

# REVELATION CHAPTER TWENTY

## The Millennium

### Revelation 20:1-6

When you're having a hard day and everything seems to be going wrong, do you ever dream of a time or place where everything would be perfect? If so, you are not alone. People for hundreds of years have written about and dreamed of a place often referred to as "Utopia." People such as the Greek philosopher Plato and the Christian Sir Thomas More, who was martyred by King Henry the VIII because More would not bow to the king as superior to the Church. He also wrote about a place called "Utopia. In his book, he described a place where everyone got along and no one was poor. Therefore, Utopia brings to mind a community and society where there is no crime, no poverty, no out-of-sight taxes, no corrupt politicians. It is a fantasy. No such place exists on earth.

However, for the Christian there is coming a time when they will all live in a place that far exceeds the perfection described in various Utopias. One day, when Christ comes back to rule on earth, there will be a period of a thousand years, called the Millennium, when life will be absolutely wonderful--as close to perfect as life could be outside of Heaven. Today we are going to look at the biblical foundation for our belief in the Millennium.

It is often said by those who object to the doctrine of an earthly **Millennium**, that the term itself is not found in the Bible either. They insist that neither in the Old nor in the New Testaments do we ever read of a Millennium. They argue from this that the teaching is manmade, not derived from the Word of God. We might reply that the mere fact that a certain term is not used in Scripture does not necessarily prove that the doctrine for which the term stands is not taught there. The word *trinity* is not found in the Bible, but all sound Christians believe in the doctrine of God in three persons. There are several other words that are used to reflect various doctrines taught in the Bible even though the word itself does not appear. So the mere omission of a title or name of a doctrine does not prove the doctrine itself does not exist.

The term for a thousand years (a millennium) is found six times in Revelation chapter 20. It simply means a "*thousand years*"; just as a *century* means "*one hundred years*," or a *jubilee* refers to a period of fifty years. A millennium then is simply a period of time. The last thousand years of man's presence on the earth is what we are about to study in this chapter. It will be a period of happy times.

#### Revelation 20:1-3 NLT:

<sup>1</sup> Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven with the key to the bottomless pit and a heavy chain in his hand.

<sup>2</sup> He seized the dragon—that old serpent, who is the devil, **Satan**—and

*bound him in chains for a thousand years.*

<sup>3</sup>*The angel threw him into the **bottomless pit**, which he then shut and locked so Satan could not deceive the nations anymore until the thousand years were finished. Afterward he must be released for a little while.*

So the first thing we see that will make the Millennium wonderful is that Satan is locked up and cannot do his mischief on earth. One of the first things that Jesus will do upon His return is to sentence and lock Satan in **the pit** for concurrent terms totaling one-thousand years without any consideration of parole.

Ever since the Garden of Eden this snake in the grass has persistently attempted to make people doubt and mistrust God. He does this by various methods and one of his favorites is to use the Church and Christians to drive people away from God. Yes, you heard me correctly, in fact I might go as far as to say that over the course of history the Church and so-called Christians have done more to drive people away from Christ than to draw them to Christ. So, by his special gift of making people believe that his lies are true, Satan has sent people down the path to destruction because they wanted to do what they wanted to do instead of what God wanted them to do. He has had far too many victory celebrations over the last six-thousand years, and enough is enough. And this is what these first three verses in Revelation chapter twenty describe. Satan will get exactly what he deserves and Christ will take him out of the picture for a thousand years. Oh happy day!

However, even though Satan is put in jail, there is this little problem that all humans are born with, and that is what is called “*a sin nature.*” It is an integral part that all earthly bodies come with as standard equipment. So when someone sins during the Millennium it will not be the result of having been deceived by Satan because he is under lock-and-key. It will simply be because of **self-will** and the person’s yielding to the lusts of their own hearts. There will be some, even in that wonderful period of time, who will dare to defy the will of God even though they are aware that they will be dealt with as severely as their sin requires. Such cases, I take it, will not be frequent during the Millennium, but Scripture makes it plain that there will be offenses even when God's King reigns over the earth.

Revelation 20:4-6 (NLT):

<sup>4</sup>*Then I saw thrones, and the people sitting on them had been given the **authority to judge.** And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded (the Tribulation saints)<sup>1</sup> for their testimony about Jesus and for proclaiming the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his statue, nor accepted his mark on their forehead or their hands. They all came to life again, and they reigned with Christ for a thousand years.*

<sup>5</sup>*This is the **first resurrection.** (The rest of the dead did not come back to life until the thousand years had ended.)*

<sup>6</sup>*Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. For them **the second death holds no power,** but they will be priests of God and of*

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<sup>1</sup> Parentheses mine.

*Christ and will reign with him a thousand years.*

**In the present age of grace, many who follow Christ will suffer persecution.** Those who live a righteous life are often called upon by the Lord to suffer and that seems unfair treatment for a lot of people. **But it is not unfair, for God has a purpose for everything He does.** Through our suffering He can bring other people to recognize how devoted and trusting we are in His care, and they may begin a genuine search for the truth which will eventually bring them to salvation and eternal life.

Romans 8:28 (NASB):

<sup>28</sup> *And we know that God causes **all things** to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*

During the **Millennium** righteousness will reign.

For look at what Isaiah says in Isaiah 32:1 (NASB):

<sup>1</sup> *Behold, a king will reign **righteously** And princes will rule **justly**.*

After the Millennium, in the eternal state (eternity in Heaven), righteousness will invade every square inch of God's Heaven, and **every sinful thing that brings people sadness and suffering will be forever banished from the new heavens and the new earth.**

**Then we read in Daniel:**

Daniel 7:18 (NASB):

<sup>18</sup> *'But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come.'*

**Daniel predicted that the time would come when believing saints would run the kingdom under the direction of Christ.** Revelation 20:4 is the fulfillment of this prophecy. Jesus, the saints who were raised to meet Him in the air at the Rapture of the Church,<sup>2</sup> and those who came to accept Christ as Savior between the Rapture of the Church and the end of the Tribulation,<sup>3</sup> will all share in ruling the earth during the millennial kingdom. These are the saints that sit on the thrones in Revelation 20:4. All those who shared in Christ's death and resurrection.

However, Revelation 20:5 tells us <sup>5</sup> *This is the first resurrection. (The rest of the dead did not come back to life until the thousand years had ended.)* All of these saints we just

<sup>2</sup> This is the event that will see all believing Christians who are alive on the earth at that time taken up to meet Christ in the heavenlies and receive their resurrected bodies.

<sup>3</sup> Their rapture will be when the Lord appears for the establishment of the kingdom.

described in the last paragraph who were joined to Christ, by faith through grace, together make up the first resurrection—**the resurrection of life**. However, verse 5 begins to describe what will happen to all who rejected Christ, which we could appropriately call the **resurrection of judgment**. These two judgments will be separated by the one-thousand years of the Millennium. Believers will be resurrected sometime during the Tribulation before the beginning of the Millennium, but unbelievers will not be resurrected until the end of the Millennium, a period of just a little over a thousand years. The unsaved will remain in their graves until the heavens and the earth pass away; **their souls in Hell** and **their bodies in the grave**, they await the day of judgment at the end of the Millennium.<sup>4</sup>

“Now it is very common for us to get confused regarding all the terms for what we call “Hell” in modern day thinking. So let us see if we can get some clarification. *Abussos* (**abyss**) appears seven times in Revelation (9:1, 2, 11; 11:7; 17:8), always in reference to the temporary place of incarceration for certain **demons**. **The abyss** is not their final place of punishment; the **lake of fire** is (Matthew 25:41). Nevertheless it is a place of torment to which the demons fear to be sent (Luke 8:31). The prisoners in the abyss are among the most vile and evil of all demons and include the *"spirits now in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah"* (1 Peter 3:19-20). Those demons, who attempted to corrupt the human race by cohabiting with human women (Genesis 6:1-4), **will never be released** (Jude 6). They will be transferred directly from their temporary incarceration in the **abyss** to their permanent place of punishment, the **lake of fire** (Isaiah 24:21-22). Other demons sentenced to the **abyss** will be released at the fifth trumpet judgment to torment sinners (9:1-12).”<sup>5</sup>

The Greek noun *hades* is used in translation of the Hebrew term, *sheol*, which refers to the grave or the realm of the dead.<sup>6</sup> The picture generally presented by Sheol is the tomb, where the bodies of the dead lie in silence.

Hades in the NT, on the other hand, can represent a place of torment for the wicked. When the term *hades* is used as the equivalent of the Hebrew *sheol*, as it is in Acts 2:27,31, **it refers simply to the grave**.

<sup>4</sup> H. A. Ironside, *H. A. Ironside Commentary – Revelation*, (San Diego, CA: Horizon Press, 1930), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 332-349.

<sup>5</sup> *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* [Chicago: Moody, 1999], 257-58.) John MacArthur, *MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Revelation 12-22*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 2000), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 234.

<sup>6</sup> Gen. 37:35; 1 Sam. 2:6; Prov. 15:24; cp. Ps 16:10; and Acts 2:27,31.

Old Testament teaching on the afterlife is less clear than in the NT. However, the NT is clear not only that there is a bodily resurrection,<sup>7</sup> but that **the believer** who dies goes immediately to be with the Lord.<sup>8</sup>

In the NT two words are translated “Hell”: *Gehenna*<sup>9</sup> and *Hades*.<sup>10</sup> It is significant that, contrary to Sheol, none of the NT terms for Hell or Gehenna are used simply for the grave.<sup>11</sup>

Now taking all of this and trying to simplify it could be quite a challenge, but here is my humble opinion based on the information I have evaluated. If we are believers in Christ’s death as a penalty for our sins, when we die our bodies go into the grave, but our souls go immediately to Heaven. When unbelievers die, their bodies go into the grave and their souls go to Hell. So we have bodies of both believers and unbelievers in their graves. But the souls of believers are in Heaven and the souls of unbelievers are in Hell. At the time of the Rapture of believers, all who have died and are in their graves or whatever condition the remains of their human might be, will arise and their bodies will be rejoined with their souls. But their bodies will no longer be earthly bodies, they will be perfect bodies that have been designed by God for eternal life. Those who come to faith after the Rapture and before Christ’s return will undergo the same process at the end of the seven-year Tribulation.

The bodies of all unbelievers will remain in their graves until the end of the Millennium when they will receive final judgment from God at the Great White Throne Judgment, where their bodies will be rejoined with their souls, but these new bodies will be quite different from those of believers. They will not be perfect and they will be specifically designed to withstand the rigors and tortures of an eternity in the Lake of Fire.

Now let us get back to the time of the Millennium that we were discussing just a few pages back. The millennial kingdom as described by Isaiah reveals to us the future time when Israel and Judah will be united again as one people in their own land, the land that God gave them thousands of years ago. The land of Israel will stretch **from the river of Egypt** (Wadi el-Arish, not the Nile River) **to the great river, the Euphrates**. Israel has never possessed this land in its entirety, but she will when Christ returns to reign as Messiah. The Canaanite tribes listed (Genesis 15:19-21) were dispossessed later in the Conquest.

#### Genesis 15:18-21 (NASB):

<sup>7</sup> John 11:24-25; Rom. 6:5; 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:20-21.

<sup>8</sup> Chad Brand, Charles Draper, Archie England, ed., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), s.v. “,” WORDsearch CROSS e-book.

<sup>9</sup> (Matt. 5:22,29-30; 10:28; 18:19; Mark 9:43,45,47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6),

<sup>10</sup> (Matt.11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Acts 2:27,31; Rev. 1:18; 20:13-14),

<sup>11</sup> Chad Brand, Charles Draper, Archie England, ed., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), s.v. “,” WORDsearch CROSS e-book.

<sup>18</sup> *On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates:*

<sup>19</sup> *the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite*

<sup>20</sup> *and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim*

<sup>21</sup> *and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite."*

“For Abram God’s message was clear: in spite of the prospects of death and suffering (enslavement in bondage), his descendants would receive the promises, for God assured it. So Israel could be encouraged by this at the Exodus as well as in subsequent times of distress, even during the Babylonian Captivity. God’s solemn covenant assures the Chosen People of the ultimate fulfillment of His promises in spite of their times of death and suffering.

“Israel would also notice the parallel touch at the beginning of this narrative. (Cf. ‘I am the LORD [*Yahweh*] who brought you out of Ur,’ [v: 7](#), with Ex. [20:2](#): ‘I am the LORD [*Yahweh*] your God who brought you out of Egypt.’) This assured Israel that in spite of opposition and bondage God would judge their enslavers and fulfill His promises.

“This passage encourages New Testament believers as well. God affirms solemnly that He will fulfill His promises concerning salvation and all the blessings that pertain to that life ([2 Peter 1:3-4](#)); despite opposition, suffering, and even death, He keeps His promises.”<sup>12</sup>

They will be united with God and dwell in peace. The glory of the God will cover the earth. Isaiah predicted how nature itself would respond to Christ’s rule over all the earth.

Isaiah 11:1-9 (NLT):

<sup>1</sup> *Out of the stump of David’s family will grow a shoot— yes, a new Branch bearing fruit from the old root.*

<sup>2</sup> *And the Spirit of the LORD will rest on him (Jesus).<sup>13</sup> — the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.*

<sup>3</sup> *He will delight in obeying the LORD. **He will not judge by appearance nor make a decision based on hearsay.***

<sup>4</sup> ***He will give justice to the poor and make fair decisions for the exploited.***

<sup>12</sup> Walvoord, John F. ; Zuck, Roy B. ; Dallas Theological Seminary: The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures. Wheaton, IL : Victor Books, 1983-c1985, S. 1:56.

<sup>13</sup> Parentheses mine.

*The earth will shake at the force of his word, and **one breath from his mouth will destroy the wicked.***

<sup>5</sup> *He will wear righteousness like a belt and truth like an undergarment.*

<sup>6</sup> *In that day the wolf and the lamb will live together; the leopard will lie down with the baby goat. The calf and the yearling will be safe with the lion, and a little child will lead them all.*

<sup>7</sup> *The cow will graze near the bear. The cub and the calf will lie down together. The lion will eat hay like a cow.*

<sup>8</sup> *The baby will play safely near the hole of a cobra. Yes, a little child will put its hand in a nest of deadly snakes without harm.*

<sup>9</sup> ***Nothing will hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, for as the waters fill the sea, so the earth will be filled with people who know the LORD.***

All nations will then ask the way to Zion, and Jerusalem will become the capitol of the whole earth. Jeremiah picks up on this theme. **Jeremiah** takes up the same happy theme in Jeremiah 16. **God had him write of the day that God would bring back his people (the Jews)** from every nation on earth and restore them to the land He had given their ancestors way back in the days of Moses.<sup>14</sup>

Jeremiah 16:14-15 (HCSB):

<sup>14</sup> *“However, take note! The days are coming”—the Lord’s declaration—“when it will no longer be said: As the Lord lives who brought the Israelites from the land of Egypt,*

<sup>15</sup> *but rather: As the Lord lives who brought the Israelites from the land of the north and from all the other lands where He had banished them. For I will return them to their land that I gave to their ancestors.*

Ezekiel 39:29 (HCSB):

<sup>29</sup> *I will no longer hide My face from them, for **I will pour out My Spirit on the house of Israel.**” [This is] the declaration of the Lord God.*

<p>Isaiah saw the city of Jerusalem built again and populated by a peaceful, happy nation under the reign of the righteous Branch (Jesus).</p>
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Then in Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 23:6 (HCSB):

<sup>6</sup> *In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. This is what He will be named: The Lord Is Our Righteousness.*

<sup>14</sup> Their utmost limits should be from the Desert of Arabia Petr’a on the south, to Lebanon on the north; and from the Euphrates on the east, to the Great Sea, or the Mediterranean, on the west. The Israelites did not possess the full extent of this grant till the time of David. Ge 15:18-21 Ex 23:31 Nu 34:2-18 De 1:7 3:25 11:24 1Ch 5:9 1Ch 18:3; Isaiah 1:4.

Ezekiel added to the story telling of the Holy Spirit being poured out by God from Heaven. He described the service of the regenerated Israel, a priestly nation through whom the Law of God goes out to all the lands of the nations. He depicted the millennial temple and even told us how the land is to be divided among the tribes. Ezekiel 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*" (Ezekiel 48:35).<sup>15</sup>

Ezekiel 38:8 (HCSB):

<sup>8</sup> *After a long time you will be summoned. In the last years you will enter a land that has been restored from war and regathered from many peoples to the mountains of Israel, which had long been a ruin. They were brought out from the peoples, and all of them [now] live securely.*

Ezekiel 43:10-12 (NLT):

<sup>10</sup> *"Son of man, describe to the people of Israel **the Temple I have shown you**, so they will be ashamed of all their sins. Let them study its plan,*

<sup>11</sup> *and they will be ashamed of what they have done. Describe to them all the specifications of the Temple—including its entrances and exits—and everything else about it. Tell them about its decrees and laws. Write down all these specifications and decrees as they watch so they will be sure to remember and follow them.*

<sup>12</sup> *And this is the **basic law of the Temple: absolute holiness!** The entire top of the mountain where the Temple is built is holy. Yes, this is the basic law of the Temple.*

Ezekiel 47:6-12 (HCSB):

<sup>6</sup> *He asked me, "Do you see [this], son of man?" Then he led me back to the bank of the river.*

<sup>7</sup> *When I had returned, I saw a very large number of trees along both sides of the riverbank.*

<sup>8</sup> *He said to me, "This water flows out to the eastern region and goes down to the Arabah. When it enters the sea, the sea of foul water, the water [of the sea] becomes fresh.*

<sup>9</sup> *Every [kind of] living creature that swarms will live wherever the river flows, and there will be a huge number of fish because this water goes there. Since the water will become fresh, there will be life everywhere the river goes.*

<sup>10</sup> *Fishermen will stand beside it from En-ge-di to En-eglaim. These will become places where nets are spread out to dry. Their fish will consist of many different kinds, like the fish of the Mediterranean Sea.*

<sup>11</sup> *Yet its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be left for salt.*

<sup>12</sup> *All [kinds of] trees providing food will grow along both banks of the*

<sup>15</sup> Op cit., Walvoord.

*river. Their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. Each month they will bear fresh fruit because the water [comes] from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be used for food and their leaves for medicine.”*

**Daniel’s** visions of the end time conclude with his prophesy about the fifth kingdom. Daniel tells us that this is the kingdom of the **Son of man**, which will replace all others and stand forever. This is the **Stone cut out without hands** that falls on the feet of the Gentile image and grinds it to powder. Then it becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth. **This is the world kingdom given to the Son of man (Jesus)<sup>16</sup> by the Father.**

Then the bodies of the beasts (symbolizing the four great empires that have ruled over all the civilized earth) will be cast into the burning flame.

Daniel 2:29-35 (NLT):

<sup>29</sup> *“While Your Majesty was sleeping, you dreamed about coming events. He who reveals secrets has shown you what is going to happen.*

<sup>30</sup> *And it is not because I am wiser than anyone else that I know the secret of your dream, but because **God wants you to understand what was in your heart.***

<sup>31</sup> *“In your vision, Your Majesty, you saw standing before you a huge, shining statue of a man. It was a frightening sight.*

<sup>32</sup> *The head of the statue was made of fine gold. Its chest and arms were silver, its belly and thighs were bronze,*

<sup>33</sup> *its legs were iron, and its feet were a combination of iron and baked clay.*

<sup>34</sup> *As you watched, a rock was cut from a mountain, but not by human hands. It struck the feet of iron and clay, smashing them to bits.*

<sup>35</sup> *The whole statue was crushed into small pieces of iron, clay, bronze, silver, and gold. Then the wind blew them away without a trace, like chaff on a threshing floor. But the rock that knocked the statue down became a great mountain that covered the whole earth.*

Daniel 2:36-45 (NLT):

<sup>36</sup> *“That was the dream. Now we will tell the king what it means.*

<sup>37</sup> *Your Majesty, you are the greatest of kings. The God of heaven has given you sovereignty, power, strength, and honor.*

<sup>38</sup> *He has made you the ruler over all the inhabited world and has put even the wild animals and birds under your control. You are the head of gold.*

<sup>39</sup> *“But after your kingdom comes to an end, another kingdom, inferior to yours, will rise to take your place. After that kingdom has fallen, yet a **third kingdom**, represented by bronze, will rise to rule the world.*

<sup>40</sup> *Following that kingdom, there will be a **fourth** one, as strong as iron. That kingdom will smash and crush all previous empires, just as iron*

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<sup>16</sup> Parentheses mine.

*smashes and crushes everything it strikes.*

<sup>41</sup> **The feet and toes** you saw were a combination of iron and baked clay, showing that this kingdom will be divided. Like iron mixed with clay, it will have some of the strength of iron.

<sup>42</sup> But while some parts of it will be as strong as iron, other parts will be as weak as clay.

<sup>43</sup> This mixture of iron and clay also shows that these kingdoms will try to strengthen themselves by forming alliances with each other through intermarriage. But they will not hold together, just as iron and clay do not mix.

<sup>44</sup> “During the reigns of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed or conquered. It will crush all these kingdoms into nothingness, and it will stand forever.

<sup>45</sup> That is the meaning of the rock cut from the mountain, though not by human hands, that crushed to pieces the statue of iron, bronze, clay, silver, and gold. The great God was showing the king what will happen in the future. The dream is true, and its meaning is certain.”

The statue referred to here is a huge metallic structure. It has a head of gold, which describes **Babylon**. The breast and arms are of silver, **Medo-Persia**. The brass is **Graeco-Macedonian**. The legs are of iron, and that is **Rome**. In the feet, clay is inserted into the iron, which is the last form of the Roman Empire. It is my considered conclusion that we are now living in the final form of that fourth kingdom.

**Hosea** warned the people of the coming exile (in Babylon)<sup>17</sup> because of their many sins. But at the same time he gives them hope that **one day all of Israel will be restored to the land**. This is referring to the End Times, not the return from exile which only included about five percent of the Israelites. **When they seek His face God will bring them home and give them everlasting righteousness and make them a blessing to all nations.**

Hosea 2:14-23 (NLT):

<sup>14</sup> “But then I (God)<sup>18</sup> will win her back once again. I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her there.

<sup>15</sup> I will return her vineyards to her and transform the Valley of Trouble into a gateway of hope. She will give herself to me there, as she did long ago when she was young, when I freed her from her captivity in Egypt.

<sup>16</sup> When that day comes,” says the LORD, “you will call me ‘my husband’ instead of ‘my master.’

<sup>17</sup> O Israel, I will wipe the many names of Baal from your lips, and you will never mention them again.

<sup>18</sup> On that day I will make a covenant with all the wild animals and the birds of the sky and the animals that scurry along the ground so they will

<sup>17</sup> Parentheses mine.

<sup>18</sup> Parentheses mine.

*not harm you. I will remove all weapons of war from the land, all swords and bows, so you can live unafraid in peace and safety.*

<sup>19</sup> *I will make you my wife forever, showing you righteousness and justice, unfailing love and compassion.*

<sup>20</sup> *I will be faithful to you and make you mine, and you will finally know me as the LORD.*

<sup>21</sup> *“In that day, I will answer,” says the LORD. “I will answer the sky as it pleads for clouds. And the sky will answer the earth with rain.*

<sup>22</sup> *Then the earth will answer the thirsty cries of the grain, the grapevines, and the olive trees. And they in turn will answer, ‘Jezreel’—‘God plants!’*

<sup>23</sup> *At that time I will plant a crop of Israelites and raise them for myself. I will show love to those I called ‘Not loved.’ And to those I called ‘Not my people,’ I will say, ‘Now you are my people.’ And they will reply, ‘You are our God!’”*

Hosea 3:4-5 (NLT):

<sup>4</sup> *This shows that Israel will go a long time without a king or prince, and without sacrifices, sacred pillars, priests, or even idols!*

<sup>5</sup> *But afterward the people will return and devote themselves to the LORD their God and to David’s descendant, their king. **In the last days, they will tremble in awe of the LORD and of his goodness.***

Hosea 14:1-7 (NLT):

<sup>1</sup> *Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God, for your sins have brought you down.*

<sup>2</sup> *Bring your confessions, and return to the LORD. Say to him, “**Forgive all our sins** and graciously receive us, so that we may offer you our praises.*

<sup>3</sup> *Assyria cannot save us, nor can our war-horses. Never again will we say to the idols we have made, ‘You are our gods.’ No, in you alone do the orphans find mercy.”*

<sup>4</sup> *The LORD says, “Then I will heal you of your faithlessness; my love will know no bounds, for **my anger will be gone forever.***

<sup>5</sup> *I will be to Israel like a refreshing dew from heaven. Israel will blossom like the lily; it will send roots deep into the soil like the cedars in Lebanon.*

<sup>6</sup> *Its branches will spread out like beautiful olive trees, as fragrant as the cedars of Lebanon.*

<sup>7</sup> *My people will again live under my shade. They will flourish like grain and blossom like grapevines. They will be as fragrant as the wines of Lebanon.*

Hosea 14:8-9 (NLT):

<sup>8</sup> *“O Israel, stay away from idols! **I am the one who answers your prayers and cares for you. I am like a tree that is always green; all your fruit comes from me.**”*

<sup>9</sup> *Let those who are wise understand these things. Let those with*

*discernment listen carefully. **The paths of the LORD are true and right, and righteous people live by walking in them. But in those paths sinners stumble and fall.***

When life feels hard and tough and there is one problem or obstacle after another on your journey, remember these promises and take hope. One day, when Jesus sets up His kingdom in the Millennium, things will be very different. In the meantime, walk on the path God has laid out before you, keep the promises of God in your heart, and keep your eye on the throne at the end of the path. Each day that you serve Him should bring joy to your heart. If that is not happening in your life, it is not God's doing. You may be doing something outside of what God has planned for you.