

Revelation 20:1-3

The future kingdom (Millennium) is often referenced in the Old Testament. Examples:

Isaiah 2, Isaiah 9:6-7, Isaiah 65, Jeremiah 23:5-6
Daniel 2:44, 7:13-14, Amos 9:11-15, Zechariah 14:1-9
Zechariah 8:1-8, Micah 4:1-8.

Verse 1

An angel...having the key of the abyss – The place of confinement of fallen angels. The abyss is mentioned seven times in Revelation (9:1, 2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3). Keys are symbols of authority.

A great chain in his hand – Probably figurative denoting that Satan is rendered totally inactive, that is, he is completely bound.

Verse 2

Note the repetition of the names from Rev. 12:9

The great dragon – Fierce, cruel, and monstrous in nature.

The serpent of old – Crafty, subtle, and deceptive.

The devil – From the Greek *diaballo* which means “accuser” or “slanderer”.

Satan – Adversary.

And he laid hold... and bound him for a thousand years – There is much debate over whether or not this is a literal 1,000 years. This word is used six times in this chapter and five other times in the New Testament. In every case a literal understanding makes good sense. It is here that the prophesied kingdom of the Old Testament is finally given a length of time. Amillennialism states that the thousand years are not literal and that the church is spiritually in the thousand years now (simply a long time). Christ is ruling in our hearts. One of the problems of this view is the fact that Satan is not presently bound. As a matter of fact, he is very active!

Verse 3

And threw him into the abyss, and shut it, and sealed it over him – Strong language to denote that Satan is taken out of action. He is bound.

That he should not deceive the nations any longer until the thousand years were completed – One of the distinctives of the Millennial Kingdom is there will be no Satanic/demonic influence.

Satan's current activity:

Luke 22:3 – Satan enters Judas

Luke 22:31 – Satan desires to destroy Peter

Acts 5:3 – Ananias and Sapphira are influenced by Satan

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 – Satan is active in blinding the minds of unbelievers

2 Corinthians 11:14 – Satan is active deceiving the church with false teachers

Ephesians 2:2 – Satan is the “*spirit that now works in the children of disobedience.*”

1 Thessalonians 2:18 – Satan hindered Paul from coming to Thessalonica

2 Timothy 2:26 – Satan ensnares and holds people captive

1 Peter 5:8-9

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith...

“There is no evidence whatever that Satan is bound today, but rather the mounting evil in the world and in the church would seem to demonstrate that he is more active than ever. The nations of the world are being deceived today and the saints are being opposed by the ceaseless activity and deceptive power of Satan.”

John Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, p. 293

After these things he must be released for a short time –

Verse 7 picks up the narrative of Satan's release at the end of the Millennium.

What is pictured is a thousand year period that fulfills the Old Testament prophecies in which Christ will reign in perfect righteousness and Satan will not be able to influence or deceive.