

The Commencement of Eternity
“THE BINDING OF SATAN”
Revelation 20:1-3

Theme: Satan’s activity in the world today is the desperate effort of a defeated enemy attempting to recover from a mortal wound inflicted by the cross of Christ!

I. THE PLACE OF CONFINEMENT – 20:1

A. *The Place of the Abyss*

1. Having destroyed the ungodly, Christ now deals with the principal enemy of God – Satan Himself.
2. We see that He does this through one of His servants – and angel – *“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand.”*
3. Much debate has existed over the centuries concerning the literal interpretation *“of the abyss.”*
4. However, much in Scripture indicates to us that this is a literal place of imprisonment for demons – cp. *Isaiah 24:21-23; Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4; Luke 8:31*
5. It has already played a role in the events of Tribulation when previously confined demons are loosed – cp. *Revelation 9:1-3, 11.*
6. Given the interaction between Michael the Archangel and Satan, it is probable that this *“angel”* will be Michael – *Revelation 12:7; Jude 9.*

B. *The Power over the Abyss*

1. Notice the indications of power of God over Satan here – the key, the chain, and the seizing.
2. If Jesus Christ is going to establish an absolute Kingdom, the current lord of the world must be dethroned.
3. At all times God has the authority to limit Satan – if He shows this limitless power on this occasion, surely He is able to help us.
4. *“The key of the abyss”* – represents the delegated authority to this angel to unlock, deposit, and relock the abyss so that Satan is incarcerated.
5. *“A great chain”* – represents the security and defiance that will characterize Satan’s incarceration.

II. THE PERSON BEING CONFINED – 20:2

A. *The Portrayal of His Character*

1. We are told that the angel – *“laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who*

is the devil and Satan, and bound him ...”

2. Again, it is worth noting that Jesus does not even need to be the one who does this – one of His angels is given the authority from Christ to execute these actions against Satan.
3. He is portrayed through a variety of names – all of which display a different aspect of His rebellion:
 - a. **Savagery:** *“The Dragon”* – this is his cruel & murderous character – cp. [1 Peter 5:8](#)
 - b. **Subtlety:** *“The Serpent”* – this is the one who tempts men – [Genesis 3:1](#)
 - c. **Strategy:** *“The Devil”* – this is his deceptive & slanderous nature – [John 8:44](#)
 - d. **Striving:** *“Satan”* – refers to his rebellious nature as God’s adversary – [Revelation 12:10](#)

B. *The Period of His Confinement*

1. Much has been said about the issue of the time reference given here – whether it should be spiritualized to refer to a long period of time or taken as an actual number of years – *“...and bound him for a thousand years.”*
2. Generally, both Amillennialists & Postmillennialists assert that since we are already in the time of the Kingdom and no future reign of Christ awaits, Satan was bound at the cross – and it meant that he would not be able to keep the nations from receiving the Gospel.
3. However this is inconsistent with the testimony of Scripture that describes Satan’s activity in the present age:
 - a. He is the god of this world, prince of the power of the air – [Ephesians 2:1-3](#)
 - b. He schemes against believers – [2 Corinthians 2:11](#); [Ephesians 6:11](#)
 - c. He disguises himself as an angel of light – [2 Corinthians 11:14](#)
 - d. He attacks believers – [2 Corinthians 12:7](#); [Ephesians 4:27](#)
 - e. He hinders those in the ministry – [1 Thessalonians 2:18](#)
 - f. He leads believers astray – [1 Timothy 5:15](#)
 - g. He must be resisted – [James 4:7](#)
4. It is primarily from these verses that we derive the term Millennium – the Latin word for “1,000.”
5. This is used six times in six verses in this context as an obvious emphasis of the number He desires to associate with the time of the Kingdom – thus it is called the

"Millennial Kingdom" or simply "The Millennium."

III. THE PURPOSE FOR CONFINEMENT – 20:3

A. *The Prevention of Deception*

1. In the period of the Millennial Kingdom, Satan's activity will not merely be restricted but totally eliminated as he is bound in the abyss.
2. This is one of the necessary elements in the Millennium being identified as "times of refreshing" – cp. Acts 3:19 and, as a "period of restoration of all things" - cp. Acts 3:21.
3. God completely eliminates Satan's freedom – "*... and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer ...*"
4. The threefold means of incarceration – binding with "*a great chain,*" imprisonment by "*throwing him into the abyss,*" and "*shutting & sealing the abyss over him*" all indicate the forcible guarantee that Satan will not exert any influence during the Millennium.
5. The terminology used here is emphatic as to the length, leaving other ways of describing an indefinite period of time – "*... released for a short time*".

B. *The Preparation for Defection*

1. Many seem to feel that Satan is responsible for the sin of men – but sin will occur without his influence.
2. There will be those during the Millennium who will have perverted hearts – who will resent the authority of Jesus and would love an opportunity to defect – but cannot.
 - a. Since all of the ungodly are judged and killed by Christ at the 2nd Coming, only those faithful to the Messiah will enter the Millennium.
 - b. However, these will function normally and will produce offspring throughout the 1,000 year reign of Christ.
 - c. It will be these children who will populate "the nations" that will not know Satanic deception
 - d. However, as we will see in vv. 8-9, in order to demonstrate two things, Christ determines that "*after these things he must be released for a short time:*"
 - (1) ... to demonstrate that Satan's 1,000 year incarceration was not a time when Satan changed, reformed, or was "rehabbed" so that God ought to be lenient.
 - (2) ... to demonstrate that the human heart is wicked by very nature and not dependent upon external forces for defilement..