

Satan Is Bound
Revelation 20
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This world has not known what it would be like without Satan's system of evil since the fall in the garden. At that time Satan had no world system, however, it did not take long for him to develop one. No sooner had the world system fallen; the false prophet and the beast thrown into the lake of fire; than the Lord sent an angel to bind Satan. John uses multiple names to describe the person of the devil who is clearly the author and force of evil. This verse serves to introduce the idea of a one thousand year period when Christ rules with a rod of iron and Satan is not allowed to deceive the nations. The idea of not being able to deceive the nations should probably be taken to mean he would not have access to the citizens of the nations. It also seems to indicate that during this thousand year reign, nations will be organized and functioning.

Several interpretations have been given to the thousand year period when Satan is bound and Jesus rules. Some have spiritualized the thousand years and have made it to be the current era. They would say Christ has been reigning since the resurrection, Satan has been bound, and we are in the millennium. They point to the lack of biblical support from other biblical sources to support this physical reign of Christ. They also point out that Jesus did not seem to teach about this period of time. The argument seems to fall short because several Old Testament passages allude to an earthly reign. It can also be seen as the final fulfillment of the promises God made to the Israelites of a protected homeland and reign upon the earth.

Others question the purpose of a millennial period and why Satan should be loosed. You might expect with Satan bound, his system destroyed, and the antichrist in the lake of fire that man would have no problem serving the Lord. However, such a mind set and worldview would be totally ignorant of the sin nature of man. As is shown in this chapter, as soon as Satan is loosed there will be multitudes already in position to follow his leading. The thousand year reign and "little while" for Satan to be released once again demonstrates man's natural selfish heart and the justice of God in judgment.

As we see in verses 4-6, Jesus will include others in his reign. John mentions three groups of people who will be resurrected to serve with him during this period. First he mentions those who have been beheaded due to their testimony. This is no doubt a reference to those who were being killed by this method during the tribulation period. This is surely a reward for their faithfulness during great times of testing. Second, John mentions a group who had not worshipped the beast and finally those who had not received the mark of the beast. These are resurrected to life. Some interpreters limit those who will be reigning with Christ to the saints killed during the tribulation period. Others include all believers of all the ages recognizing anyone who has denied themselves to follow Christ as being one who has given their life for the faith and therefore included. This interpretation allows for an interpretation of 1 Thessalonians which mentions the resurrection of believers to meet Jesus in the air, to line up with the saints reigning with Christ.

Saints resurrected in the first resurrection are said to be blessed because the second death has no power. This statement seems to indicate the inclusion of all believers. It also implies a coming second resurrection. Although a second resurrection is indicated, the terminology, *second resurrection*, is never used. These said to never again be affected by death; they are

immune from the second death, which will later be identified as eternal separation from God and his special place prepared for the saints known as heaven. They are also given the privilege to reign with Christ for a thousand years. There is no mention of birth and death during this period and we are left to speculation. Because there is an uprising after Satan is released, many assume that there will be people born during this period. It is also worthy to note that this is not heaven. Christ will rule, however, humans will maintain their sin nature.

Satan On The Loose

It is difficult to imagine a world that has been free from Satan and his systems of evil would contain a spirit that would lead a group of people who have lived under the reign of Christ, yet give themselves to Satan; a rebellion. However, that is just what happens when Satan is loosed. In an apparent rapid fashion, Satan gathers a substantial following and arranges them for war. Evidently some who have been established to rule over nations give in to their hearts of pride and follow the deception of the devil. From four corners of the earth they come against the beloved city and there is a large multitude. Again the sinful heart of man and his bent to be deceived is manifest and the need of God's righteousness is realized. The Lord moves rather quickly as fire comes down from heaven to devour this rebellious army. This final showing by the devil is his own undoing and brings the age of Christ's earthly reign to a close.

The Bible says it is appointed once to men to die and then comes the judgment. Upon the end of mankind and the earth as we know it, Jesus reappears on his white horse and comes to a great white throne representing the final judgment. Earth and heaven simply disappear. A new age is dawning but Christ must finally and forever deal with the problem of evil. He has covered believers with his blood dealing with their evil but millions have rebelled and refused to believe. Judgment is now swift and sure. Those who have refused him cannot enter heaven and the justice of God must stand. The dead are raised in what we call the second resurrection. Those who were known as great and those known as small will all be judged from two books. One book contains all of their works. Since no man can work his way to heaven, everyone at this judgment will be found lacking. Their sentence due to their own sin is death. The second book is the Lamb's book of life but their names are absent. Neither their works nor their faith will gain them entrance into God's kingdom. Verse 13 speaks of these giving up her dead for this judgment as a way of reminding us that everyone who dies without Christ will face this judgment. Finally, the terms of the sentence are pronounced, anyone who was not found recorded in the book of life were thrown into the lake of fire.