth and all his demons with him (Isaiah 24:21–22).

The release of Satan... “But after these things he must be released for a little while” (20:3b); following the Millennium, Satan will be released for a short time; this is one final escapade as Satan is given the opportunity to collect all of those who would rather be in his kingdom than in the kingdom of God; we must remember, the Millennial kingdom consists of more than the saints of God; there are those who did not go to war in the battle of Armageddon; there are the Gentile “sheep” who ministered to the Jews while they were escaping into the wilderness; there will be that Jewish remnant whom God protected from the Antichrist, and there are those who are born during the Millennium; Satan will be given one last, but short opportunity to influence as many of those people to join his cause, and of course, that will be a serious mistake!

The Blessing of the Believers (20:4–6)

The reign of the saints... “And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them...” (20:4a). We will be given responsibilities of judging the world; Paul wrote, “Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?” (1 Corinthians 6:2a; Revelation 2:26; 3:21;5:10); of course, the ultimate ruler will be Jesus Christ; He has returned to earth as KING OF KING AND LORD OF LORDS (19:16); as the saints, we will be assisting Christ in carrying out His wishes; we will have delegated authority from Christ to bring truth to education; to bring justice to the courtroom; to bring moral standards to society; to bring fairness and equality among racial groups; to bring true news from the media; we will not have opposition from the ACLU or atheistic professors who will try to
indoctrinate people into their leftist agenda; what a different world this is going to be and we as the saints of God will have much to do with bringing back righteousness, justice, truth, and equal opportunity to a world that had fallen prey to the evil one.

The recognition for those martyred during the Tribulation... “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 worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years” (20:4b). Even those martyred saints who gave their lives for Christ during the Tribulation—who refused to worship the beast or to take his mark—they too will join the Church in ruling and reigning with Christ throughout the Millennium.

The resurrection of the unsaved... “but the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished...” (20:5a). All those who died outside of Christ, throughout all the ages, will remain in Hades and will not be resurrected until after the thousand years are over; Hades is an intermediate abode of the dead and at first consisted of two divisions: one called Abraham’s bosom or Paradise, and the other division, separated by a gulf, is called Torments (Luke 16:19–31). During the OT times, all true believers who died went to Abraham’s bosom where their spirit lived peacefully until Christ shed His blood for the total forgiveness of their sins; once Christ ascended into heaven, these OT saints were released from Abraham’s bosom and went to be with Christ in heaven (Ephesians 4:8); however, they do not receive their resurrection bodies until Christ comes a second time; this is also true of those saints martyred during the Tribulation (Daniel 12:1–2); remember, we, the Church receive our resurrection bodies at the time of the rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:16); all the unsaved remain in Torments or Hades until the end of the Millennium where their bodies will be resurrected and joined with their spirits only to face Jesus in the Great White Throne judgment when their verdict will be to spend eternity in hell (20:11–15).

The reality of two resurrections... “This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who is part of 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” (20:5b–6). The phrase, “This is the first resurrection” should be part of verse 6, and admittedly creates confusion when connected with “the rest of the dead who did not live until the thousand years were finished.” There are two resurrections; the first resurrection is that of the saints, which includes the Church at the rapture, and the OT saints and martyred saints during the
Tribulation which occurs at the end of the Tribulation; there are two parts to the first resurrection: one at the rapture and the other at the Second Coming of Christ to earth at the end of the Tribulation.

The phrase “the second resurrection” does not appear as such; it is assumed; if there is a first resurrection there must be a second resurrection; Jesus said, “Do not marvel at this, for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:28–29); yes, there are two resurrections; the first is the resurrection of the saints, the second is the resurrection of the unsaved that occurs a thousand years later.

The Battle at the End of the Millennium (20:7–10)

_The deliverance of Satan from prison..._ “Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison...” (20:7). God is permitting Satan to have one last fling; when the Millennium ends, He releases Satan from the bottomless pit; notice what he does; he is back to his same old tricks.

_The deception of Satan..._ “... and 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 of the sand of the sea” (20:8). Satan is the great deceiver and that is exactly how he begins to operate the moment he is let out of prison; he still believes he can fool people; he still believes he can conquer Christ; for one thousand years he has been rendered inactive; he has been stuck in a fiery inferno in the heart of the earth, but that has not discouraged him; that has not caused him to give up his dream of winning the battle.

Once he has been set free, nations from all over the globe are deceived; Gog and Magog are deceived; the number of people deceived is “of the sand of the sea”; that is a lot of people.

This is very curious to me; why would people coming out of the Millennium allow themselves to be suckerized by the Devil, when for one thousand years they have been living the good life; sin has been greatly reduced, people have felt safe and secure, there have been no wars, there have been bountiful harvests, people are feeling prosperous; the curse of Adam has been lifted from this earth and there has not been a more beautiful environment since the days of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden; this is so inconceivable that I cannot comprehend it.
One thing it shows me is, even when Satan is bound, and life is good, there are still people who hate God so much, that given the opportunity they will rebel; peace, prosperity, natural beauty—such things as these are no guarantee that man will bow before their Creator and worship Him; this may seem unbelievable, but people born into the Millennium will still have a sin nature and a potential rebellious spirit; they will still have the free will to do and act as they please; and while judgment will come swiftly and justly, it seems that for many, nothing will prevent them from arming themselves against God once Satan is released from the bottomless pit; it is hard to believe that some people hate God so much, that even while enjoying His blessings, they join the opposition to fight against Him.

*The disdain of Gog and Magog*... There is only one other place in Scripture that mentions Gog and Magog and that is Ezekiel 38–39. Magog was the second son of Japheth and the grandson of Noah. He settled in an area north of the Black and Caspian seas. In ancient times it was known as Scythia; in modern times it is known as Russia; the Scythians were skilled with the bow and arrow and it was said they could hit their target while shooting from behind their backs; during the days of the Roman empire they were Rome’s biggest threat.

Ezekiel says that Magog and her allies will invade Israel when Israel is dwelling securely in her land with unwalled villages; at such a time, Russia and Muslim allies attack Israel to get spoil; some see this battle taking place before the rapture of the Church, some see it taking place after the rapture but before the Tribulation begins, some see it happening during the first half of the Tribulation, some see it as part of the battle of Armageddon at the end of the Tribulation, and a growing viewpoint is, it takes place at the end of the Millennium, once Satan is released from the bottomless pit.

My personal opinion is, it could occur at any time, but if it occurs after the rapture, I believe it will be before the Tribulation begins; I believe in the imminent return of Christ, that He can come at any time, even before all prophecies are fulfilled; these unfilled prophecies can be fulfilled after the rapture and before the Tribulation begins, or during the Tribulation itself.

If the battle of Gog and Magog takes place before the Tribulation begins, who is the Gog and Magog that Satan gathers together after he is released from the bottomless pit at the end of the Millennium?

If Gog and Magog are not those armies mentioned by Ezekiel, then who are they?

Doc Beshore saw it as a term referring to “complete defeat”; he believed the real
battle of Gog and Magog mentioned by Ezekiel will take place before the rapture, so in Revelation it becomes a byword like “Waterloo”; today, you sometimes hear the expression, “I met my Waterloo,” meaning, whatever problem you were facing, it got the best of you. William Barclay, in his commentary on Revelation, states that Jewish thought on Gog and Magog is symbolic “for everything that is against God... When John brings Gog and Magog into the picture he is going back to Ezekiel, and he is introducing the symbolic figures who stand for all the world forces which array themselves against God only to be utterly destroyed.”

The destruction of his army... “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” (20:9). The hostile armies under the Devil’s leadership come up against the camp of God’s people and against the beloved city of Jerusalem; immediately fire comes down from heaven and consumes them.

Scripture tells us that God’s saints will be camped in Jerusalem because that is where the Lord Jesus will be; of course, when there is an attack, we will want to be as close to Jesus as we can be; the prophet Isaiah says: “Then the moon will be disgraced, and the sun ashamed; for the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before His elders gloriously” (Isaiah 24:23); Jerusalem will be home to all the saints; Jeremiah wrote: “At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD and all the nations will be gathered to Jerusalem for the name of the LORD” (Jerusalem 3:17); where the Lord is, that’s where we will be; we may have ministries thousands of miles away, but every one of us will have a house in Jerusalem; by the way, transportation will be no problem for we will have glorified bodies—bodies like the resurrected Christ that can move in and out at will; we can be in Jerusalem and a moment later be in Los Angeles; remember how Jesus appeared out of nowhere to the men on the road to Emmaus, and then disappeared as quickly as He came (Luke 24:31).

When Satan’s army, known as Gog and Magog, tries to make war with the saints in Jerusalem, they will be swiftly destroyed, and all the saints will be protected because we will be where Jesus is. Amen!

The destiny 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” (20:10). Satan, who deceived the nations is now thrown into the lake of fire; is this literal fire and brimstone? For Satan, this has to be a symbol of extreme anguish and pain, for he and the
demons are spirit beings, so the nature of their torment is spiritual; however, human beings are physical beings with resurrected bodies and I believe the fires of hell are real and literal; their bodies burn but are never destroyed; Revelation 14:11 says: “Those who drink of the wine of the wrath of God, their smoke will go up forever and ever.”

Hell was initially created for the Devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41); all unbelievers will end up there, not by God choosing, but by their own choice; these are people who have heard the message of salvation and the love and grace of God and have chosen to reject it; they have no one to blame but themselves.

The demise of Satan was assured at the cross and will be executed at the end of the Millennial Kingdom; but for those of us who have been wise to put our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and to live our lives for Him, we have a better future—a bright future—a glorious future! Right now we are citizens of the kingdom of God; our citizenship is already there; that is our place; that is our home. Jesus Christ is our King and the day will come when we will come back with Him in a glorified form to reign alongside of Him over those still living in human form; and we will be with our King Jesus forever and ever in a kingdom without end. Amen and amen!