

## How Is Satan Bound for a Thousand Years?

Daniel 12:1-3; Revelation 20:1-3

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There is coming a time in history in which Satan and his forces will no longer be able to deceive/mislead the nations of this world but will be restrained from that destructive/deadly activity. The result will be that the gospel of Jesus Christ will go forth with great power. All nations will be converted to Christ and will flow into His Visible Church.

As we continue our study of Daniel 12:1-3, we have begun confirming and supplementing information in these verses with what Jesus revealed to the Apostle John in Revelation 19-22.

Just as the angel, Gabriel, revealed in Daniel 11:44-45 there is coming a great battle in Israel that will be instigated by the Papal King which will lead to great suffering for an unbelieving Israel; and as it is also revealed in Daniel 12:1 that Michael, the Prince (Jesus) will spiritually come and stand up to save Israel from her sins as Israel turns in faith/repentance to Christ who will also bring the Papal King to his end with none to help him. So likewise, in Revelation 19:11-21 Jesus will spiritually arise and come riding on a white horse as King of kings to judge His enemies at the Battle of Armageddon. At that time, the Beast and his civil government who work in alliance with the Papal False Prophet and his ecclesiastical government will be cast into the Lake of Fire.

What then happens in God's prophetic plan after the Papal King and his civil/religious system is destroyed by the Lord Jesus and a believing Israel and believing nations of the earth begin to flow into Christ's Church? Revelation 20:1-3 tell us that Satan will be bound by Jesus so that he will not be able to deceive the nations for a thousand years. Let's consider this by seeking to answer these questions: (1) Who Binds Satan? (2) In What Way Is Satan Bound? (3) For How Long Is Satan Bound?

### I. Who Binds Satan?

A. Just as we were given symbol after symbol in Revelation 19 (in depicting the spiritual coming of Jesus upon a white horse to defeat His enemies), so the symbols continue in Revelation 20. Let us note the mighty acts of this angel before identifying the angel.

1. This angel has and exercises great authority, for He has "the key of the bottomless pit" (Revelation 20:1). The "key" in Scripture is a symbol of power and authority. If one possesses the key, He has authority to open or to close, to permit or to restrain.

2. The key that this angel has opens/closes "the bottomless pit" (literally, the abyss, *abússos*). The bottomless pit (or abyss) is not hell (the lake of fire, Revelation 20:10), but signifies a place or state of confinement—the depths of the sea (Psalm 107:26), the grave (Romans 10:7), or a spiritual place or condition of restraint (Luke 8:31; Revelation 11:7). A bottomless pit places before our imagination a pit from which one cannot escape.

3. A "great chain" is a symbol of great restraint. One who is chained (Satan) is prevented from doing all the evil he wants to do.

B. Who is this angel that exercises such power over Satan to bind and to cast him into this place/state of restraint for a thousand years?

1. I submit once again that this is not a mere angelic messenger but is a divine messenger (the Lord Jesus)—Michael (Daniel 12:1; Malachi 3:1; Revelation 10:1-2—the same language as in Revelation 1). Jesus has "the keys of hell and death" (Revelation 1:18). He then certainly has "the key of the bottomless pit" (Revelation 20:1).

2. If this is an angelic messenger, he "is given" the key to the bottomless pit by Jesus.

### II. In What Way Is Satan Bound?

A. The one bound is identified as the “serpent” (Revelation 20:2) i.e. the one that deceived Eve and was promised by God that the seed of the woman (Jesus) would crush his head with a decisive mortal wound that came at the death, resurrection, ascension, and coronation of Jesus at God’s right hand. All the victories of Jesus over the devil since then and into the future are grounded in that victory. Because of that victory over the Serpent, who is also called, the Devil (*diabolos*, false accuser or slanderer), and Satan (*satanas*, adversary), he is a defeated foe, and his final judgment is certain to come (Revelation 20:10).

B. Satan is cast into the bottomless pit, is shut up, and sealed in it (Revelation 20:3) for this reason/purpose: that he should not “deceive the nations” (i.e. lead nations as nations away from Christ and the true religion by false religion/atheism).

1. This is a very specific reason given for Satan’s restraint—it reminds us of the specific restraint given by God to Satan in the life of Job: (1) do what you will, but don’t touch his body; (2) do what you will to his body, but don’t take his life. So, in a similar way, Satan in Revelation 20:1-3 is restrained in this one specific point: from deceiving the nations as nations (i.e. the rulers/governments/vast majority of people within the nations) any longer as he has done throughout history. Satan is not restrained from tempting people or even in deceiving individuals, but is restrained from deceiving nations as geo-political kingdoms/states.

2. This specific restraint upon Satan is not in the past or in the present. Jesus certainly did bind Satan in His earthly ministry and did by Satan by His death, resurrection, ascension, and coronation (Matthew 12:28-29). Satan is certainly bound by the authority of King Jesus so that he is not permitted to do whatever he desires to do in the past or in the present (as in the case of Job). But the restraint of Satan in Revelation 20:1-3 is a very specific restraint that has not been realized yet in the world—he cannot deceive nations any longer (as political states or the majority living within nations).

3. Since the earthly ministry of Christ, since the death, resurrection, ascension, and coronation of Christ in heaven, since the destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.), has Satan not deceived nations and led them into false religions/atheism? Then Satan has not in this specific sense yet been bound. It is yet to come in the future.

4. There have been periods in history in which nations have officially declared themselves to be Christian nations (after Theodosius I, nations at/after the Reformation). But this is the point—the presence of a Christian nation or a few Christian nations is not what is prophesied to come. What is prophesied to come by way of Satan’s restraint here in Revelation 20 is that he will not be able to prevent any nation from becoming a Christian nation (not Israel nor any of the nations of the world). This is not speaking of the New Heaven and New Earth, for Satan will be loosed again in Revelation 20:7. The worldwide effect of Satan’s future restraint is given in Psalm 72:9-14; Psalm 86:9; Revelation 11:15.

5. It is clear throughout the Book of Revelation that the period of time wherein the Civil Beast unites with the Papal False Prophet and exercises tyranny, persecution, and deception is specifically said to be a time in which Satan and his cohorts deceive the whole world (Revelation 12:9; Revelation 18:23—the Harlot of Rome). This is presently the time in which we live. Nations as geo-political states (since the earthly ministry of Christ) have been deceived and misled into false religion, into polytheism, and into atheism by Satan. Thus, this specific binding/restraint of Satan has not yet been realized, but it is coming.

### C. Objection/Response

1. Some state that Revelation 20:1-3 refers only to Satan being restrained by Jesus from preventing the spread of the gospel to the nations of the world.

2. However, that was not the commission Jesus gave the apostles and His ministers (Matthew 28:18-20).

3. Even in the Old Testament Satan could not restrain the gospel going to Nineveh through Jonah, or to Babylon/Persia. That is not the restraint placed on Satan in Revelation 20:1-3. He cannot deceive the nations to lead them away from Christ any longer for a thousand years.

4. If Satan is only restrained so that he cannot prevent the spreading or preaching of the gospel to the nations, those nations (as nations) may yet be deceived and blinded by Satan (just like individuals). But when Satan is restrained from deceiving and blinding the nations of the world (or individuals) to whom the gospel is preached, they will come to Christ, because they are no longer blinded to the truth—they will see and receive the gospel by faith (Romans 11:25-26).

5. If that is what the restraint placed upon Satan means (that he cannot deceive/blind the nations as nations any longer), then we should expect to find some evidence of such an amazing period of time in Scripture. We find exactly such a glorious period of time prophesied to come and we do (Revelation 11:15; Revelation 15:4; Isaiah 2:2-4).

6. If Satan has already been bound so as not to deceive the nations any longer, then why do we find in the Book of Revelation that the nations (as nations) after the First Coming of Christ are deceived (Revelation 12:9; Revelation 18:23). In other words, Satan cannot be restrained from deceiving the nations in the present time if he is presently deceiving the nations. Thus, this restraint of Satan from deceiving the nations for a thousand years is yet future.

### **III. For How Long Is Satan Bound?**

A. Satan is bound for a thousand years in a yet future glorious period of history.

B. The binding of Satan and the millennial reign of the martyrs and witnesses are contemporaneous with one another. When Satan is bound, the millennium abounds. When Satan is no longer bound, the millennium comes to an end (Revelation 20:7-10). We will talk more next time about this thousand-year period of time and seek to answer questions like: Is it a literal/figurative thousand years? When does the thousand years begin? How will the martyrs/witnesses of Christ reign with Christ?

C. In summary, the Lord in the future will spiritually come to destroy His enemies and convert the nations by the power of His Word and Spirit (Revelation 19:11-21; Daniel 11:44-45). Then the period of worldwide deception that has covered the earth will come to an end when Satan is bound and restrained from doing so any longer for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1-3). At the same time, the martyrs and witnesses of Christ will reign a thousand years (Revelation 20:4-6; Revelation 12:1). After the thousand years Satan will be loosed to deceive the nations once again and will be judged/condemned and cast into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:7-10). Then will follow the simultaneous resurrection and judgment of the just and the unjust (Revelation 20:11-15; Daniel 12:2), and the New Heavens and the New Earth (Revelation 21-22; Daniel 12:3).

D. Application

1. The Lord can restrain Satan from any evil he desires to do in this world (Jesus is the Almighty). Thus, when tragedy comes (like the floods, fires, aircraft collision/crashes) or trials into our life, there is a divine reason/purpose for it (Genesis 50:20; Romans 8:28). We can/should ask WHY, but we will live in the past if we don't move on to ask WHAT (WHAT am I to learn?).

2. As disciples of Christ, we are all called to restrain ourselves from many things in this world (certainly that which is sinful, but at time even from that which is not sinful). We are called to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Christ (Matthew 16:24). The world tells us that we should not deny ourselves whatever we want, but that is not what Jesus teaches. True joy/happiness comes not from seeking whatever we want, but from denying ourselves whatever will keep us from following Jesus in keeping His Word. This we must teach not only to ourselves, but to our children as well.

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