

BINDING OF SATAN

THE ISSUE

Revelation 20 - *1And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. 2He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. 3He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.*

QUESTION - What is the interpretation of the “binding” of Satan?

TIME MACHINE

First, ask yourself what this passage meant to the Christian's being persecuted back in John's day? Get in a time machine and travel back to the first century A.D. Look around ... what do you see? Start in Rome, walk down any street, try and count the idols, temples, abomination, corruption, pagan festivals, superstitions. How many Christian churches do you find? Do you notice that Christianity is just struggling to gain a footing?

Now take your time machine back further. Climb into the helicopter that you brought with you (which has an always full gas tank). Fly any direction you want across the earth ... to any country. How many nations do you find that worship God? You will find only one ... and that was Israel. ALL the nations, with the exception of the Jews, were under the control and influence of Satan. Not absolute control, because God is always in ultimate control ... but surely under Satan's control in the sense that none of these people, except for the Jews, worshipped the true God.

God allowed these nations to pursue their own way ... and ignore the true God.

Acts 14 - *14But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: 15"Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. 16In the past, he let all nations go their own way. 17Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of*

food and fills your hearts with joy." 18Even with these words, they had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them.

Even Paul says in the first century that the *god of this age* (i.e., Satan) has *blinded the minds of unbelievers*.

2 Cor 4 - *1Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. 2Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 3And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*

QUESTION - If Satan was blinding the minds of unbelievers in the first century ... how much **more** was this true during the old dispensation?

DARKNESS

QUESTION - (*from perspective of a first century Christian*) Will this condition ever change? Will Satan continue his rule over the nations? Will the Gospel ever penetrate this Satanic darkness ... Asia, Africa, Europe?

ANSWER - Old Testament prophecies,

Psalms 2 - *8 Ask of me,
and I will make the nations your inheritance,
the ends of the earth your possession.*

Psalms 72 - *8 He will rule from sea to sea
and from the River to the ends of the earth.*

*9 The desert tribes will bow before him
and his enemies will lick the dust.*

*10 The kings of Tarshish and of distant shores
will bring tribute to him;
the kings of Sheba and Seba
will present him gifts.*

*11 All kings will bow down to him
and all nations will serve him.*

*17 May his name endure forever;
may it continue as long as the sun.
All nations will be blessed through him,
and they will call him blessed.*

Genesis 12 - 3 *I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you."*

Amos 9 - 11 *"In that day I will restore
David's fallen tent.*

*I will repair its broken places,
restore its ruins,
and build it as it used to be,*

*12 so that they may possess the remnant of Edom
and all the nations that bear my name, "
declares the LORD, who will do these things.*

Micah 4 - 11 *But now many nations
are gathered against you.*

*They say, "Let her be defiled,
let our eyes gloat over Zion!"*

*12 But they do not know
the thoughts of the LORD;
they do not understand his plan,
he who gathers them like sheaves to the threshing floor.*

*13 "Rise and thresh, O Daughter of Zion,
for I will give you horns of iron;
I will give you hoofs of bronze*

and you will break to pieces many nations."
You will devote their ill-gotten gains to the LORD,
their wealth to the Lord of all the earth.

LIGHT

These prophecies teach that the spiritual darkness that covers the nations shall not continue. Satan's deception of the nations will end. The prophecies have their fulfillment when Jesus is born and begins His ministry. The Pharisees accuse Jesus of casting out demons by the power of Satan. Jesus answered,

Matthew 12 - 24*But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons."*

25Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. 26If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? 27And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. 28But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

*29"Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first **ties up** the strong man? Then he can rob his house.*

The above is from the NIV.

The KJV translates verse 29 as,

*29Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first **bind** the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.*

QUESTION - Does Jesus say in Matthew 12:29 that He would BIND Satan?

QUESTION - **WHEN** does Matthew 12:29 say that the binding of Satan, by Jesus, would take place? Was this binding in the

- first century?
- some distant future time during the Millennium?

COMMENT - If you answer that the binding Jesus is speaking about in Matthew 12:29 refers to the Millennium ... then there is probably not much use of you reading further.

FIRST CENTURY BINDING

If you have read this far, the **assumption** is that you understand Matthew 12:29 to teach that Jesus claimed He was **binding Satan** during the first century. There may be *another* binding during the Millennium ... maybe ... maybe not ... but at least there was a binding, in some sense, done by Jesus on Satan in the first century.

SIDE NOTE

Exactly the same Greek word for *binding* that is used in Matthew 12:29, is also used for the *binding* in Revelation 20:2.

Revelation 20 - *1And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. 2He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and **bound him** for a thousand years.*

WILDERNESS TEMPATION

The work of binding Satan probably began when Jesus triumphed over Satan in the temptations in the wilderness.

Matthew 4 - *1Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert **to be tempted by the devil**. 2After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."*

4Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

5Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 6"If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:

" 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"

7Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

8Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9"All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

10Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

11Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

MISSIONARIES

Satan's **falling** from heaven is associated with the missionary activity of the seventy. Christ begins to cast out demons ... the power and influence of Satan over the nations was beginning to be curtailed. When the seventy missionaries returned, they said,

Luke 10 - 17*The **seventy-two** returned with joy and said, "Lord, **even the demons submit to us in your name.**"*

*18He replied, "I saw Satan **fall** like lightning from heaven. 19I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. 20However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."*

One should carefully consider this passage when interpreting Revelation 20.

GREEKS

On another occasion certain Greeks wished to see Jesus. We read,

John 12 - 20*Now there were some **Greeks** among those who went up to worship at the Feast. 21They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "**we would like to see Jesus.**" 22Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.*

23Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. 25The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

27"Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. 28Father, glorify your name!"

*Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again."
29The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.*

*30Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. 31**Now** is the time for judgment on this world; **now** the prince of this world will be **driven out**. 32But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will **draw** all men to myself." 33He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.*

*(KJV) 31Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be **cast out**.*

The Greek word in John 12:31 “**driven out**” has the same root as the Greek word used in Revelation 20:3 where it is said of Satan,

*(NIV) Revelation 20 - 3He **threw him** into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.*

*(KJV) 3And **cast him** into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.*

It is very important to notice that in John 12:20-33, the *casting out* of Satan is associated with the fact that not only the Jews ... but **ALL MEN** ... are being drawn to Christ ... as a result of Christ's death and sending of the Holy Spirit. Especially notice that Jesus emphatically says, “**now**” ... in John 12:31.

QUESTION - Can any stretch of the imagination interpret **now** to mean thousands of years future in the Millennium?

PAUL

Paul in Colossians specifically links the **disarming of Satan's minions** (and thus **Satan himself**) with Jesus' triumph on the cross.

Colossians 2 - 13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, *14* having **canceled the written code**, with its regulations, **that was against us** and that stood opposed to us; **he took it away, nailing it to the cross. 15** And having **disarmed** the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, **triumphing over them by the cross.**

(KJV) Colossians 2 - *15* And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

(Young's Literal Translation) Colossians 2 - *15* having **stripped** the principalities and the authorities, he made a shew of them openly -- having triumphed over them in it.

PETER

Peter says that Satan is still roaming ... but Satan's actions are bound (limited) to some degree ... as though he is on a **leash** ... Satan can only go so far. Peter says that Christians can **RESIST** Satan ... which means there is a **curb** on how far Satan can go.

I Peter 5 - 8 Be self-controlled and alert. **Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion** looking for someone to devour. **9 Resist him**, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

JOHN

John writes in Revelation 12 that there was a **casting out of Satan** as a result of Christ's death and resurrection. Here it is said that Satan was **hurled (cast)** down to the earth. Notice that Satan wanted to kill Jesus at birth ... but the baby Jesus was protected from Satan's evil intentions. Later Satan pursues the Church ... but God had prepared a place for her to be safe for 1260 days ... a time, times and half a time out of Satan's reach. Thus God put some **restrictions** on Satan's efforts ... Satan was **bound** to some degree. This sounds similar to what Peter is saying above.

Revelation 12 - 1 A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. **2** She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was **about to give birth.**

3Then another sign appeared in heaven: *an enormous red dragon* with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. 4His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might *devour her child* the moment it was born. 5*She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations* with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. 6The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.

7And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels *fought against the dragon*, and the dragon and his angels fought back. 8But he was not strong enough, *and they lost their place in heaven*. 9*The great dragon was hurled down*—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. *He was hurled* to the earth, and his angels with him.

10Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say:

"Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night,

has been hurled down.

11They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

12Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short."

13When the dragon saw that he had been *hurled to the earth*, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. 14The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach. 15Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. 16But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. 17Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who

obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

INTERPRETATION

Notice that in ALL THESE PASSAGES, the **casting out** or **hurling down** of Satan is in some way associated with the first coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus it seems fair to conclude that this binding of Satan begins with Jesus' first coming. The truth of the Gospel was gradually replacing Satan's lies. Satan was now **constrained** in how much he could deceive the nations. Elect from every nation would now be saved.

Our interpretation of Revelation 20 **must be based on** the *analogy of Scripture* ... let Scripture be the guide as to our interpretation. Examine how Scripture describes these events in other passages. The **binding** of Satan and his being **hurled** into the abyss to remain for a thousand years ... is a **symbolic way** of describing that throughout the Gospel Age, which began with Christ's first coming and extends almost to His second coming, Satan's influence on earth is **constrained** so that he is **unable to prevent** the Church from spreading throughout the nations.

During this Gospel Age, Satan is **prevented** from causing the nations to destroy the Church. By means of preaching of the Word, as applied by the Holy Spirit, the elect from all parts of the earth are brought from darkness into light. In that sense the Church conquers the nations, and the nations do not conquer the Church. Throughout this entire period Churches are established and the Gospel is spread to the ends of the earth. In regions where Satan **had been allowed to exercise almost unlimited authority** during Old Testament times, **he now must watch** as the servants of Christ gain territory. Within a relatively short time, Christianity spreads throughout southern Europe. Soon it conquers the continent. In the centuries that followed, the Gospel is proclaimed everywhere.

It remains for the reader to prove that there are actually two bindings,

- First Century
- Millennium

If this supposed *proof* of a **SECOND binding** is predicated upon the interpretation of the *1000 Years* ... then be very careful ... because the same reasoning we have just worked through for the first century binding **can be done** for the interpretation of the *1000 Years*. When you do so, then you come up with an understanding of the *1000 Years* that is *vastly different* from what is preached by the TV Evangelists. Rather, the *1000 Years* should be understood more in line with what was taught by Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Augustine.

The implication is that the *millennialists* might consider **studying** their Bible without first putting on a pair of "Joseph Smith-like" *millennial Urim and Thumim* "glasses".

Interesting Web Comments

*There is not much disagreement between amillennialists and postmillennialists concerning the **chronological order of end-times events**. In both views, the millennium is a metaphor for Christ's kingdom on earth. **First**, the millennium will be completed. **Then** simultaneously, the second coming of Christ, the resurrection, and the final judgment will occur.*

*This was the unified, **general view** of the church for many centuries. This view was **held by** church fathers, such as **Athanasius** and **Augustine** and also by the reformers of the 1500s, such as **Martin Luther, John Calvin, and John Knox**.*

*The premillennial view has **also** been around since the early centuries A.D. **However**, prior to modern times, it was the **minority view**. Premillennialism was called either chiliasm or millenarianism. Both phrases mean literally, "thousand" (from the Greek and Latin, kilo and mil).*

http://www.forerunner.com/eschatology/X0002_2._Amil_Rebuttals.html

*This morning **John MacArthur** opened the 2007 Shepherd's Conference with a loud blast that will no doubt be heard around the Reformed world in the coming weeks. His message in General Session 1 was entitled "**Why Every Self-Respecting Calvinist is Premillennial**".*

*I am not going to try to quote him here, because frankly I did not take notes, I just sat there and listened. **MacArthur pulled no punches** in his messages saying things like **Jesus, Peter, the writer of Hebrews, and James** were **all premillennial**. **He also said that it is too late for Calvin** but it is not too late for you [to join the Reformed Premillennial movement]! I just want to note that he neither proposed nor answered the types of objections that are oftentimes levied against premillennialists ([like some I have heard lately](#)). Instead, MacArthur systematically unpacked the biblical theology that leads one to an unabashed Calvinistic eschatology.*

<http://www.irishcalvinist.com/?p=659>

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More Than Conquerors by William Hendriksen