

REVELATION – SERMON 79

SATAN CAST INTO THE ABYSS

Revelation 20:1-3

INTRODUCTION

- It is very rare for tyrannical kings and rulers to be brought to justice for their evils
- Even when their regimes are overcome, they often have the resources to escape trial and execution
- But in the rare instances when a powerful tyrant is captured and humiliated, it is the cause of great wonder and astonishment to all who behold it, especially those who suffered under his oppression
- In Isaiah 14, a prophecy is given concerning the mighty “king of Babylon”, called “Lucifer” the “son of the morning”
- There is given a description of his original majesty and heavenly glory, then of his proud rebellion against God, followed by his casting out of heaven to “the ground” and finally to “hell”
- Those who will witness this even shall “narrowly look” upon him and “consider” with astonishment how such a powerful being could be brought to such humiliation and desolation (Isaiah 14:16-17)
- Since the grand primeval promise made in Eden, of the woman’s seed bruising the serpent’s head (Genesis 3:15), the saints of the Most High have anticipated the day when the arch-enemy of God and mankind would be finally defeated
- The defeat of Satan was effected through the atoning work of Jesus Christ: his life, death, resurrection from the dead, and ascension to glory (Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8)
- Golgotha became the scene of the greatest victory ever accomplished, where the Lord Jesus Christ “spoiled principalities and

powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Colossians 2:15)

- The *de jure* (legal) defeat of Satan was accomplished at the cross, but the *de facto* (actual) and complete fulfilment will not take place until the Second Coming of Christ
- When the Lord comes at the battle of Armageddon he will slay the armies of the rebels, and cast the beast and false prophet into the lake of fire (19:20)
- While those two agents of Satan will be eternally damned to the lake of fire from that moment, Christ has a different sentence for their lord, who has yet another role to fulfil in God’s plan for the ages
- Among all the many blessings that will come upon the earth during the Millennium, one of the foremost is the banishment of Satan for its entire duration
- Indeed, Satan’s binding and banishment are a *necessary* element of the Messiah’s earthly reign, for there can be no rival king or kingdom present, whether human or angelic
- These verses clearly refute the allegorical, non-literal interpretations of the millennium (Amillennialism and Postmillennialism)
- The early church almost universally was Premillennial, accepting the clear Scriptural teaching that Christ would return before establishing his kingdom and banishing Satan
- Augustine (354-430 AD) is responsible for the “spiritualised” view of the kingdom, where Satan was bound during Christ’s earthly ministry, the first resurrection is the new birth, and the 1000 years is the present interadventual period
- This stemmed from his view that the visible “catholic” church is the kingdom of God on earth, set forth in his work, *The City of God*
- Roman Catholicism and Protestantism rely upon Augustine’s teachings

Here we will consider the devil's downfall, as he is cast into the bottomless pit for 1000 years

I. THE PERSONALITY OF THE DEVIL

A. The angel

1. He is unnamed, but comes down from heaven, on a divine mission with divine authority and power
2. He comes to the earth – the dragon having been previously been confined to the earth (12:9)
3. He has the key to the bottomless pit
 - a. Previously Satan was permitted to hold this key and release demonic hordes with it (9:1)
 - b. Christ holds the keys of hell and death (1:18), and no man or angel may open this door without his permission (3:7)
4. He has a great chain
 - a. This is a chain of heavenly origin, capable of restraining spiritual beings
 - b. God previously confined sinning angels in “chains of darkness (2 Peter 2:4) and “everlasting chains” (Jude 6), possibly in this same bottomless pit

B. The dragon

1. He is described under four of his names (cf. 12:9)
 - a. The dragon – indicates fierceness and violence
 - b. That old serpent – subtle, deceptive (Genesis 3:1)
 - c. The devil (*diabolos*) – slanderer
 - d. Satan – adversary, opposer

2. He bears many other names and descriptions in Scripture
 - a. Lucifer, son of the morning (Isaiah 14:12)
 - b. The anointed cherub that covereth (Ezekiel 28:14)
 - c. Beelzebub, prince of the devils (Matthew 12:24)
 - d. The god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4)
 - e. The prince of this world (John 12:31)
 - f. The prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2)
 - g. The tempter (Matthew 4:3)
 - h. Belial (2 Corinthians 6:15)
 - i. The accuser of our brethren (Revelation 12:20)
 - j. The wicked one (Matthew 13:19)
 - k. A roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8)

II. THE PERIOD OF HIS DEPRIVATION

A. Satan's present work

1. Amillennialists claim that Satan is *presently* bound in the bottomless pit
2. But the Scriptures clearly show this to be false, as Satan remains "in the world" (1 John 4:4) and is constantly working evil here
 - a. He walks about seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8)
 - b. He spreads lies in the world (John 8:44)
 - c. He spreads false doctrine (1 Timothy 4:1)

- d. He fills hearts with lies (Acts 5:3)
- e. He beguiles (2 Corinthians 11:3)
- f. He catches away the seed of the word sown in hearts (Matthew 13:19)
- g. He blinds the minds of unbelievers (2 Corinthians 4:4; Acts 26:18)
- h. He tempts believers to sin (1 Corinthians 7:5; 1 Thessalonians 3:5)
- i. He seeks to get an advantage of believers (2 Corinthians 2:11)
- j. He hinders believers (1 Thessalonians 2:18)
- k. He afflicts believers (2 Corinthians 12:7)
- l. He desires to sift believers (Luke 22:31)
- m. He wrestles with believers (Ephesians 6:11-17)
- n. He transforms into an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)
- o. He takes people captive at his will (2 Timothy 2:26)

B. His future activity during the tribulation

1. Following the rapture, the Holy Spirit's restraining work will cease and Satan will commence his strategy to bring the world under his complete control
 - a. Establishing his man upon the throne of world dominion
 - b. Setting up his idolatrous religion (the mark and worshipping the beast)
 - c. Persecuting the saints, putting them to death

- d. Attempting to destroy the woman (Israel)
 2. There will be a war in heaven when Michael casts him to the earth (12:12)
 3. As the end draws closer he will advance with increasing fury, "because he knoweth that he hath but a short time"
- C. He will be banished for 1000 years at Christ's coming

III. THE PIT OF HIS DETAINMENT

A. The bottomless pit

1. This term in Greek is *abusson*, from which we get the English "abyss"
2. It is also translated "the deep" (Luke 8:31), and denotes a place "without depth", and hence is called "bottomless"
3. It is the same pit that was opened in 9:1-3 and from which the beast ascended (11:7)
4. Its location is in the earth (9:1)
3. At some point in the past, this infernal chamber was filled with demons and securely locked
4. Jude describes "angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day"
5. The angels that sinned when the "sons of God came in unto the daughters of men" (Genesis 6:1-4), were confined to *tartarus* (2 Peter 2:4), which may be another term for the bottomless pit

C. The secure prison

1. He is bound with a great chain
2. He is cast in the pit

3. He is shut up in the pit
4. He is sealed in the pit
5. If God intended to express to us that the devil will really be imprisoned and rendered incapable of any influence on earth, then it is hard to imagine how he could have portrayed it more clearly than he has in these verses

IV. GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL DESIGN

- A. Satan's binding is a necessary part of Christ's earthly kingdom
 1. The fulfilment of prophecy (Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 14:15; Luke 10:18)
 2. The eradication of the rival and opposing king and kingdom
 3. "That he should deceive the nations no more"
- B. A final test for mankind
 1. Satan's removal will mean the removal of a major source of evil in the world
 2. The evil "world system" will also be eradicated when Christ bears global rule
 3. Man will be given the optimal conditions for which to prove himself to be good and upright
 4. The only source of evil left in the world will be man's fleshly nature
 5. Notwithstanding this ideal environment, at the end of the Millennium, man will again demonstrate his utter incapability of obedience to God, as an innumerable multitude join the released devil to go to war against Christ (20:8-9)

CONCLUSION

1. Satan is one of the most powerful beings in the universe
2. He vehemently hates God, and is in constant war against him and his saints
3. All of us were born into this world under his power, and helpless to deliver ourselves
4. Were it not for the love of God in giving his Son to deliver us, we would all lost eternally in hell with the devil and his angels
5. Now believers are able to overcome the devil, not because of our own strength, but “because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4)
6. We can be encouraged to persevere in our daily warfare, knowing that “the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly” (Romans 16:20)
7. Pentecostal “Word of Faith” heretics teach that believers should rebuke Satan and evil spirits in Jesus’ name
8. It is not our role to address Satan or to “bind” him
9. How do we war against the devil?
 - ✓ Be sober and vigilant (1 Peter 5:8)
 - ✓ Be not ignorant of him and his devices (2 Corinthians 2:11)
 - ✓ Do not give place to the devil (Ephesians 4:27)
 - ✓ Submit yourself to God, resist the devil (James 4:7)
 - ✓ Overcome him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of your testimony (Revelation 12:11)
 - ✓ Take unto you the whole armour of God (Ephesians 6:10-18)
 - ✓ Be skilful with the word of God (Matthew 4:4,7,10)