

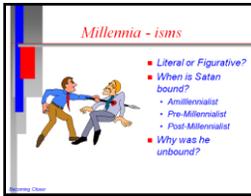


### *Satan Bound*

(Rev 20:1-3 NIV) And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. (2) He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. (3) He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.

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This is probably the most controversial passage of Scripture in the entire New Testament, if not the Bible.

Much of the confusion is over the period of a thousand years. Is it a literal thousand years, or is it just a symbol for a long time? This argument crosses all theories.

The more important point -- the thing which generally distinguishes the theories -- is the question of "When was Satan bound?"

**Amillennialists** hold (along with some historicists) that he was bound at the Cross. They cite Mark 3:23-27 as a parable of this. They point out that the purpose of this binding is that Satan would deceive the nations no more. If you examine history before Christ, polytheism and paganism are the norm for "new" religions. After Christ, men no longer believe in the old demons (though they can be sold a "new" heresy, over and over again.) They point to a parallel sequence of events in Ezekiel 35-48 as further evidence. By this view, Satan has already been bound; just before the end, he will be released -- and we will see a sudden recurrence of paganism and polytheism (sound familiar?)

**Pre-Millennialists** take the strict order of the Scripture here, and interpret the following versions as a literal second coming of Christ. Some take this so literally (Smith) as to see a literal chain. Of course, they hold that this has not yet happened.

**Post-Millennialists** hold that Satan is bound (as with the premillennialists) after Armageddon -- but that Christ's ride on the white horse is in heaven, and is not a figure of His second coming. They argue that a literal second coming would also imply a literal sword, a literal chain, literal horses, etc. Christ is in heaven; the spread of the Gospel after Armageddon ushers in the Millennium. Christ then returns (parallel to the teaching of the Gospels) at the judgment.

(It should be noted well that there is not a 100% relationship between these. There are, for example, pre-Millennial historicists.)

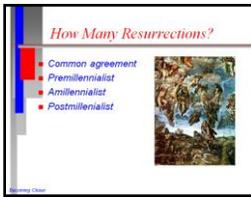
One key question remains: why was Satan released at all? Several answers have been proposed; here are some to think about:

- If the Millennium is the golden age described, then faith will become easy -- and it is then not faith, but sight. It must be tested, and shown to be truly voluntary.
- It has also been suggested that this will reveal the true wickedness of man, that even after the Millennium, some men will still rebel against God.
- The answer I like best is this: tell me why God allowed Satan in the first place -- then I'll tell you why he is let loose.

### The First Resurrection

(Rev 20:4-6 NIV) I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshipped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (2) (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. (3) Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

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There are a (very) few things on which all points of view agree:

- There is at least one bodily resurrection of the dead.
- The saints are to be a kingdom of priests, reigning with Christ.
- The millennium is generally associated with the golden ages described in the Old Testament.
- The saints are to judge (in the sense of the Old Testament judges) the world with Christ.

Other than those general statements, there is no great agreement here.

**Premillennialists** take this passage most literally. Most commonly, they see five resurrections of the dead:

- Christ, the first fruits
- The rapture of the church
- The raising of the Tribulation martyrs and Old Testament saints at the end of the Tribulation
- The raising of the Millennial saints at the end of the Millennium
- The raising of the wicked.

Most also see a number of other phenomena, based upon various traditional theories:

- Smith sees a world with "no sin allowed" -- with the Christians as enforcers.
- Evidently basing himself on Scofield's theory about "no rain before the time of Noah" he sees a reversion to the world before the curse. (This makes the return of Satan somewhat of a problem).
- Talbot sees us in the "Resurrection body", parallel to that of Christ after the Resurrection.

One thing sticks out here: the absolute definiteness with which they speak, and the thundering condemnation of anyone who disagrees. Anyone who does not see this is a deceiver, an apostate, a heretic -- though in truth I've yet to see them called Antichrist. Everything short of that, however.

**Amillennialists** generally point to the large number of Scriptures which point out that we are *now* a kingdom of priests, etc. Basing themselves upon this, they then conclude (parallel to the idea that the binding of Satan was at the Resurrection of Christ) that the first resurrection is actually the new life of the the believer in Christ.

There is ample Scriptural support for this. Against this there is a "feeling" -- an artistic point, really -- that this is future tense; prophecy in every sense of that word. In other words, it hasn't happened yet.

The **Postmillennialists** generally agree that it is future; there argument is quite different. They note that "souls" -- not bodies -- are mentioned here. Citing the passages where Christ goes to prepare a place for us, they conclude that Christ does not return until the White Throne Judgment (which, as a matter of fact, is the conclusion you would reach if you did not have the book of Revelation). They argue that if Christ is bodily returned to reign, how could Satan possibly be loosed? Hence the idea that the reign is a spiritual one, a golden age in which the Church is triumphant -- and then the end.

(It should be noted that there is considerable variation in thinking, and that, for example, historicist is not necessarily synonymous with postmillennialist).

### *The Final Conflict*

(Rev. 20:7-9 NIV) When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison (8) and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. (9) They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

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Gog and Magog, as previously stated, represent the Scythians, the forebears of those who now live in the Ukraine. The map shown is a mediaeval manuscript which portrays this fact. In this instance, however, it may be taken that Gog and Magog either a) lead or b) are symbolic for all the forces of evil on the earth.

Is this Armageddon? Generally, the amillennialists say yes; the others say no -- this is "Gog and Magog II".

The other symbols again are interpreted in various ways. "Fire from heaven" is seen (usually by the futurists, but also by others) as a literal phenomena (like Elijah called down) -- but McGee sees another nuclear exchange, evidently getting the B-52s out of the museums. For those who see this in the symbolic sense, fire from heaven is parallel to that at Pentecost (the literalists will now scream "that was tongues *like as of fire*"), and thus this represents revival -- starting in the Ukraine.

Similarly, the literal interpretation (shared by most of all methods) is that the "city he loves" is Jerusalem. But Jerusalem is sometimes used as a symbol for the church, and this could be seen as a spiritual attack -- which is then ended by the return (postmillennial, of course, or perhaps amillennial) of Christ.

The nasty question: why, after this millennium of joy, would anyone want to ally himself with Satan against the now openly demonstrated Prince of Peace? This might seem a problem for the premillennialist view, but there is a simple answer:

(Jer 17:9 NIV) The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

(Significant parallel passages exist in Daniel 11 and Zechariah 14:1-11)

### *Lake of Burning Sulfur*

*(Rev 20:10 NIV) And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

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It will clarify things wonderfully if we can keep a simple model in mind:

- Hades (Greek) or Sheol (Hebrew) is the abode of the dead. The word itself has no meaning as to good or bad (more later). {Interestingly, Smith -- alone -- insists this is a literal, physical site, at the center of the earth.}
- The lake of fire, or Gehenna in other passages (by most interpreters) means the final destination of the wicked, and is different than Hades. In other words, Hades is not “Hell” as this passage shows it.
- Hades can be seen as being divided into two compartments (see the story of Lazarus and Dives): Torment, for the wicked, and Paradise, for the blessed.

If you keep these distinctions in mind, much of Scripture on the subject of life after death is easier to understand. You must also understand that this is not “pronounced” in Scripture; it is a conclusion from Scripture, and not all agree.

Some other things to note:

- Satan is NOT the ruler of Hell (Milton made him that in Paradise Lost).
- The Lake of Fire (Sulfur) is the intended destination for Satan and his angels; the intent was NOT for man to go there. Man chooses this fate himself, when he chooses to ignore God. The intended fate of man was fellowship with God forever.
- Note who’s waiting for Satan -- the other inhabitants are the Beast and the False Prophet (those who deceived others on Satan’s behalf!)

### *Great White Throne Judgment*

(Rev 20:11-13 NIV) Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. [12] And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. [13] The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.

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A good word for symbols: the throne is

- Great (implying large) = power
- White = purity
- a Throne = authority

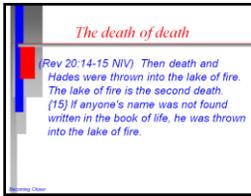
all of which are attributes of God.

A distinction is made between “books” and “book” -- this is generally taken to be books of deeds versus the book of life.

The passage about the sea giving up its dead would have been of importance to an ancient Christian. Many believed that if a person was not properly buried, his spirit (literally, ghost) would walk the earth until the Resurrection. This is the origin of our beliefs about ghosts today (i.e., those who had violent deaths, etc.). This passage assures those who had that belief that no one would be exempt -- burial did not matter, if even those who died at sea were to be brought to judgment.

Do all appear at the Last Judgment? Most futurists say no, the saints are exempt. I think not; the scene recorded in Matthew 25:31ff seems to indicate that all appear -- some for blessing, some for the lake of fire.

The key point is this: He who is righteous and omnipotent will call you to account. Would you rather rely on your own righteousness, or His?



Everyone likes a lesson to end on a positive note, and I'm no exception. Here is the first real change in the order of the universe: death, and the place to which the dead go, are thrown in the Lake of Fire. Death is no more.

But there is more to come!



(Artwork is by an anonymous early Renaissance student, probably working for Michaelangelo) Here it is: the ultimate conquest. Death itself, and Hades, the prison of the soul, are cast into the lake of fire, to trouble mankind no more. The universe is changed, and as we will see in the next chapter, this is just the beginning of changes.

The Lake of Fire is the image most people associate with “hell.” The Greek normally translated such is Hades, the prison of the souls of the dead. The image here is far more intense. There are three key points which are common to all interpretations:

- This is an eternal fate; there is no hope of release.
- It is eternal separation from God (which is stressed by most preachers today).
- It is eternal torment (which is NOT stressed these days).

This fate was originally intended for Satan, “the beast” and the False Prophet. No others are certain to go there -- except by their own choice. The book of the lamb is open to all who will accept him.

The “book of life “ is an old concept. It was taught throughout the Old Testament. Moses mentions it (Exodus 32:32); it is explicitly taught in one of the Messianic Psalms (Ps. 69:28; this is the Psalm which prophesies that they will give the Christ vinegar to drink).

It is in Revelation that we see one of the tests for “in or our?” Did you worship the beast? (Revelation 13:8). Who is in it? The only names we know for certain are those who belong to Jesus Christ. It is His book. The test, for those of us who claim the name of Jesus, is found here:

(Mat 25:31-46 NIV) "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. {32} All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. {33} He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. {34} "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. {35} For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, {36} I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' {37} "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? {38} When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? {39} When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' {40} "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' {41} "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. {42} For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, {43} I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' {44} "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' {45} "He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' {46} "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."