

## **Revelation Pt 45 Satan's Release and the Final Rebellion**

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Revelation / Revelation 20:7–10

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### Introduction

Last time we watched Satan get bound.

An angel descended from heaven with a key and a great chain. The dragon, that ancient serpent, the devil, the Satan, was seized, thrown into the Abyss, locked in, and sealed over. The nations were free from his deception. The saints took their thrones. The martyrs who cried out from under the altar asking how long finally had their answer. And for a thousand years, the King reigned with His people and the dragon could not touch any of it.

But verse 7 opens with six words that change the atmosphere entirely.

When the thousand years are complete.

The millennium ends. And what happens next is an incredibly jarring moment. Not because it is surprising to God. But because of what it reveals about the human heart, about the nature of evil, and about why the final judgment has to be exactly what it is.

This is not an easy passage. But it is an important one. And if we let it do what it is meant to do, it will make the hope waiting at the end of it land with even more weight.

## Read the Text: Revelation 20:7–10 (BSB)

### **Revelation 20:7–10 BSB**

<sup>7</sup> When the thousand years are complete, Satan will be released from his prison,

<sup>8</sup> and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—to assemble them for battle. Their number is like the sand of the seashore.

<sup>9</sup> And they marched across the broad expanse of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. But fire came down from heaven and consumed them.

<sup>10</sup> And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, into which the beast and the false prophet had already been thrown. There they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

## Walking Through the Text

### **1. The Release (v. 7)**

*When the thousand years are complete, Satan will be released from his prison. — Revelation 20:7 (BSB)*

Satan is released. Not escaped. Released.

That distinction matters more than it might seem at first. He does not break free. He does not overpower the angel who bound him. He does not find a weakness in the lock or the seal. He is released. Which means God permits it. God opens the door. This is not a crack in God's plan. It is the plan.

That raises a hard question. Why would God do that?

It is worth sitting with the question honestly before reaching for an answer, because the release of Satan after a thousand years of perfect peace under the direct reign of Christ is maybe one of the most unsettling moments in all of Scripture. The millennium has been everything God promised. The saints are reigning. The enemy is gone. The nations are free from deception. And then God opens the door.

The text does not give us a single direct answer. But it gives us enough to work with.

## **What the millennium proves**

The first thing to understand is what the millennium itself is

demonstrating. For a thousand years, humanity has lived under the best possible conditions. No satanic deception. No counterfeit kingdom. No beast demanding worship. No false prophet performing signs to lead people astray. Just the direct reign of Jesus Christ over the earth with His saints. If there was ever a moment in human history where the environment was perfectly suited to draw people toward God, this is it.

And yet when Satan is released and goes out to deceive, people follow him. Not a handful. Not a small fringe group. Numbers like the sand of the seashore.

This tells us something that the rest of Scripture has been saying since Genesis 3. The problem with humanity is not primarily the environment. It is the heart. Satan's deception works because there are hearts willing to receive it. A thousand years of perfect conditions under a perfect King does not change a heart that has not been transformed by grace. The millennium proves what Romans 3:10–11 says plainly:

*"There is no one righteous, not even one. There is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God." — Romans 3:10–11 (BSB)*

Without the transforming work of God in a person's heart, even a thousand years of living in the presence of Christ's kingdom is not enough to produce true devotion. The

release of Satan does not create the rebellion. It simply reveals what was always there.

This is not a pessimistic view of people. It is an honest one. And it is exactly why the gospel matters. The good news is not that people are basically good and just need better circumstances. The good news is that God transforms hearts that cannot transform themselves. That is the only thing that makes a person immune to Satan's deception when the door opens.

### **What the release accomplishes**

The release also serves the justice of God at the final judgment. When the great white throne appears in verse 11, every person who has ever lived will stand before it. And God's judgment will be thorough and just and beyond any possible challenge.

Part of what makes it beyond challenge is this moment. No one who stands before the great white throne will be able to say they never had a fair opportunity to choose differently. The people who follow Satan after the millennium have lived under Christ's direct reign for a thousand years. They have seen the kingdom. They have experienced the peace. They have had every possible advantage. And they still chose the dragon the moment he showed up.

The release of the Satan is the final demonstration that the

judgment coming in verses 11 through 15 is not arbitrary. It is not harsh. It is the just and permanent answer to choices that were made freely, repeatedly, and with full knowledge of the alternative.

There is also something worth noting about who releases the Satan. God does. The same God who bound him. The same God who locked the Abyss and sealed it over him. The same God who is described throughout Scripture as slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, not willing that any should perish. That God opens the door. Not because He wants the rebellion to succeed. But because He is committed to justice that is complete, transparent, and unassailable. The rebellion that rises up after the millennium seals its own fate with full knowledge and full freedom. And God will judge it accordingly.

None of this catches God off guard. None of it threatens the outcome. The rider on the white horse already won. The thrones are already set. The saints are already reigning. Satan's release is not a reversal of any of that. It is the final chapter of a story whose ending was never in doubt.

## **2. The Deception of the Nations (v. 8a)**

*...and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle. — Revelation 20:8a (BSB)*

The Satan does exactly what he has always done. He deceives.

He was bound specifically to keep him from deceiving the nations. That was the stated purpose of the binding in verse 3. And the moment he is released, that is precisely what he does. His character has not changed. A thousand years in the Abyss did not produce repentance. It produced nothing but a return to his oldest and most practiced work.

He goes out to the four corners of the earth. This is global language. He is not targeting one region or one people group. He is ranging across the entire world looking for anyone willing to follow him. And he finds them. In numbers like the sand of the seashore.

Then John introduces a name that has deep roots in the Old Testament. Gog and Magog.

### **Who are Gog and Magog?**

This identification is one of the most discussed in Revelation, and it is worth taking a moment to look at the two main readings.

The first reading connects directly to Ezekiel 38–39. In those chapters, Gog is a prince from the land of Magog who leads a massive coalition of nations in an invasion of Israel from

the north. The description is sweeping. The armies are vast. They come against a people living in peace. And God destroys them with fire, brimstone, plague, and sword. It's a dramatic judgment scene in the entire Old Testament. Many premillennial scholars see Ezekiel 38–39 as a distinct event that occurs either before or during the tribulation period, separate from the Revelation 20 battle. In that reading, John is borrowing the names Gog and Magog as a reference point his readers would recognize, using familiar imagery to describe a different but parallel event at the end of the millennium.

The second reading takes Gog and Magog as symbolic. Rather than a specific nation or coalition, the names represent all nations that have ever set themselves against God and His people. In this reading, John is drawing on Ezekiel's imagery not to describe the same event but to show that this final rebellion is the ultimate fulfillment of everything Ezekiel's vision was pointing toward. The nations that always opposed God make one final stand.

Both readings land in the same place theologically. Whether Gog and Magog refers to a specific people or to the totality of rebellious humanity, the point is the same. Satan gathers every willing heart from every corner of the earth for one last attempt to overthrow the kingdom of God. And the attempt fails completely.

What is striking is the scale. Like the sand of the seashore. This is the language of uncountable numbers. Abraham's descendants were promised to be as numerous as the sand on the seashore. Now the enemies of God's people are described the same way. It is a deliberate contrast. The enemy looks formidable. He looks overwhelming. He looks, on the surface, like he might actually have a chance.

He does not.

### **3. The Assault on the Beloved City (v. 9a)**

*They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. — Revelation 20:9a (BSB)*

The army moves.

After the Satan gathers them from the four corners of the earth, they march. The breadth of the earth. Every direction. Converging on one place. The camp of the saints and the beloved city.

The beloved city is Jerusalem. That identification is consistent with the entire prophetic tradition of the Old Testament. Jerusalem was the city God chose. The city where His name dwelt. The city where the temple stood and the presence of God resided among His people. And the city

that became the focal point of every major conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world.

The Old Testament prophets saw this moment coming from a long way off.

Zechariah 14:1–2 says:

*"A day of the LORD is coming when your plunder will be divided in your midst. I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it. The city will be captured, the houses looted, and the women ravished. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be removed from the city." — Zechariah 14:1–2 (BSB)*

Zechariah saw the nations gathering against Jerusalem. He saw a siege. He saw the city surrounded. And then he saw God act. Zechariah 14:3 continues: "Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations as He fights in the day of battle." The pattern in Zechariah is the same pattern John is showing us here. The nations come against the beloved city. And God Himself fights against them.

Psalms 2 sits behind this scene as well. Verses 1 and 2 ask:

*"Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against His Anointed One." — Psalm 2:1–2 (BSB)*

Kings of the earth. Rulers gathering together. Against the Lord and His Anointed. That is exactly what is happening in Revelation 20:9. The nations have been gathered by Satan and they are marching against the city of the King. From a human vantage point it looks like the most organized and powerful military action in the history of the world. The sand of the seashore. Marching together. Surrounding the city.

And then look at what Psalm 2:4 says about how God responds to that gathering:

*"The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them." — Psalm 2:4 (BSB)*

The One enthroned in heaven laughs. Not because the threat is not real. Not because the army is small. But because the gap between what the nations think they are doing and what is actually about to happen to them is so vast that laughter is the only appropriate response from the throne.

Now feel the full weight of the image John is painting. The saints are surrounded. The beloved city is encircled. The army outside the walls is beyond counting. From inside the city, the situation looks like this: there is no escape route, there is no relief force coming, and the enemy has every numerical advantage.

This is the posture God has put His people in before. Not because He has abandoned them. But because He is about to show them something about Himself that they could not see any other way.

Think about Israel at the Red Sea. The Egyptian army behind them. The water in front of them. Nowhere to run. And God parts the water. Think about Elisha surrounded by the Syrian army in 2 Kings 6. His servant panics. Elisha prays that God would open the servant's eyes. And the servant sees the hills full of horses and chariots of fire surrounding the enemy. The saints in Revelation 20 are in the same position. Surrounded. Outnumbered. And completely safe.

Because the battle is not theirs to fight.

Notice what the saints do not do in this verse. They do not mount a defense. They do not organize a counterattack. They do not send messengers to negotiate. They do not appear in this verse at all except as the people being surrounded. The text moves immediately from the surrounding army to the fire from heaven. There is no gap in between where the saints scramble to respond. They hold their ground. And God acts.

This is Arguably one of the most important postures in all of Scripture. Not passivity. Not indifference. But a settled trust that the battle belongs to God and that the saints' role is to

stand firm, not to fight the battle themselves. Paul captures it in Ephesians 6:13:

*"Therefore take up the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you will be able to stand your ground, and having done everything, to stand." — Ephesians 6:13 (BSB)*

Stand. Not charge. Stand.

The saints surrounding the beloved city are doing exactly that. They are standing. And the God who laughs from His throne at the nations who rage against Him is about to answer.

## **4. Fire from Heaven (v. 9b)**

*But fire came down from heaven and consumed them. — Revelation 20:9b (BSB)*

Nine words. And the largest army in human history is gone.

Fire from heaven is the language of direct divine intervention throughout Scripture. When Elijah stood against the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, fire fell from heaven and consumed the sacrifice. When the two messengers came to destroy Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from the Lord out of the heavens. When Elijah called down fire on the soldiers sent to arrest him in 2 Kings 1:10–12, fire came down from heaven and consumed them.

In every case, fire from heaven means the same thing. God Himself is acting. Not through an army. Not through a human champion. Through direct, immediate, sovereign intervention.

The army surrounding the saints does not get a battle. They get consumed. The gap between what they expected and what they received is the gap between human confidence and the Lord's power. They marched across the breadth of the earth. They surrounded the beloved city. They had numbers like the sand of the seashore. And fire came down from heaven and consumed them.

This is the same lesson Revelation 19 taught with the defeat of the beast. The battle belongs to God. Always has. The saints do not need to fight. They need to hold their ground and trust the One who fights for them.

Ezekiel 38:22 described God's judgment on Gog in almost identical terms:

*"I will execute judgment on him with plague and bloodshed. I will pour down torrents of rain, hailstones, fire, and sulfur on him and on his troops and on the many nations with him." — Ezekiel 38:22 (BSB)*

What Ezekiel saw God do to Gog, John sees God do here. The armies come. The fire falls. It is finished.

## 5. The Devil's Final End (v. 10)

*And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, into which the beast and the false prophet had already been thrown. There they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. — Revelation 20:10 (BSB)*

Satan is not consumed by the fire that fell from heaven. He is not destroyed alongside the armies he gathered. His end is different. More deliberate. More permanent.

He is thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur.

John makes a point of telling us who is already there. The beast and the false prophet. They have been in the lake of fire since Revelation 19:20, when the rider on the white horse captured them and threw them in alive. That was before the millennium began. Before the thousand years of Christ's reign. Before the Satan was bound in the Abyss. The beast and the false prophet have been in the lake of fire through all of it. And now the Satan joins them.

Think about what that means. The dragon who stood behind the beast and the false prophet and empowered everything they did is now in the same place they are. The one who gave the beast his power in Revelation 13:2, who

gave him his throne and great authority, ends up in the same destination as the instruments he used. The beast did not escape the lake of fire by serving the dragon. The false prophet did not escape it by performing signs on the beast's behalf. And the dragon does not escape it by being the one pulling the strings. They all end up in the same place.

This is the complete dismantling of the unholy trinity that has driven the opposition to God throughout Revelation. The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. The counterfeit father, the counterfeit son, and the counterfeit spirit. All three of them, together, in the lake of fire.

Now look at the phrase John uses to describe what awaits them there.

Day and night forever and ever.

This is one of the strongest expressions of eternity in the New Testament. The Greek phrase is precise and deliberate. It is the same phrase used in Revelation 4:8 to describe the four living creatures worshiping God around the throne. They do not rest day or night, saying "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come." The worship of God is eternal. John uses identical language here to describe the judgment of the enemy. The same eternity that stretches out before the throne of God in worship stretches out before the lake of fire in judgment.

This is not a comfortable truth. And we should not try to make it one. The permanent, conscious, unending nature of this judgment is one of the hardest things in Scripture to sit with. But it is also one of the most important. Because it tells us something about the seriousness with which God takes evil and the seriousness with which He takes His people.

Every lie the Satan ever told. Every person he ever led away from God. Every martyr whose blood was shed through the hands of those he deceived. Every generation of believers who suffered under systems he empowered. All of it is being answered here. Permanently. The lake of fire is not disproportionate to the dragon's crimes. It is the just and final answer to them.

Isaiah 27:1 promised this moment from a long distance:

*"In that day the LORD will take His sharp, great, and mighty sword and will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent. He will slay the dragon that is in the sea." — Isaiah 27:1 (BSB)*

That day has arrived. The dragon that Isaiah saw God promising to punish is the same dragon John sees thrown into the lake of fire. What Isaiah saw from the far side of history, John sees being carried out.

And Genesis 3:15 stands behind all of it. When God spoke to the serpent in the garden after the fall, He said:

*"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." — Genesis 3:15 (BSB)*

From the first promise in Scripture to the last pages of Revelation, God kept His word. But He did not keep it without giving previews along the way.

In Acts 28, after Paul's shipwreck on the island of Malta, a viper driven out by the heat fastened itself to his hand. The islanders watched and immediately drew their conclusion. This man is getting what he deserves. Justice has caught up with him. The serpent had found its mark. But Paul shook the viper off into the fire and walked away without a scratch. The thing that was supposed to destroy him ended up in the fire. The islanders waited for him to swell up and fall dead. He never did.

Luke is not just telling a survival story there. He is showing us Genesis 3:15 in miniature. The seed of the woman is not destroyed by the serpent. The serpent ends up in the fire. Paul on that beach is a living picture of the promise God made in the garden. The servant of God shakes the serpent into the flames and walks away unharmed.

And now in Revelation 20:10, the full version arrives. Not a viper on a beach. The dragon himself. Thrown into the lake of fire permanently. What Malta previewed, Revelation 20 fulfills. The serpent who started his work in a garden and showed up on a beach in Malta meets his permanent end here. In the fire. Forever.

For the churches of Asia Minor reading this letter under the shadow of Roman persecution, this verse was the answer to everything they had endured. The power behind the empire. The power behind the imperial cult. The power behind the trade guilds and the pressure to compromise and the blood of the martyrs. All of it ends here. In the lake of fire. Forever.

And for us, the same truth holds. The enemy who prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour, who accuses believers before the throne, who works through deception and fear and discouragement, has an end that is already written. He is not an eternal rival to God. He is a defeated enemy with a known destination. And knowing that changes everything about how we face him today.

## Key Themes

**The release of the Satan reveals what the human heart does without grace.** A thousand years of perfect conditions

under a perfect King, and the moment Satan is released, people follow him. The millennium does not fix the human heart. Only God can do that. This is not a pessimistic view of people. It is an honest one. And it is why the gospel matters as much now as it ever has.

**The Satan's character never changed.** He went into the Abyss as a deceiver. He came out as a deceiver. A thousand years of imprisonment produced no repentance, no reformation, no change. This is consistent with everything Scripture says about the nature of unrepentant evil. The binding restrained him. It did not change him. His end in the lake of fire is not arbitrary. It is the natural destination of a being who had every opportunity and chose the same path every single time.

**The battle still belongs to God.** The army surrounding the saints was numbered like the sand of the seashore. The saints did not fight. Fire came down from heaven and consumed them. Nine words. The largest rebellion in human history ended in nine words. God did not need a military campaign. He does not need one now. The battle has always belonged to Him.

**The enemy's end is permanent.** The beast and the false prophet have been in the lake of fire since Revelation 19. Now Satan joins them. Day and night forever and ever. This is not a threat. It is a promise. The power behind every

system of evil that has ever opposed God and His people ends up in the same place. Permanently. And what follows that permanence, beginning in Revelation 20:11, is the final and complete justice of God over all of human history.

## Application

1. The Satan was released and immediately went back to doing what he has always done. He deceived. His methods have not changed because his character has not changed. He is still at work the same way right now. He targets the mind. He targets the heart. He introduces doubt about God's goodness and truthfulness. Think about the areas of your life where deception has the most traction. Where are you most vulnerable to believing something about God, about yourself, or about your situation that is not true? What would it look like to actively guard those areas?

2. The nations followed the Satan even after a thousand years of Christ's direct reign. They had every possible advantage and still chose rebellion. That is a sobering picture of what the human heart does without transformation by grace. It should change how we think about the people around us who do not know Jesus. They are not just making bad choices. They are operating without the one thing that actually changes a person from the inside. How does that shape the way you engage with

people who are far from God?

3. The saints surrounded by an army that outnumbered them beyond counting did not fight. They held their ground and God acted. That is a hard posture to maintain when the pressure is real and the threat feels overwhelming. Think about the situation in your life right now that feels most threatening or most out of your control. What would it look like to hold your ground and trust God to act rather than trying to fight the battle yourself?

4. The Satan is now in the lake of fire forever. The deceiver is gone. The accuser is silenced. The dragon who stood behind every system that ever crushed and persecuted God's people has reached his permanent end. For the churches of Asia Minor, that truth would have changed the way they faced every day under Roman pressure. How does it change the way you face yours? What would be different about your daily life if you lived with the constant awareness that the enemy's end is already written?

## Closing

The thousand years ended. The Satan was released. He did what he has always done. He deceived the nations, gathered an army numbered like the sand of the seashore, and

marched against the beloved city.

Fire came down from heaven and consumed them.

And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire, where the beast and the false prophet were already waiting. Day and night. Forever and ever.

The dragon is done. The deceiver is silenced. The accuser who has stood against the people of God since the garden of Eden has reached the end that was always coming for him.

But the story is not over yet.

The armies have been destroyed. The devil is in the lake of fire. And now the dead, all of them, great and small, stand before a great white throne. The books are opened. The Book of Life is opened. And every person who has ever lived will face the One from whose presence earth and sky fled away.

The final judgment is coming. And next week we are going to sit with it honestly, because it is heavy and it matters. But we are also going to find that even in some of the most sobering passages in all of Scripture, the grace of God is still on the page.