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He Seized the Dragon, or Satan, and Bound Him for a Thousand Years

20: 1-3

He seized the Dragon, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years DIG: What thousand-year period does Satan's imprisonment coincide? Where is he bound? By whom? For what purpose will he be bound? What purpose will be served when Satan tries to deceive the nations again? What will it prove?

REFLECT: What is the hope in this passage for you? What is discouraging?

Satan, the counterfeit Father, will be **bound for a thousand years**, or a millennium, in **the Abyss**. Traditional Judaism has other views of how long the "Days of the Messiah" will last. Some rabbis say forty years, some say seventy years, some say four hundred years, and some say seven thousand years. Rabbi ben-Yitzchak said: As long as from Noah's day until our own (Sanhedrin 99a).⁴²⁵

John saw an angel coming down out of heaven and holding a great chain in his hand (20:1). So this **angel** will be at **His** bidding. The lowest order of heavenly beings, a common **angel**, will be able to bind **Satan, the model of perfection** who was **the anointed cherub, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty (Ezekiel 28:12b and 14)**. This **angel** is probably the same one who released the demonic locusts by opening the shaft leading to **the Abyss** in the fifth trumpet judgment (9:1-2).

*It is important to understand that the devil isn't in control of **the Abyss**. **The One** who has **the keys of death and sh'ol (1:18)** is our **Lord Jesus Christ**. **Satan** is not the king of hell. **He** doesn't run around with little horns and a red suit, ordering people to shovel coal. That is not the picture in the Bible. My friend, **Satan** is the chief prisoner. **He** is not king of sh'ol. **ADONAI** is **the King** of hell. The Bible teaches that sh'ol **was prepared**, and designed by **God, for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41)**. They are **His** prisoners.*



All four titles by which **Satan** is called in the book are brought together here. **He is the dragon (12:3-4)** defeated in heavenly combat by Michael, **the ancient serpent (Genesis 3:1)** **the devil (Luke 4:2-13)** who knows **his** time is short, and **Satan (12:9-10)**. **The angel bound and chained him for a thousand years (20:2)**. This is the first time in the Scriptures that the exact length of the Messianic Kingdom is given. It will be **a thousand years**, or a millennium. There is no good reason for taking the **thousand years** in other than their literal sense.⁴²⁶ In the first seven verses of this chapter they repeat the phrase **thousand years** six times. It must be pretty important to put that kind of emphasis on it. The early Church believed in a literal thousand-year reign of **Christ**. Those who rejected that position were considered to be heretics. Therefore, to spiritualize this passage is to disembowel all Scripture of vital meaning. The thrones are literal; the martyrs are literal, **Yeshua** is literal; the Word of **God** is literal; the beast is literal; his image is literal; his mark on people's foreheads and hands is literal; and the **thousand years** are literal. **A thousand years means a thousand years!** Can't **the Lord** say what **He** means? Of course **He** can, and when **He** says **a thousand years He** means **a thousand years**.⁴²⁷

Then **the place, the purpose and the promise** of **Satan's** binding are given. **The place is the Abyss. He threw him into the Abyss (9:1, 9:2, 9:11, 11:7, 17:8, 20:1 and 20:3)**. **The Abyss** is also the temporary place of confinement for fallen **angels**. It is the same place where the demonic **angels** of **Genesis 6:1-4** were chained. They had devised a wicked plan to completely corrupt mankind, making it impossible for humans to be saved. (see my commentary on **Genesis, to see link click Ca - The Sons of God Married the Daughters of Men**). Thus, **the Abyss** is a place for the worst of the worst. **Peter** tells us that **the LORD did not spare the demonic angels when they sinned** by marrying the **daughters of men** and producing the **Nephilim, but sent them to hell (Second Peter 2:4a)**. The phrase, **sent them to hell**, is actually the translation of a single Greek word

used only in **Second Peter**, it is derived from *tartarus*, which in Greek mythology identified a subterranean **Abyss** that was even lower than Hades or **hell**. Tartarus came to refer to the abode of the most wicked spirits, where the worst rebels and criminals received the severest divine punishment. Much like when **Jesus** used the term *gehenna* (the name for Jerusalem's garbage dump, where fires burned continually) to illustrate the inextinguishable torments of eternal anguish, **Peter** used a familiar word from popular Greek thought to designate **hell**.⁴²⁸ There, **ADONAI** put **them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment (Isaiah 24:21-22)**. Because **their** sin was so severe, **God** placed **them** in chains to prevent them from committing such wickedness ever again (**Second Peter 2:4b**). After the Great Tribulation, **Satan** will be chained, along with **his** co-conspirators, for a thousand years.

And the purpose will be that **he** will be **locked and sealed there to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended**. The binding of **Satan** will restrict **him** from doing what **he** does best, deceiving people about themselves, **God** or eternity. There can be no Messianic Kingdom with our **enemy the devil** prowling **around like a roaring lion looking for people to devour (First Peter 5:8)**. **He** will be incarcerated for **a thousand years** with no hope of escape.

But **the promise** is that **after that**, or **after** the thousand years, **he must be set free for a short time** to fulfill **God's** plan (**20:3**). Why would **ADONAI** allow **Satan** to be set free and deceive the nations once again? What purpose would that serve?

The Bible teaches that **the heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure (Jeremiah 17:9)**, and that we are born with the disease of sin. However, the world teaches that we are born sinless and to end up with a person like Adolph Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Osama bin Laden or Charlie Manson, something terrible has to go wrong. And there are those who will blame the dreadful outcome of a child molester or mass murderer on their environment. They say if only his father hadn't abused him, or if only she would have had more opportunities as a young woman, and so on. This argument has gone on forever.

But all that will end with the **thousand-year** reign of **Jesus Christ**. It will be a time of perfect peace. There will still be those with a sin nature living at that time, but they will be unable to carry out any evil plans. There will be no abuse, sexual crimes or murders. The believers who **will reign with Christ (20:6b)** will prevent it. As a result, conditions will be perfect and unbelievers will have a hundred years to accept the **Messiah** or die (**Isaiah 65:20**). However, **when the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out and deceive the nations** one last time. **In number they will be like the sand on the sea shore (20:7-8)**. At that time all excuses for mankind's sinful behavior will be exposed for what they are - lies.



King David saw the heart of this debate clearly after his sin with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband Uriah. He pleaded: **Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your unfailing love; according to Your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise (Psalm 51:1-2 and 17).** We should do likewise.

*Dear wise, just yet merciful Heavenly **Father, Your** love is immeasurable, giving your **Ruach ha-Kodesh** to live within believers. **I pray that from His glorious riches He would grant you to be strengthened in Your inner being with power through His Ruach, so that Messiah may dwell in your hearts through faith. I pray that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to grasp with all the kedoshim what is the width and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Messiah which surpasses knowledge, so you may be filled up with all the fullness of God (Ephesian 3:16-19). Your patience is great. The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some consider slowness. Rather, He is being patient toward you - not wanting anyone to perish, but for all to come to repentance. (Second Peter 3:9) Your justice is filled with mercy and grace. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not from yourselves - it is the gift of God. It is not based on deeds, so that no one may boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).***

***You** are the best **Father** that there ever could be. There is no way that **You** could ever change for the better - for **You** are perfect in love, holiness and in all **You** are! We love **You** and know that even when **You** send someone to hell for all eternity, it is done in a fair and just way, having given chance after chance to repent. When their heart says, "No," to loving **You, You** respect their choice. The consequence of eternal destiny is each person's own choice of whom they will love most in their lives - **God** or themselves. **You** are so wonderful and have made a heavenly home of eternal peace and joy for those who choose to love and follow **You. You** are fantastic and worthy of all love! In **Your** holy **Son's** name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*