

The Book of Revelation
“The Loosing of Satan”

Message 036

“The Loosing of Satan”

August 10, 2008

Revelation 20:7-15

Revelation 20:7-10

Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. 9 They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. 10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Revelation 20:11-15

11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

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If time permits we will take up two sections today:

The Loosing of Satan, verses 7-10; and The Great White Throne, verses 11-15.

First, the Loosing of Satan, verses 7-10.

There are two main thoughts in these verses that have to do with the loosing of Satan for a “little while” or a “little season.” They are that Satan will deceive the nations and the battle of Gog and Magog against the Camp of the Saints.

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After the “binding” of Satan for the duration of the **thousand years**, which in my understanding is not a literal 1000 calendar years, but is an indefinite period of time from the crucifixion of Jesus Christ until the end of this present age? The thousand years is also called the **millennium**.

The question that must be dealt with, if not indeed answered, is the timing of the loosing of Satan. If the thousand years have **expired** and the end of the world has come and a New Heaven and a New Earth have begun, how can it be said that Satan is **then** set loose to deceive the nations?

Rev 20:3 is the prophecy of the loosing of Satan:

“... and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.”

The assurance of this prophecy being fulfilled is stated in verse 7:

“Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison...”

Of the thirteen different translations I checked on verse 7; they all say essentially the same thing: expired, completed, ended, over, and finished; which would say that **after** the thousand years are expired, **then** Satan is loosed for a little season.

However, when I checked with references on the Greek word so translated it was not so clear that the loosing must occur **after** the thousand years are finished.

“Verse 7a can be translated as an indefinite future clause [Robertson, Word Pictures, VI, 460] ‘*Whenever* [hot’-an] the thousand years should be completed...’ This would be expected if the thousand years were symbolic and an indeterminate period of time instead of literal. But it is possible to translate [hot’-an] as ‘*when*’. Presumably scribes replaced [hot’-an] *whenever* it should be completed with *after* in order to clarify the indefiniteness. The New International Greek Testament Commentary on the Book of Revelation, G. K. Beale, 1021.

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Strong’s Concordance defines [hot’-an]:

whenever (implying hypothesis or more or less uncertainty).

KJV - as long (soon) as, that, till, when (-soever), while.

(Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright © 1994, 2003 Biblesoft, Inc. and International Bible Translators, Inc.)

Thus it seems to me that it is permissible to understand the loosing of Satan to occur just before the thousand years are absolutely ended. This view is supported by The Pulpit Commentary

“And after that he must be loosed a little season. Omit "and." "A little time; a little while" is the exact phrase used in Rev 6:11, where it certainly means the period of this world's existence. Such also is its meaning here.

Rev 6:9-11

When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" 11 Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a **little while** longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

"He must be loosed" signifies that Satan is, in regard to the ungodly, allowed to work his will during this period. The thousand years' binding, and the loosing for a little time, describe two events which occur **contemporaneously**. While the godly need have no fear, because even in this world Satan's power as regards them is completely limited by Christ's act of redemption, yet in another sense, as regards the ungodly, Satan is loosed and obtains power over them. The chief difficulty in this interpretation lies in the words, "after this." But it must be remembered that the "thousand years" do not express a period of time, but the quality of completeness. Therefore the loosing of Satan must not be supposed to take place in a period subsequent to the period of the binding. The seer wishes to describe the devil in a twofold character, subordinating the second to the first. He thus says, "By Christ's redeeming work Satan is bound and fettered in regard to you faithful Christians; but there is also a second subordinate

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fact to remember, that at the same time he is powerful in his natural sphere, among his own adherents."

The binding of Satan in one direction being immediately followed by a display of power in another, and the former fact being expressed by the chronological symbolism of being bound for a thousand years, it is part of this chronological symbolism to express the second fact as taking place after the first, though a subordination of the secondary to the primary effect is really what is intended to be conveyed...."

(from The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by BibleSoft)

If then we can understand that the loosing of Satan occurs **contemporaneously** with the binding of Satan, but just before the end of this present age, we can proceed to deal with the Battle of Gog and Magog.

This battle is mentioned in Rev 16:12-16

Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

15 "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."

16 And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, **Armageddon**.

We have previously explained that “Armageddon” appears **only** in Rev 16:16 and is not a literal geographical location but is a symbolic name composed by John from several significant locations in the OT.

“Gog and Magog” refer to Gog the ruler of the territory of Magog and is taken from Ezekiel 38 and 39.

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In previous messages I have said that this is no literal battle at some future date on the calendar but it is a symbolic expression describing the spiritual warfare between Satan’s minions and the saints of God.

[My sermon of March 30, 2008 dealt with “Armageddon.”]
Satan was bound at the cross of Jesus Christ and was limited as to his ability to deceive the nations compared with his power to deceive the nations before the spread of the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the world. Now at the close of this present age Satan is loosed. He will no longer need to use deception and false religion and idolatry parading as the Church of Rome.

No, Satan is free for a little season to deceive the willingly ignorant in the last attack on the Church before he is cast into the lake of fire for ever and for ever.

This spiritual battle is Armageddon; Gog and Magog, the minions of the Devil; not Russia, not China, and not Rome; but the worship of man as manifested in our postmodern culture, and is the denial of Christ.

No nation can be described as being in the “four corners of the earth.” This language means a world-wide scope. And no geographical area or nation can be described as the “camp of the saints.”

Peter tells us who the “camp of the saints” is.

1 Peter 2:9-10

9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

This “holy nation” has no geographical boundaries thus it cannot be surrounded by the host of Gog and Magog; not in Jerusalem or anywhere else on the face of the earth.

A fair question is “Why Satan must be loosed?”

The saints who are alive at the end of the present age will be given the honor to glorify their Savior in the face of ridicule and physical persecution.

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The “camp of the saints,” like Job, will answer Satan’s derisive challenge to God.

Job 1:8-9

8 And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

9 Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?

The battle is spiritual and we must be ready if we are called on to resist, even to the shedding of blood, if that is what the Lord has determined for us. Are we to go to heaven on flowery beds of ease?

Ephesians 6:10-12

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Are we, in this generation, about to experience the “loosing of Satan?”

All I can say is that the society we live in is competing for the title of being the most wicked and ungodly since the days before the Great Flood. Sodom was a nice village when compared to America in the 21st Century.

The definition of western culture is Postmodernism:

No objective truth; a two-story conception of truth [religion in the upper story and science in the lower story, with no crossover permitted, i.e. a separation between faith and science. Faith cannot be absolute truth while “science’ must be true.]

No moral judgment allowed. The popular TV series, Seinfeld, had this line in nearly every show; no matter what the subject, “Not that there is anything wrong with that.” In the TV series, Seinfeld your subconscious was repeatedly being assaulted with: “Not that there is anything wrong with that.”

Pluralism. Any and all, or no religion has equal value. The claim of Jesus Christ to be the only way to God is offensive and rejected as hateful.

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John 14:6

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

“The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life released its second report based on the *U. S. Religious Landscape Survey* this past June. This enormous undertaking surveyed 35,000 Americans and concluded that most Americans have a non-dogmatic approach to faith. Seven in 10 say that many religions can lead to eternal life and that there is more than one way to interpret the Scriptures. Although 9 in 10 believe in God, only 6 in 10 believe He is personal – and 3 in 10 see “god” as an impersonal force in the universe.

America is still mostly classified as Christian. Evangelicals make up 26.3 percent of churches, mainline Protestants are 18.1 percent, and Catholics 23.9 percent (for a total of 68.3 percent of the population). However, of all the religious groups surveyed, only Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses contained a majority who think that their beliefs represent the “only” way to heaven.

Here’s a startling fact: over half (57 percent) of evangelical Protestant church members believe that other religions can lead to eternal life. How can the church impact the world for Christ if so few professing Christians understand, much less witness to, the truth of their faith?”

Acts & Facts, August 2008. page 4

A new friend who is the pastor of a local Baptist church has on his website:

Seven Solas of the Modern Church

Layman's guide to the key drivers of the 21st century church

1. Sola Cultura - let culture define church life
2. Sola Successa - let numerical success legitimize activities
3. Sola Entertaina - let entertainment be the guiding principle
4. Sola Edificia - let the edifice be the center of church life

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5. Sola Programma - let programs dominate the peoples time
6. Sola Thralldoma – let the people be enslaved by whatever thrills them
7. Sola Processa – let the church be managed by business philosophies and processes

In contrast, to the seven solas of the modern church, the five Solas of the Protestant Reformation were,

1. Sola Scriptura! The Scripture Alone is the Standard
2. Soli Deo Gloria! All for the Glory of God Alone
3. Solo Christo! By Christ's Work Alone are We Saved
4. Sola Gratia! Salvation by Grace Alone
5. Sola Fide! Justification by Faith Alone

The church in America is in great danger of relegating the preaching of the Gospel to a subordinate and unnecessary element of corporate worship. I wonder whether many of the “successful” churches even know what the Gospel is.

Did Jesus say that there are many on the Broad Road that leads to destruction?

The thousand years is the Gospel reign of Christ as He is in the midst of the churches [Rev 2 & 3]. The Gospel is preached and men and women are convicted of sin and guilt; they repent and believe the Gospel; they are called and justified.

But contemporaneously at the end of this present age the final apostasy of those who are religious but lost will be manifest. This is what I see happening all around us. Every important truth of the Bible is being denied by those who are supposed to stand for the truth.

Several examples:

A young earth that was created by a transcendent God?

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No, “science” has “proved” that the earth is 4 to 6 billion years old.

A single man and woman who were created by God from whom the rest of human kind were born?

No, we evolved from a slime pit, eons ago by random chance.

A significant man called Adam who represented the entire human race and by whose one sin mankind was condemned?

No, all men come into the world neutral and it is their free-will “decision” that determines their eternal destiny.

A universal flood that covered the entire globe?

No, there may have been a local flood but the story of Noah is a myth.

A promised Seed of the Woman that was born of a virgin according to prophecy?

Oh no, that is medically impossible.

Mainline Protestant churches ordaining homosexuals as ministers!

Same sex “marriage”!

Abortion on demand!

Elevating animals to the same value as humans!

The refusal to carry out capital punishment on any schedule shorter than 15 to 20 or more years!

Assisted suicide!

More concern as to “why” a criminal commits his crime than the simple fact that a crime was committed and should be punished!

The rise of radical Islam and the movement toward a world-wide Caliphate!

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And on and on it goes!

Luke 21:28

And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

We may not yet be in the time of the “loosing of Satan for a little season” but then it is possible.

There must be an end and so there is. And the prophecy of John is magnificent in its simplicity. No extended description of the battle, no wild exaggerations, only a couple of sentences. No fodder for three or four “Left Behind” books.

... And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. 10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

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The Great White Throne, verses 11-15.

Revelation 20:11-15

11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

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We must be ever mindful that this is a Book of Symbols. Do not imagine a literal “great white throne”. Think of the One who knows every thought and deed of every person who ever was. Think of an instant when the uncountable sins of the innumerable multitudes are brought to final judgment.

We are in the realm of the consciousness of the human mind where every word and thought will be known by every other soul. Abraham said to the Rich man in hell, “son remember!”

God is God and man is the creature. Some men will worship their Maker and some will curse Him and die the eternal death in the lake of fire.

From the commentary of Charles Alexander:

THE LAKE OF FIRE

“And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire” (20:15)

The “lake of fire” is a symbol. Natural fire has no terrors for the spirit. It is written that God has made His ministers (the angels) a ‘flame of fire’ (Hebrews 1:7). In any event there can be no natural ‘flame’ where there is not atmosphere to feed it,

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so the ‘flame’ which denotes the angelic nature, and the ‘fire’ which is reserved for the wicked, cannot be a material combustion. The fire of hell is the consuming righteousness of God. “Our God is a consuming fire’ (Hebrews 12:29). As Cruden so ably puts it, “Fire is a symbol of the holiness and justice of God”.

Proceeding, Cruden writes: “Daniel says (Daniel 7:10) that a fiery stream issued and came forth from before the Lord (noting the speedy execution of His judgments for the terror of the wicked and the comfort of the godly). Our Saviour is compared to fire. Malachi 3:2 - He is like a refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap; that is, he shall consume the wicked by his judgments and purify his people by his doctrine. The Holy Spirit likewise is compared to fire: Matthew 3:11 - He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.”

We must never forget that the Lord reigns as much in hell as in heaven, for Job tells us that Satan must go to God first for permission to tempt the righteous. The iron of the divine restraint is on all the activity of the Evil One, as our Book of Revelation has shown in the Binding and Loosing of Satan (chapter 20:3). Satan is moved by malice, but the sovereign restraint of God permits only so much as will prove at the last that Satan has failed in his assault against the truth. At the last, Satan will be compelled to acknowledge the righteousness and justice of his own awful fate. No discordant voice will be raised, not even in hell, against the justice and righteousness of God. All enemies of the truth will be proved to be liars, as their awakened consciences will only too readily acknowledge. Further than that we are not permitted to go, but the unanimity of creation as to the worthiness of Christ to take the throne and the glory and the crown, will prevail in the lowest depths of hell as in the highest altitudes of heaven: At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:9-11)

John 5:24-30

"Most assuredly [Amen, amen], I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. 25 Most assuredly [Amen, amen], I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. 26 For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself,

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27 and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.

28 Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice 29 and come forth — those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

The first resurrection is spiritual: regeneration, to be born again, and the second resurrection is that of the body. All who have died will come out of the grave, or from the sea, or from the ashes of cremation and face judgment.

The Bible says nothing about a separation of 1000 years between the bodily resurrection of the believer and the bodily resurrection of the condemned; only that they are raised from the dead to stand before the Judge of all the earth.

2 Corinthians 5:10-11

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. 11 Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

The unrepentant will now confess that Jesus is Lord, but only to confirm his condemnation. The saint will most gladly confess that Jesus is Lord to the honor of God the Father.

The believer whose life is founded on the work of Jesus Christ may confess that some of his work was wood, hay, and stubble which will be destroyed, but he himself will be saved.

1 Corinthians 3:9-15

9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it,

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because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.

14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

The second death of verse 14 is the conscious separation of the lost soul for all eternity; away from the presence of the Lamb for ever and for ever.

Brownlow North, a puritan wrote, “You will live as long as God lives and you will live somewhere; in paradise or in hell.”

The believer is born twice and dies once; the unbeliever is born once and dies twice.

One of the greatest books ever written on the atonement of Christ is The Death of Death by John Owen. Verse 14 tells us that when Christ conquered death on the cross that death itself is cast into the lake of fire. Death is ugly and the one who had the power of death, even Satan.

Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire.

Hebrews 2:14-18

14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. 17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

And we will close with another quote from Mr. Alexander:

“Without the Book of Revelation the Bible could not have been complete. To have left the Church of our Lord without that apostolic guidance which she needed during the two thousand years of her history, would have meant

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that in all her long ages of warfare and travail she would have had no guiding light to comfort her in the mystery of her suffering. It is an easy exercise for some of our latest writers on prophecy to lift the entire Book out of history and present it as a guide book to sensational forecasts of what is about to happen in the Middle East, with Russia and China as the dark villains of the play. The fact that no true spiritual end is served by these exciting labours is no deterrent either to the impulse which throws more and more of this material on to the profitable book market, or to the appetite of a large portion of the Christian public to buy and read.”

Revelation Spiritually Understood, Volume 25, Charles D. Alexander

As one of your pastors I am responsible to tell you the truth.

There is objective truth and it is in this Book we call the Bible.

You, old man and woman; you child, and you in the years of your youth, what is your hope?

Is your hope that somehow God will overlook your sin?

Is it your hope that there is no lake of fire?

Can you say from the depth of your being, “I am a sinner in need of a Savior; Christ died for my sins and that is my only hope?”

Do you entertain any idea that people who refuse to confess the exclusive claims of the Lord Jesus Christ to be true as having any hope of escaping judgment in the lake of fire?

Repent and believe the Gospel!