

February 26, 2017

Revelation 20:1-3 Satan Bound

Well let's turn in our Bibles please to the book of Revelation chapter 20. We're going to read together verses 1 through 10. Revelation chapter 20, verses 1 to 10:

“¹ And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ² And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, ³ and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

“⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. ⁵ But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

“⁷ And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, ⁸ and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. ⁹ And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. ¹⁰ And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

We come now today to the seventh and final parallel section in the book of Revelation. Each of these seven parallel sections in this book traverse the time period between the first and the second coming of Christ. Each of these sections has a different theme, and each of them emphasizes a different aspect of the spiritual warfare that will take place throughout this age. Let's just briefly review each of these parallel sections from the first.

The first parallel section in chapters 1 to 3 showed us what spiritual warfare would look like in the local churches, between the first and the second coming of Christ. And there, you recall, we looked at the seven churches.

The second parallel section in chapters 4 to 7 showed us a vision of heaven, and the role it plays in the spiritual warfare that we experience, and the persecutions we endure here on earth,

between the first and the second coming of Christ. And there, you recall, we looked at the seven seals.

The third parallel section in chapters 8 through 11 showed us the temporal judgments that God is going to bring upon the wicked, and how they will be unable to stop the spread of the gospel throughout the whole world, during the time between the first and the second coming of Christ. And there, you recall, we looked at the seven trumpets.

The fourth parallel section in chapters 12 to 14 showed us Satan and his helpers, who all work together to assault and oppose and persecute Christ and His people, between the first and the second coming of Christ. And there, you recall, we were introduced to the dragon, the beast, the false prophet, Babylon, and those who bear the mark of the beast.

The fifth parallel section in chapters 15 to 16 showed us the wrath of God poured out on the unrepentant of the earth, and how the way of the transgressor is hard, between the first and the second coming of Christ. And there, you recall, we looked at the seven vials, or bowls, that were poured out.

The sixth parallel section in chapters 17 to 19 showed us the nature and function of Babylon, the beast, and the false prophet, and the final destruction of them all, between the first and the second coming of Christ. And this of course brings us up to where we are today, which is the seventh parallel section.

Now this seventh parallel section that we are beginning today will show us the safety and the protection that the church enjoys in this age, because Satan is bound. It will show us his final destruction, and it will show us that all of these things take place between the first and the second coming of Christ. This section then closes with the description of the final judgment at the end of chapter 20, and the new heavens and the new earth, in which the saints dwell forever, in chapters 21 and 22.

And so, it is the nature of each of these seven parallel sections that they each cover the time period between the first and the second coming of Christ. Each of them begins with the first coming of Christ and takes us up to the second coming; and then the next parallel section reverts right back to the first coming of Christ again and takes us up to the second coming again; and so this cycle repeats over and over again, seven times, in the book of Revelation.

What did we see last week in chapter 19, as we came to the end of the sixth parallel section? Well, we saw the second coming of Christ, didn't we? And so what would we expect as we move into the beginning of this seventh parallel section? Well, we would expect to be taken right back to the first coming of Christ, and that is exactly what we find. Verses 1 to 3 of chapter 20 tell us about the binding of Satan that took place at the first coming of Christ. He remains bound for this entire age in which the New Covenant operates and the church evangelizes the whole world.

And right before the end of this age, Satan is loosed for a little season of time. He produces the great apostasy of the professing church; he raises up the Antichrist; he inspires the formation of the worldwide transnational coalition of nations headed by that Antichrist, to persecute the church almost to the point of extinction. And it is when the final effort is made to destroy the last of the Christians off of the face of the earth that Christ returns, He saves His people from destruction, and casts Satan and all of his helpers into the lake of fire. In Revelation 20, we are taken once again from the first of coming all the way up to the second coming, and we traverse the territory between the birth of Christ and the return of Christ in Revelation chapter 20.

Once again, it is important for us to understand that Revelation is not written in a chronologically linear fashion. It is written in a cyclic fashion. Therefore, the events in chapter 20 do not occur chronologically in history after the events of chapter 19. The thousand year period mentioned in chapter 20 does not occur chronologically after the second coming of Christ described in chapter 19, as the Pre-millennialists would have us believe.

The events in chapter 20 no more follow the events in chapter 19 chronologically than the events in chapter 12 follow the events in chapter 11 chronologically. You remember in chapter 11, verses 15 to 19, we had the description of the second coming of Christ, and then in chapter 12, verses 1 to 5, it went right back to the birth of Christ. So just as the events of chapter 12 do not chronologically follow the events of chapter 11 in history as it unfolds, in the same way, the events of chapter 20 in Revelation do not chronologically follow the events of chapter 19 as history unfolds.

Now the question then arises, and we've answered this before, but I want to remind you of it again: How do we know when one cyclic section ends and another begins? Well, it's very clear how we can know. Each parallel section ends with the second coming of Christ and allusions to judgment and the eternal state, and then the beginning of the next section starts with events back on earth that commence with the first coming of Christ, and are characteristic of the age. And of course, that is exactly what we see here in chapter 19 and chapter 20.

Chapter 19 closes with a clear description of the second coming of Christ, and the eternal state of the beast and false prophet in the lake of fire. And chapter 20 opens with a description of Satan being bound by Christ through His work on the cross at His first coming. So whatever this thousand year period is, it does not occur after the second coming of Christ, but it occurs after the first coming of Christ.

Furthermore, it should be clear to anyone that the thousand years of verses 2 to 7 in chapter 20 takes place before and precedes the second coming of Christ, which is spoken of in chapter 20 and verse 9, when Christ comes in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, as 2 Thess 1: 7-10 states. So if the second coming is in verse 9, and it is, then clearly this millennium, this thousand years, takes

place *before* that event. So this millennium takes place between the first and the second coming of Christ.

Now you recall that we said at the very beginning of the study of this book of Revelation, over a year ago, that the central theme of the book of Revelation was the victory of Christ and His church over Satan and his helpers. That's what this whole book is about. It's about the victory of Christ and His church over Satan and his helpers. And this of course was summarized in the key verse of the whole book, in Revelation 17:14, when it says, "These"—speaking of Satan and his helpers—"shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."

So this whole book is a book of spiritual warfare, of the battle between Christ and His people and Satan and his helpers. And the book is a chronicle of how Christ defeats Satan and all of his helpers, and Christ and His church are victorious, and Satan and his helpers are all cast into the lake of fire. And this process all takes place between the first coming to the second coming of Jesus.

Now beginning back in chapter 12 of Revelation, we were introduced to Satan, who was called the dragon, and we were introduced to the dragon's four helpers—the beast, the false prophet, Babylon, and those who have the mark of the beast. And as we have proceeded through chapters 12 to 19, we have seen the systematic destruction of each of these four helpers of Satan.

We saw the destruction of those who have the mark of the beast, in chapter 14. We saw the destruction of Babylon, in chapter 18. We saw the destruction of the beast and the false prophet, in chapter 19. And now in chapter 20, we're going to see the destruction of Satan himself, that dragon, that old serpent, the Devil.

So chapter 20 completes the victory of Christ over Satan and his helpers. When Satan is cast into the lake of fire, not a single enemy is left. Christ has totally vanquished Satan and his kingdom and his works and his helpers. It says in First John 3 and verse 8, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." And in the book of Revelation, that is exactly what we see Jesus doing—destroying the works of the Devil.

This book promises, and this book predicts, that at the end of this age, the totality of the kingdom of Satan, and indeed, Satan himself, will be defeated and destroyed by Christ, and cast into the lake of fire, and remain there for all eternity, never to harm us ever again. And while this book also makes it clear that we will have much tribulation between now and then, and that the spiritual warfare will be fierce, we need to persevere in our faith and in our faithfulness to Christ, because the outcome for all those who do is eternal triumph and blessedness in the kingdom of God forever. Through Christ, this book tells us that we are more than conquerors.

It is important for us to understand the structure of Revelation chapter 20, verses 1 to 10.

First of all, in verses 1 to 3, we have a description of the millennial reign on earth set forth for us, in which the topic is Satan's relationship to the nations of the earth during the thousand year period. What is really obvious in this passage, is that Satan is bound.

Then secondly, in verses 4 to 6, we have a description of the millennial reign in heaven, in which the topic is the disembodied souls who are on thrones with Christ in heaven during the thousand year period. So verses 1 to 3 and verses 4 to 6 run parallel with each other—the one referencing what is happening on earth, and the other referencing what is happening in heaven, both of which are chronologically happening at the same time.

Then thirdly, in verses 7 to 10, we have a description of the millennial reign on earth again at the end of this age, in which the topic is once again Satan's relationship to the nations of the earth during the little season that he is loosed to deceive the nations.

So, you could read verses 1 to 3, skip verse 4 to 6, and pick up the reading at verses 7 to 10, and have a continuity of events as seen on earth. Let's do that, okay? Verses 1 to 3: "1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."

Verse 7: "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

So verses 1 to 3 say, at the beginning of this age, Satan is going to be bound. And then we're going to have this thousand year period, and then Satan's going to be loosed, he's going to gather the nations together to attack the church, and when he almost has them destroyed, Jesus is going to come back. He's going to take out Satan and his people, cast them all into hell, and deliver the church, and they're going to go into the new heavens and the new earth.

Now during that thousand year period that's occurring on earth, verses 4 to 6 describe what's going on in that thousand year period in heaven. Notice he says in verse 4, "And I saw thrones." Where have we seen thrones before? Thrones are always in heaven. Twenty-four elders sit on thrones, right? He says, "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus." Notice there's no bodies there, there's just souls, and souls who are there because they had their heads cut off while they were alive on earth. So these are disembodied spirits.

These are the same group of spirits that are in the fifth seal in Revelation chapter 6, who are under the altar of God and saying, Lord, how long before you get justice for us? So these are souls in heaven who were killed on earth during this thousand year period. And what are they doing in heaven? They're sitting on thrones and they're reigning, okay? They were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God. They "had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." So while this thousand year period is happening on earth, during which Satan is bound, they're in heaven reigning with Christ for that same period.

So you could read verses 1 to 3 and skip to verses 7 to 10, and have a continuity of events as seen on earth. And what happens in verses 4 to 6 occurs in heaven at the same time as the events in verses 1 to 3 and verses 7 to 10 are occurring, and are parallel with them, though they are occurring in a different realm. Verses 1 to 3 and 7 to 10—that's what's happening on earth; 4 to 6 is what's happening in heaven at the same time during this thousand year period. Well then, that is the overall picture of this chapter, and that is the approach that we're going to be taking.

Today what we want to do is consider together these first three verses that tell us about the binding of Satan, and in order to do so, we want to ask and answer three questions about the binding of Satan. In the first place this morning, let's consider together the question, When was Satan bound? That's the first question we're going to answer.

Now our Confession of Faith says in chapter 1 and paragraph 9, "The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture, it must be searched by other places that speak more clearly." So as we look at Revelation chapter 20, verses 1 to 3, we have to ask ourselves, Is there any other place in the Bible that speaks about the binding of Satan, or any other passages that might give us an idea about this event—when it occurred, and what it means? And the answer is, Yes, there are a number of passages that we can look at that are going to cast light on this passage.

The Bible talks a lot about Satan being bound, and Satan being defeated, and Satan being overcome, in the gospels and in the epistles. And so we want to look at several passages that use this same language of Satan's binding, and defeat, and containment, and see what they have to say. Now these are ordinary prose passages we're going to be looking at. They do not use symbolic language like our passage does, and therefore, they will be normative in determining the meaning of symbolic language. Ordinary prose always trumps symbolic language in determining the meaning of the symbolic language.

So first of all then, as we answer the question, When was Satan bound, let's look at passages from the gospels, all right? The first passage in the gospel we want to look at is Matthew chapter 12. I'd like you to turn to the passages and just follow along with me, if you would please. Matthew chapter 12, beginning at verse 22.

“²² Then was brought unto him,” that is, unto Jesus, “one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. ²³ And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?” Isn’t this the true Messiah that the Old Testament promises? “²⁴ But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils,” and of course, Beelzebub is another name for Satan. “²⁵ And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: ²⁶ and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? ²⁷ And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. ²⁸ But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. ²⁹ Or else”—now here’s our passage—“how can one enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.”

What Jesus is saying is, Look, your explanation for the power I possess to cast out demons is illogical and self-contradictory, because if I’m using Satan’s power to cast out Satan’s demons, then Satan is enabling me to destroy his own kingdom. It would be like a military general calling upon the artillery to barrage his own infantry. You’re not going to fight your own people, your own army, or else your kingdom is going to collapse. Jesus is saying, There is another explanation as to why I’m able to cast out demons, and that’s because I have bound the prince of demons, and therefore, I can ravage his kingdom.

Now if you’re going to break into someone’s house and steal their stuff, in order to be successful at that, you’ve got to tie up the owner of the house, right? You’ve got to capture him, you’ve got to tie him up, you’ve got to set him on the floor, and then you can go steal all the stuff out of his closets and cupboards, and afterward you can go away with his goods and he cannot stop you.

And what is being said here is that Jesus has bound Satan in the degree and in the sense that He can now go into Satan’s kingdom and do anything He wants and take anything He wants. What Jesus is saying is, I have bound Satan, I can go into his house, and I can take his goods. My ability to cast out demons is because I’ve bound the master of demons, Satan himself. I can take Satan’s people out of his kingdom of darkness and into my kingdom of light, because I have bound him and he cannot do anything to stop me.

So here we have a clear statement about Jesus binding Satan at His first advent. The binding of Satan is associated with Christ’s first coming and the establishment of his kingdom, which is the kingdom of God. And it’s interesting to note that the very word that is used in Revelation 20 and verse 2 for the binding of Satan is the exact same Greek word that is used here in Matthew 12:29 for binding Satan.

And so here in Matthew 12:29 is a very powerful indication of when the binding of Satan took place. It took place at the first coming of Jesus while He was here on the earth, and that’s why He could cast out demons, and that’s why He could take people who were in Satan’s kingdom

and bring them out of it into His own kingdom. He went in and pillaged and plundered Satan's kingdom of his people, and made them His own people.

There are number of other passages that address Christ's control over, and defeat of, and containment of Satan as a result of Christ's first coming. Turn please to Luke chapter 10. Now here in this passage, Jesus had sent the seventy out, and He told them to cast out demons and preach the gospel. Well, they came back and they gave a report. Now notice Luke chapter 10, verses 17 to 19. It says: "17 And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils [demons] are subject unto us through thy name. 18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. 19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you."

Here we have the beginning of the downfall and the control and the containment of Satan, as a result of the first coming of Christ and His teaching and His works. Satan is falling from power. Jesus bound Satan in such a way that not only could He ravage Satan's house, He also bound him in such a way that His disciples could also ravage Satan's house. And once again, we see Jesus containing, and controlling, and overpowering Satan, and defeating his agenda and purposes. And when does He do this? He does this at His first coming.

In verse 19 these serpents and these scorpions are metaphors for the demons, and the idea here is that not only Jesus, but also His disciples have power over the enemy and over his demons, and the enemy can do nothing to harm or hurt the disciples as they go out and preach the gospel, nor can they stop the spread of the gospel.

Turn please to John chapter 12. Now in John chapter 12, in verses 20 to 22, we see there were certain Greeks, certain Gentiles, that came to worship at the feast, and the same came to Philip and said, "Sir, we would see Jesus." And Philip comes and tells Andrew, and Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. So these Gentiles have come, and they have said to the apostles, We want to see Jesus, and the apostles bring the message to Jesus—These Gentiles are here, and they want to see you. And this is very important to Jesus, because it's a declaration of the expansion of His kingdom—that it will not just be made up of the Jews, but it will involve the people of whole world.

Now notice what Jesus says in verses 31 and 32. He says in verse 31, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. 32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." And so all men without distinction, be they Jew or Gentile, will be drawn to Him, and Jesus saw that in the coming of these Gentiles to speak with Him. Now this word *cast out*—"now shall the prince of this world be cast out," in verse 31—is the same root word as is found in Revelation 20 and verse 3, when it says that Satan was cast into the bottomless pit.

So this casting out of Satan was the casting into the bottomless pit, with all of its restraint. This concept of Satan being forcibly removed from his place of influence and control and being fallen and cast down and bound is found in many places in the gospels, and it tells us that Satan was

overcome, Satan was defeated, and Satan was bound at the first coming of Christ, so Christ and His disciples could ravage his kingdom.

Now when it says that Satan was cast out and cast down, what was he cast into? He was cast into this bottomless pit of Revelation 20 and verse 3, to a place on the earth where he is restrained from being able to deceive the nations.

So having now seen passages from the gospels that indicate when Satan was bound, in the second place, in answering the question, When was Satan bound? we want to consider together passages from the epistles. So, passages from the gospels, now passages from the epistles. Turn please to Colossians chapter 2. We'll start reading at verse 13:

“¹³ And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh”—that’s “you” before you were saved—“hath he quickened together with him”—He’s made you alive with Him. That’s regeneration. Notice, “having forgiven you all trespasses.” Isn’t that good news? All your trespasses are forgiven, no matter what kind they are, no matter how many they are, no matter how terrible they are—He’s forgiven you all trespasses.

How did He do it? Verse 14: “blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.” And so the bill that the law of God wrote out to us that stated what we owed the law of God for our transgressions against it, Jesus took that bill, and He said, I’ll pay that. He nailed it to His cross, and He paid every bit of what it required.

Now notice verse 15. Here’s our verse: “and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” Now this word “spoiled” in verse 15 means disarmed. It means to be stripped of what one has. And so where there was warfare and you defeated a soldier, you disarmed him, you stripped off his sword and his armor and his shield, and he was left defenseless, okay? That’s what the word “spoiled” means. It means to be disarmed. We see this same language in Luke 11:22. You can look at that later.

Whenever you run across this phrase “principalities and powers,” it’s talking about Satan and his demons, okay? Satan and his demons are these principalities and powers, and here Paul is looking back. As Paul’s writing Colossians, he’s looking back at the cross and he’s talking about what happened at the cross. He says, What happened at the cross was not only the forgiveness of our sins. What happened at the cross was the triumph over Satan. Jesus stripped him of all of his power. Jesus mocked him publicly and paraded him before the spiritual universe as a defeated foe.

And this of course was the fulfillment of Genesis 3:15, in which the Son of the woman crushed the Serpent’s head. So what happened at the cross? Jesus disarmed Satan and his demons, and He publicly mocked them and paraded them in His triumph over them.

Now notice Hebrews 2:14. Hebrews 2:14 says, “¹⁴Forasmuch then as the children,”—that’s us, God’s elect—“are partakers of flesh and blood,” (you all have flesh and blood here this morning), “he,” Jesus, “also himself likewise took part of the same;” He became incarnated; He took flesh and blood. Notice: “that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” When was the Devil destroyed? When Jesus died on the cross. His power of death was removed.

Now when it says that Satan was destroyed, it means that he was defeated. His power over death and his strength were defeated and destroyed. It’s not to say Satan himself was annihilated, like he went away into nothingness. Destroyed means his power over death and his strength were removed and defeated. And so Jesus, once again, took everything Satan had away from him when He died on the cross. He defeated him. He took away his ultimate power over death, which means He took away all lesser powers as well.

Now notice First John 3 and verse 8. John says, once again looking back at the cross, he says in verse 8: “He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning.” Now here is our passage: “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”

And so just like Paul looks back on the first coming of Jesus and His work on the cross, and he says, He disarmed Satan and publicly shamed him; the author of the book of Hebrews looks back on the cross and says, Satan’s powers were stripped from him, namely, his power over death; now John looks back at the cross, and he says, Jesus was manifested to destroy the works of the Devil. When was Jesus manifested? Well, at the time when John was writing First John 3:8, it was His first coming. John says, looking back at the manifestation of Jesus Christ—that is, that first coming of Christ—he looks back at it, and he says, That first coming was for the purpose of destroying the works of the Devil. Well, did He succeed in destroying the works of the Devil when He was manifested at His first coming? He absolutely succeeded. Once again we see Jesus destroying Satan’s power and his ability and his freedom to do his work at His first coming.

Now turn to Revelation 12, verses 1 to 10, which we’ve studied before: “¹ And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars,” and we saw that represented Israel. “² and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.” She is pregnant with Christ; she’s bringing forth Christ through the instrumentality of Mary.

Verse 3: “And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. ⁴ And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.” And of course, the dragon is Satan, we’ve seen that clearly, and he manifested his work through Herod, who wanted to kill Christ as soon as He was born.

“⁵ And she brought forth a man child,”—Jesus was in fact born; Herod didn’t succeed in destroying Jesus—“who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron:”—that’s the characteristic of His rule and the outcome of it—“and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.” And so His whole life—His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension—is described in the last part of verse 5. Now verse 6. Here’s what happens after the ascension of Jesus: “And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

“⁷ And there was war in heaven:” upon the ascension of Jesus, there’s war in heaven, “Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, ⁸ and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. ⁹ And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. ¹⁰ And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.”

This is Satan falling as lightening from heaven; this is Satan being cast out; this is Satan being cast down. And where is he cast down into? He’s cast down into this bottomless pit, which is on the earth, in which he is contained and restrained and controlled, so that the disciples of Jesus can go into his house and take his people, and bring them into the kingdom of Christ.

And so there is massive amounts of evidence that Satan was bound by the events and at the time of Christ’s first advent. And while there is a great deal of evidence that Satan was defeated and cast down and bound by Christ at His first coming, there is no evidence anywhere else in the Bible that this took place anywhere else or at any other time, or that it has yet to come at some time in the future.

Turn please to Revelation 20, verses 1 to 3. Now as we look at Revelation 20, verses 1 to 3, it says, “¹ And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ² And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, ³ and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.”

As we look at other clear passages that use this language and these symbols, it becomes quite obvious as to when Satan was bound. He was bound at the time of the cross by the work of Jesus at His first advent. This is not a binding that is going to take place at some point in the future after the second coming of Jesus, because the second coming of Jesus occurs in verse 9 of Revelation 20. This is something that has already taken place in the past, at the *first* coming of Jesus.

So therefore, when did the thousand years begin? It began when Satan was bound. When was Satan bound? He was bound at the first coming of Jesus. If Satan was bound at the first coming of Jesus, then the millennium began at the first coming of Jesus. What does that mean? It means we're living in the millennium right now. The millennium is not something that begins in the future. It is something that began 2,000 years ago, and has been going on up to this very point in time.

That brings us to our second question this morning. Having answered the question, When was Satan bound? Answer: He was bound at the cross; therefore, the thousand years began when he was bound at the cross; and therefore, we're in the thousand years now. The second question we want to ask is, For how long is Satan bound?

Well it's very obvious, isn't it? It says right in the text in Revelation 20:1-3 that he is going to be bound for a thousand years, and when the thousand years has passed, then he's going to be loosed. Now the question we have to ask is this: Do we understand this thousand year period literally or figuratively?

Well, we know that apocalyptic literature is primarily symbolic, right? And we also know that the usage of numbers in the book of Revelation is virtually always symbolic, right? And while certainly in this passage the angel is literal, and Satan is literal, if we think about the rest of this symbolic picture, it quickly becomes obvious that the key is figurative, the lock it opens is figurative, the chain is figurative, and the pit is figurative, because Satan is an immaterial spirit, and you cannot lock up an immaterial spirit with material items. By definition, a spirit has an immaterial body, and material things don't contain or constrain them. A spirit does not have a physical dimension that is subject to physical obstacles.

So, if the key, the lock, the chain, and the pit are all symbolic, and everything associated with this prison is all symbolic, then by what rationale should we conclude that the prison sentence is literal? If the prison is symbolic, why would the prison sentence not also be symbolic?

Up to this point in time in our study of Revelation, we have seen that almost every number used is symbolic and not literal, and that the symbolic use of numbers is the norm, not the exception. Now we know that the number ten symbolizes and conveys the concept of perfection and totality, and one thousand is just the cube of ten. Ten times ten times ten is a thousand. A thousand is simply perfection and totality raised to the third power. And we said that any time a primary number is multiplied, it's just an intensification of the idea of the symbolism of that number.

So one thousand represents the perfect duration of time allotted by God between the first and second coming of Christ. It is the total amount of time for the church age. Just like the key and the lock and the chain and the pit are all symbolic of Satan being limited and contained by an act of God, the duration of a thousand years is also symbolic of how long that limitation and containment will go on.

The number symbolizes an age-long, but definitely limited, period of time. A thousand was the biggest number that they had, so they talk about thousands and thousands, and thousands times thousands. But that's the big number that they had, and it was a big period of time, and so they used a big number to symbolize that big period of time.

This symbolic use of the number one thousand should not surprise us at all, because it is used in a non-literal way elsewhere in the Scriptures. For example, in Second Peter 3:8, it says "that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." In Psalm 90 and verse 4, it says, "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night."

The symbolic and non-literal use of the number one thousand occurs several times in the Bible, and we shouldn't be surprised if it's used that way here. So how long literally has Satan been bound? Well up to this point in time, nearly two thousand literal years, right? In fact in 2033, it will be two thousand literal years.

Now because people did literalize this number "one thousand" back in history, in 1033 A.D., people thought Jesus was going to come back. There was great millennial fever going on then. But it obviously didn't happen, because this number is not a literal number. It is a figurative number, and historically it didn't work out as a literal number, did it? So we have to remember that apocalyptic literature is primarily symbolic. All the elements of this prison are symbolic. And so it stands to reason that this number one thousand is symbolic also.

And that brings us to our third and final question. Having asked, When was Satan bound? Answer: By the events of, and at the time of Christ's first coming. For how long is Satan bound? An age-long, but definitely limited period of time. Satan is bound for the total time of the church age, between the first and second coming. Then the third question is this: Why was Satan bound?

Now first of all, we know that Satan is not bound to complete inactivity, all right? When Satan was bound, he was not bound to complete inactivity. For example, it says in First Peter 5 and verse 8, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Clearly, Satan has mobility. He is able to walk about, and he is able to assault individual Christians and try to draw them into sin and away from Christ. Satan's free to do that.

Furthermore, Second Corinthians 4, verses 3 to 4, says, "³ But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: ⁴ In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.." So Satan is loose and operative and has the ability to blind people's minds to the gospel.

So First Peter 5:8 says Satan is loose and operative with reference to believers, and seeks to tempt them and draw them away from Christ, and Second Corinthians 4 and verse 4 says Satan

is loose and operative with reference to unbelievers, and seeks to blind their minds to the gospel. So with reference to believers and with reference to unbelievers, Satan is still operative and active. So clearly, Satan is not totally bound in every respect with reference to every possible activity that he can engage in.

So secondly, we need to ask in what sense *is* he bound? Well, it says specifically in our text that he is bound so that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years are ended. That's what it says in verse 3: "he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled." After that, he'll be loosed.

So his binding is with respect to the nations; that is, entire nations as a whole, and especially with respect to the function of their civil authorities, so that Satan is unable to deceive the nations of the earth into making a concerted, unified, intense, and prolonged effort to destroy Christianity in the world. And the reason we know this is not only because it's stated in verse 3, but where we see him loosed *from* this restraint in verse 7, he promptly goes out to deceive and gather all the nations of the whole world into a unified, transnational coalition to launch a unified assault against the believers on the earth, who would be totally wiped off the face of the earth *by* it, did not Christ return to rescue them.

And while it is true that for the last 2,000 years, individual nations have tried to wipe Christianity out within their own borders, there has never been any kind of a coordinated, transnational, worldwide effort to do so, nor will there be one, until Satan is loosed. There are still nations, and there always have been nations, who tolerate and even protect Christians, and they have always had some place to which they could flee and find protection.

Furthermore, because Satan is bound, the two witnesses of Revelation 11, verses 3 to 6, who represent the church and her missionary activity, cannot be stopped from spreading the gospel throughout the whole world. Like a mighty army, the church has expanded and spread its message into every nation on the earth, and Satan's kingdom has been plundered as hundreds of millions of Gentiles have been brought out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of light, and churches have been established across the globe, and Satan was restrained in the sense that he was powerless to stop it from happening. Satan is bound so that he cannot destroy the church as it functions as a mighty missionary army that is bringing the gospel to the nations.

We are living in a time of protection, until, as it says in Revelation 11:7, our testimony to Christ and the gospel is finished, and the work of plundering Satan's kingdom of all of God's elect is completed. Only then will the thousand years be finished, and only then will Satan be loosed.

I mean, how would you feel if you were tied up on your living room floor, and these guys are just going through your house taking whatever they wanted, and you are just powerless to stop it? You could yell at them, you could scream at them, you could kind of wiggle around, but you couldn't do much. And that's exactly the position Satan is in. When we go out in missionary

activity and preach the gospel out into the world, he can't stop it while we go out and plunder his kingdom of all God's elect and bring them out of his house and into the house of Christ.

So then, Jesus' ministry and death and resurrection marked the great turning point in Satan's domination of the world. You remember from the first four thousand years from creation until Christ, Satan was free to deceive the nations, and the kingdom of God was confined to this tiny little nation, this tiny little group of people, because Satan was loose. But then Jesus came and bound him, and now the kingdom of God has expanded over the whole world because we've been protected from the kind of behavior that he engaged in for the first four thousand years, between creation and the first coming of Christ.

Satan's control over the world has been broken; Satan has been stripped of his power; he has been bound from being able to keep the light of the gospel from spreading over the whole earth. Jesus said in Matthew 24:14 that the gospel of the kingdom would be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations, and then shall the end come. Satan is powerless to prevent that from happening. Satan sits there, bound, seeing his kingdom growing smaller and smaller as the kingdom of Christ grows larger and larger, and the evangelization of the world continually diminishes his control over it.

Before Christ came, the kingdom of God on earth was tiny. Now, Christ having come and bound Satan, the kingdom of God on earth is huge, and that's why when the two witnesses go out in Revelation chapter 11, and men try to hurt them, it says "fire proceeds out of their mouth, and devours their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. And these have the power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will." They can't be stopped until their ministry is finished. So when the last elect person has been plundered out of the kingdom of Satan, that's when the thousand years will be over, that's when Satan will be loosed, and that's when that final end time will occur.

Well, that's the first three verses of Revelation chapter 20. Next week, we'll look at verses 7 to 10, and when we've completed that, we'll go back and look at what's going on in heaven in parallel with what's going on on earth in our third message. Well, let's pray together.

Father, we thank you so much for this blessed book and for how you make it possible for us to rightly understand it. Father, I pray that the false interpretation of this book that is so rampant in our day, through the teachings of Tim LaHaye and others of the dispensational school, I pray that it would be undone, and that the truth of the meaning of this book would be finally understood by the church of God so that they might be able to fight sound, intelligent, spiritual warfare in this age between the first and the second coming of Christ. Father, I pray that we would be grateful that Satan is bound and we are in a time of protection. And while yes, individual Christians are assaulted and even martyred, yet as we shall see, that's not a defeat either, for they instantly go to heaven and are resurrected, and indwell the new heavens and the new earth, and they aren't hurt at all by that martyrdom. And so Lord, we thank you that Satan is powerless to

harm your people. That's not to say he's not powerless to inflict pain and injury on them, but he's powerless to hurt them. And Father, we're grateful for that. And now, Lord, be pleased to help us further understand these things, and thank you for the victory that Christ achieved over Satan at the cross that we might be delivered from him who comes to kill and steal and destroy. In Jesus' name. Amen.