

# The Binding Of Satan

## Revelation 20 Notes

### ***The Thousand Years (vss. 1-10)***

- In the battle of Armageddon, the beast and the false prophet were cast into the lake of fire that burns with brimstone (19:19-21). With the defeat of these two and the destruction of the harlot, Satan has lost his allies. What becomes of him and the victory of the saints is the chief subject of 20:1-10, rather than the "thousand years," which usually receives the emphasis.
- The key symbolizes power to bind; the chain symbolizes that by which Satan is bound. With the loss of his allies and the victory of the saints under Christ, Satan is bound; that is, his power is severely curtailed. No longer can he control the nations as he once controlled them, nor can he control a man against his will.
- The four names by which the great deceiver of the whole world was called in 12:9 are repeated in vs. 2. As a dragon, he is strong and ferocious; as the old serpent, he is a cunning deceiver; as the devil, he has been the accuser and slanderer, the adversary of all that is good. The thousand years during which Satan is bound must be interpreted symbolically, as are other numbers in the book. This number is a complete number which stands for an undetermined but full period of time. The binding of Satan does not render him absolutely helpless or unable to operate; in this binding, Satan is divinely restrained from reestablishing control over nations.
- The purpose of casting the devil into the abyss was not punitive, for his punishment comes later (vs. 10); but it was preventive for the reasons stated above. The abyss is not final, for when the appointed period is finished, Satan is to be loosed for a little time. The Roman persecution as it backed paganism is at an end; the devil is cast into the abyss, no longer to deceive the nations as he once did; the saints' death for the word of God is avenged and vindicated as they now sit upon thrones, reigning with Christ. This leads to the conclusion that the thousand years symbolizes that period of victory beginning with Constantine, when Roman persecution ended, and continuing until some time before the Lord's return when Satan will be loosed from his present restraint.
- The judgment that is rendered against Satan is on behalf of the saints. Such a judgment on their behalf had been executed against the harlot as she was burned with fire (18:20). Now judgment is executed against the beast and false prophet as they are cast into

the lake of fire, and against the dragon as he is cast into the abyss. As these had been cruel and relentless enemies, persecutors and seducers of the church, so now on behalf of the saints, judgment is executed against them.

- The vision portrays the victory of the martyrs underneath the altar, whose cry has been answered, and whose victory is symbolized as a resurrection and as being seated on thrones. Christ's victory was manifested in His resurrection and His being seated on His throne.
- In vs. 6, the fifth "blessing" is pronounced. Those who are holy are now completely separated from sin. Three great rewards follow this announcement, one negative and two positive.
- The victors on thrones were those who overcame; and those who overcame did so by the blood of the Lamb, by holding fast the word of their testimony, and loving not their life even unto death (12:11). In the spirit of this faithfulness they bound Satan by overcoming him. When such a spirit and loyal devotion to the principles and cause of Christ no longer distinguish God's people, the restraining power is gone; Satan is now loosed once more.
- In vs. 8, Satan changes his tactics; he no longer works through one great imperial power, backing a form of religion such as emperor worship. As it had been from the beginning, deception continues to be his means of control. No longer relying upon one great power, he now gathers his forces from all sources, from nations in all quarters of the earth; the host is numberless. Gog and Magog symbolized all the heathen enemies of God's people from the time of the prophets to the Roman Empire, all who sought to thwart His purpose and to destroy His king. Far from a physical conflict, this battle will be a moral and spiritual one.
- As God brought Ezekiel's Gog of Magog to an end by His judgment, so He brings this last enemy to an end. Whenever and wherever the battle and whatever be the nature of its enemies, the church can be assured that in all ages and at all times God will fight for His own and give them victory.
- The devil, man's great deceiver from the beginning, now reaches his final doom and eternal end. His destruction has been gradual, but long-since determined in the mind of God, for the lake was prepared for him and his own (Matthew 25:41, 46). He now shares the lot of his allies -- the beast, the false prophet and the harlot.

### ***The Final Judgment (vss. 11-15)***

- John sees in vision the great throne of judgment. As the throne of God, it is great in distinction from all other thrones that have appeared previously; it surpasses them all. At the coming of Christ in

judgment, the present order will pass away.

- The "books" were reminiscent of Daniel 7:10 and these "books" symbolize the divine record of the lives and deeds of all who have lived. The "book of life" is God's roll of the faithful in His city of Zion, those who were redeemed by the blood of the Lamb and have faithfully continued doing His will.
- Because of the Jewish emphasis on proper burial of the dead and fear of possible calamity if this was not done, some have concluded that John speaks of the literal sea in vs. 13. However, consistency demands that the sea be interpreted literally. The mass of humanity, represented by the "sea," must also stand before the judgment with those who have died (cf. Acts 10:42; 2 Timothy 4:1; 1 Peter 4:5). All will be raised, the just and the unjust (John 5:28; Acts 24:15).
- Thus far, the harlot, the beast, the false prophet, Satan, and now in vs. 14, death and Hades have been brought to their end in the lake of fire. Death is the last enemy to be destroyed (1 Corinthians 15:26).
- There remains only one group to be dealt with: those not found written in the book of life. These would be all of the rest who had fought with the beast and the false prophet against the Lord, those who had been slain with the sword out of His mouth (19:21), those who had rallied around Satan in his last effort to destroy the camp of the saints (20:9) and all others who, in their indifference, had not taken a stand for Him. The defeat of Satan and his forces against God and His truth is total, complete and final.