

LIVING WATERS NEWSLETTER

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THE BINDING OF SATAN AND CHRIST'S REIGN

The only Scripture mentioning the binding of Satan and the so called "millennial reign" of Christ is the 20th chapter of the book of Revelation. These words, as the rest of Revelation, were a message to the church in John's day, not concerning events centuries after their time. The book is about the fall of Jerusalem and the Jewish system and the rise and triumph of Christianity. A theology popularized by C.I. Schofield, R.A. Torrey, J. Vernon McGee, David Wilkinson, Hal Lindsey, Jerry Fallwell, Pat Robertson, Dave Hunt, Jimmy Swaggart, Jack Van Impe, Tim LaHay and a host of fundamentalists preachers is summarized by the following beliefs: In the last days Satan and his crowd are going to become so powerful that the only thing that can save us is for Christ to come and "rapture" his church out of this mess, take it to heaven for seven years (some say) and thus turning the world over to Satan who will bring a "great tribulation" upon the wicked. Then Christ "returns with his saints," binds Satan for a thousand years and reigns during this thousand-year period. Satan is then loosed for a short time, then destroyed. Somewhere in the midst of all these theories there is a judgment, the planet is destroyed, and the saints will enjoy an eternity in heaven dwelling in "mansions" prepared for them, while the wicked spends eternity burning in hell, described as "the lake of fire."

These theories, which are diverse in number, say God's world is "the late great planet earth" and that "Satan is alive and well on the planet earth." Instead of seeing Satan as having been defeated and stripped of his power by the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, Schofield's dispensationalists and Hal Lindsey's "money making best sellers" have caused Christians to give up any hope that the power of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God can change the tide of evil and rebellion in the world. We have to wait until Christ comes and literally binds Satan for a thousand years

Having noted briefly the common beliefs concerning the future regarding Satan and the reign of Christ, we now put aside the popular theories of prominent prophesy preachers and examine the word of God on these subjects. We will discuss them in three subjects: (1) Satan the ruler of this world (2) Satan's defeat (binding) and (3) The Kingdom: Christ the ruler of all things.

SATAN THE RULER OF THIS WORLD

When God created man, He was given the commission to "fill the earth and subdue it and rule over every living thing on the earth" (Gen. 1:26-28). God has never changed His goal for man. Man had knowledge of the world outside of Eden he was to subdue because he was not created in the garden of Eden for "God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to "cultivate it and keep it" (Gen.2:15). The Hebrew word for cultivate is *'abed* meaning to *serve, tend, or till*. The word for keep is *shamar* meaning to *guard or keep*. This being true there must have been danger of a present and evil power which made such "guarding" necessary. Chapter 3 of Genesis introduces that evil power as the serpent (Satan). It was at this point (described in Genesis 3) that man lost his right to rule over God's creation because he failed

to guard (*shamar*) that which had been entrusted to him. Man had actually "handed over" his power of rulership to Satan. The late German theologian, Erich Sauer in *The King of The Earth* states that "this is shown to be true by Satan offering the Lord all the power and glory of the kingdoms of this world, if he would only fall down and worship him. He justified the possibility of his offer and his ability to carry it out by claiming that the rule of the world had at some time been conferred upon him. 'It has been delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will give it' (Luke 4:6)." Satan then, having usurped by deceit the authority God gave to man, became the "ruler of this world" (John 12:31,14:30, 16:11). This is seen by the many references in the New Testament. Here are a few more scriptures on this subject: "Prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2), "god of this age" (II Cor. 4:4), "Roaring lion" (I Pet. 5:8), "The whole world lies in the power of the evil one" (I John 5:19), "one who disguises himself as an angel of light" (II Cor. 11:14). "Satan who deceives the whole world" (Rev.12:9, 13:14). These scriptures in no way say that God has given up on the world and abdicated His creation to Satan. Satan, Lucifer, a fallen angelic power, was evidently in rebellion against God before his appearance in Eden. God obviously had the power to destroy Satan, but he, being in rebellion to God, was allowed the right to unfold his nature and pursue his plans, that was first demonstrated in his conflict with Adam. He was permitted to work out the fullness of his rebellion in the world, that had been created for man, and in the end condemn himself. The conclusion is that Satan can only do what he is permitted to do by God.

SATAN'S DEFEAT (THE BINDING OF SATAN)

Most of the "Soothsayers of the second advent" mentioned above avow that Satan will not be defeated until Christ returns. This assumption is based upon Revelation 20:1-3, 7-10, the only place in scripture where the "binding" and "loosing" of Satan is mentioned. Accepting the fact that these words, like the rest of Revelation, was a message to the church in John's day and written in symbolism, we must turn to the Gospels and the Epistles to interpret the symbols. Any doctrine based upon the symbols in Revelation must be sustained by the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles. No doctrine based only upon symbolism is acceptable.

The Pharisees accuse Jesus of casting out demons by the power of Satan. He answers "How can one enter the house of the strong man (Satan) and plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man? Then he shall plunder his goods" (Matt. 12:29). The word "bind" here is the same word used in Revelation 20. The Lord began "binding the strong man" during his earthly ministry, having successfully completed his mission, he is now plundering Satan's house and carrying off his possessions. This work of *binding Satan* began when Jesus triumphed over him in the temptations in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13). Jesus then begins to cast out demons and the power of Satan was beginning to crumble. The purpose of the binding of Satan in Revelation was *that he should deceive the nations no more* (Rev. 20:3). In Luke 10 Jesus sends out seventy to preach and heal in the cities he intended to visit. Upon their return they said, "Lord even the demons are subject to us in your name." He then says to them "And I beheld Satan falling as lightening from heaven"

(Luke 10: 17, 18). Satan “falling from heaven” was the result of the mission of the seventy. This is a commentary on the binding of Satan in Revelation 20. The term “falling from heaven” does not mean Satan inhabited the “heaven” which is the location of the throne of God. The word “heaven” in the Greek is *ouranos* and is translated “heaven” 218 times, “heavens” 24 times, “sky” 22 times and “air” 9 times. In Ephesians 2:2 the Apostle Paul wrote: “you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to *the prince of the power of the air*, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.” Just before his crucifixion Jesus stated “Now judgment is upon this world, now the ruler of this world will be *cast out*” (John 12:1). The word *cast out*, used here is the same root word in the original, as the words *casting* or *hurling* into the abyss in Revelation 20. Concerning the defeat of Satan, Jesus further said: “*Now judgment is upon the world, now the ruler of this world will be cast out*” (John 12:31) and “...concerning judgment because the prince of this world *has been judged*” (John 16:11). The words of the Apostles verify these statements of Jesus concerning the defeat of Satan. “He had disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through the cross” (Col. 2:15). “Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, he himself also partook of the same, that through death he might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is the devil” (Heb. 2:14). “...the son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil” (I John 3:8). Jesus’ final act in the binding of Satan was the destruction of the Old Covenant System when Jerusalem was destroyed. In all these passages the *binding* the *casting, out* or the *falling* of Satan is associated with *the first coming of Christ* that is, beginning with his defeat of Satan in the temptation accounts to his resurrection and ascension. However, it did not end there, but continues his kingship through his people. Luke wrote in Acts 1:1 “The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that *Jesus began to do and teach.*” The binding of Satan continues to take place (Eph. 6:12) and will consummate with the devil being “thrown into the lake of fire, which is the second death.” (Rev. 20:10,14).

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST, THE RULER OF ALL THINGS

It was by his death and resurrection that Satan’s power was broken (Eph. 4:8; Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14) but it was by his ascension that he came to his throne and began his Kingdom reign. This is seen in Daniel 7:13, 14: “I kept looking in the night vision, and beheld, with the clouds of heaven one like the Son of Man was coming, and he *came up* to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And he was given dominion, glory and *a kingdom*, that all peoples, nations and men of every language might serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and his *kingdom* is one which will not be destroyed.”

What was at issue between Satan (the prince of this age) and Christ during his earthly ministry was his Messianic Kingdom. This is seen by: 1. The temptation accounts, 2. Jesus casting out demons, 3. The manner in which the demon possessed behaved in his presence, (as Jesus approaches they usually raised a cry in fear, “the Holy One of God” “The Son of God” “Son of the Most High.” They considered his coming their destruction and torment). All this shows that in Jesus’ presence and person, the kingdom became a reality. Matthew 12:28: “But if I cast out demons by the spirit of God, the kingdom of God is come upon you.” Also, Luke 10:9 at the sending out of the seventy: “...heal

those who are sick and say unto them ‘The kingdom of God has come near you’”

Although the reigning of Christ is said to be a thousand years in Revelation 20:4, as we stated in the December issue of *The Living Waters Newsletter*: “The scriptures use the term ‘thousand years’ to indicate a great vastness and is not to be taken literally” as most self-proclaimed prophecy experts predict. To do so limits the reign of Christ to a thousand years. To quote Erich Sauer again from his book *From Eternity to Eternity* “The message of the Millennial kingdom is found only *once* in the New Testament. Otherwise the whole New Testament is silent on this doctrine, both as to the Gospels and the Pauline and other epistles. At all events, apart from Revelation 20 there is nowhere else a single detailed mention.” The “thousand-year reign” of Christ is simply a figurative term denoting the vastness of the Kingdom, which began when Christ ascended and will last until “he hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when he has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign ‘until he has put all his enemies under his feet.’” This is borne out in Psalm 110:1, 2: “The Lord says to my lord: ‘Sit at My right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’ The Lord will stretch forth your strong scepter from Zion saying, ‘Rule in the midst of your enemies.’” The Son of Man, the second Adam, has ascended to the throne as ruler of the kings of the earth and his people have ascended to rule with him (Eph. 2:6). They continue to defeat Satan by disciplining the nations. Nothing short of the resurrection could precipitate the judgment and attest the right of Christ to reign as one seated at the right hand of the Father “far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come, and (having) all things in subjection under his feet...” (Eph. 1:20-22). All this was prophesied in the words of the Psalmist: “...He said to me ‘you are my son, today I have begotten you. Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as your inheritance and the very ends of the earth as your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron, you shall shatter them like earthenware.’ Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; take warning, O judges of the earth” (Psalm 2:7-10). It is in the context of the resurrection that Paul makes the following statement: “...He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising him from the dead” (Acts 17:31). Christ, having been exalted and given “all authority in heaven and on earth” (Matt. 28:18), means all judgment has been given to him. “For not even the Father judges anyone, He has given all judgment to the Son” (John 5:22). Since the ascension we have seen the ruling power of Christ exercised in the fulfillment of Psalm 2 beginning with both Jerusalem and the Roman Empire being destroyed and the rise and fall of the nations of the world throughout history. Judgment is a prerogative of the reign of Christ. The word “Kings” and “Judges” is used interchangeably in Psalm 2:10. Solomon the *reigning king* of Israel *judged* the people (I Kings 3:9). One of the definitions given for the word *krino* (judge) in *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* is “to rule, govern, to preside with the power of giving judicial decisions.” In the book of Judges, the Judges *reigned* over Israel. John 5:27-29 Jesus states: “...and He (God) gave Him (Jesus) authority to execute judgment because he is the Son of man. Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear his voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to the resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to the resurrection of Judgment.” The son has authority to act in the capacity once reserved to God alone. He rules life and death.