

# IMPRISONMENTS OF SATAN

## Summary and Historical Background

This chapter shows its importance by touching on many major doctrines in theology. Therefore, a literal, historical, and dispensational method of interpretation is needed to provide an interpretation that is consistent with conservative theology. There are four important facts, which are readily apparent from the study of this chapter.

First, the sovereignty of God is taught in this chapter. His overall control is seen in two distinct ways. One, He has sovereign control over all of His creation so that His will is done in Heaven and on earth. Even so, He has given his creatures a limited degree of freedom to make decisions that can be good or bad. He holds them responsible for their decisions and will bless them or judge them accordingly, but in the end He will see to it that their decisions accomplish His will. Satan is an example of this truth. Satan chose to rebel against God and is using his freedom to lead some angels and men in rebellion against God. However, God is using his rebellion to test the loyalty of His created beings, angels and humans. When God has accomplished His purpose with Satan, he will be judged for his rebellion and cast into the Lake of Fire (20:10). This is an example of God's sovereignty in action with His created beings that have some freedom of choice. Two, God's sovereign control will enable Him to establish Christ's Kingdom on earth. Satan's powerful and deceitful opposition cannot thwart God's plan altogether, though he may hinder it from being established immediately (20:5-6). God will accomplish what He has planned though He may wait a long time before "the fullness of time" comes (Gal 4:4).

Second, the resurrection of Tribulation saints and all unbelievers is certain (20:4-6). This chapter gives clear Bible proof that death is not the end of man's existence (Heb. 9:27). The believers that die during the Tribulation will be resurrected after this event to rule with Christ in His Kingdom (20:4, 6). Other resurrections of believers not mentioned in this chapter are as follows: the Old Testament saints will be resurrected after the Tribulation (Dan 12:1-2) to be at the marriage supper of the Lamb; and the Church saints will be resurrected and taken to Heaven in the Rapture before the Tribulation and will return to earth with Christ to rule with Him in His Kingdom (1 Th 4:13-17; Rev 2:26-27; 3:21). All dead unbelievers will be resurrected after the Millennial Kingdom at one time to be judged at the Great White Throne (20:5; 11-12).

Third, all the unsaved are doomed to eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire (20:11-15; 21:8). After they are judged at the Great White Throne, they will be found guilty for not taking the blood of Jesus to wash away their sins and for not receiving Jesus as their Savior to have their names written in the book of life. Then they will be sentenced to the Lake of Fire to be with Satan, Antichrist and the False Prophet who are already there (19:20; 20:10, 11-15).

Fourth, the inborn depravity of man is revealed. Children will be born during the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ. Probably billions or even trillions will be born and few will die during this long reign of Christ. It will be a near perfect Kingdom without Satan to tempt them to sin; he will be bound in the abyss for a thousand years (20:1-3). The environment of the world will be godly as people conform to the laws of God. Those who do not obey God's laws will be swiftly judged (Zech 14:16-19). The only source of sin will be the inborn depravity in them. That will remain in them until they receive Jesus as their Savior. They must accept the blood of Jesus to wash away their secret sins and have their names written in the book of life. This will allow God to remove their depraved nature and give them a new nature (2 Cor 5:17; 2 Pet 1:4). But those that refuse to receive Jesus Christ as their Savior will retain their depraved nature, even though they lived in a near perfect society. Their depraved nature will cause them believe Satan's lies when he is released from the abyss after his thousand years of captivity. They will join Satan in his attack against Christ and be destroyed by fire (Rev 20:7-9). The only means to remove the depravity of

sinners is salvation through Jesus Christ (Rom 6:23); otherwise it will remain forever (22:11).

## **I. Satan Bound for a Thousand Years – 20:1-3**

### **A. Place of Satan's Binding – 20:1**

20:1 – John sees an angel coming down from Heaven with the key to the bottomless pit (the abyss) and he had a great chain in his hand. This is the fourth vision that John received after the seventh bowl was poured out. The key represents the authority that is given to this particular angel to open and to shut the door to the abyss. Notice, this authority is given to an angel, not to one of Jesus' disciples. The authority that Jesus gave to His disciples is to judge the twelve tribes of Israel during the Millennial Kingdom (Mt 19:27-28). The chain in the angel's hand represents the authority that he has to bind Satan in the abyss so he cannot escape from the abyss, a deep place in Hades (Dt 32:22; Ps 86:13; Lk 8:31).

### **B. Period of Satan's Binding – 20:2**

20:2 – This angel has God's authority to lay hold of the powerful dragon whose activity is aptly described in Revelation 12-13. Only with the authority of God could this angel have the power to seize the dragon (Jude 1:9). Likewise, Christians have the authority of Christ to make disciples anywhere in the world (Mt 28:18-20), but only with His power will he be able to do it. The dragon is clearly identified by three other names (cf 12:9). He is the old serpent, referring to his appearance in the Garden of Eden when deceived Eve into eating the fruit of the forbidden tree and led Adam to rebel against God. He is the Devil, meaning accuser or slanderer, which he did when he unsuccessfully tempted Jesus to sin (Mt 4:1-11). He is Satan, meaning adversary, which he was when he attacked Job's possessions and then his body (Job 1-2). The angel will bind this dragon for a thousand years, the entire length of the Millennial Kingdom; he cannot deceive people into sin and cause rebellion during Christ's rule of the earth.

The career of Satan is given in other Scripture verses. (1) He was created as a superior beautiful angel and was in the third heaven with God (Ezk 28:12-13). (2) He was cast into the second heaven because of sin (Isa 14:12-14; Eph 2:2). (3) He will be cast down to earth in the middle of the Tribulation (Rev 12:9, 13). (4) He will be bound in the abyss for 1000 years (Rev 20:1-3). (5) He will be loosed for a little season after the Millennium (Rev. 20:7-9). (6) He will be cast into the eternal lake of fire (Rev 20:10).

The Amillennial expositors believe that Satan was bound by Christ's death and triumphant resurrection. The Scriptures prove this interpretation to be false (cf 1 Pet 5:8; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 6:11), and the present day newspapers agree. It is true that Satan was judicially defeated at the cross (Jn 12:31; Rom 6), but his physical binding awaits the end of the Tribulation. This event will occur during the 75 days between the end of the Tribulation and the inauguration of Christ's Kingdom (20:4-6; Dan 12:11-12).

### **C. Purpose of Satan's Binding – 20:3**

20:3 – The angel has a six-fold responsibility in his relationship with Satan: First, he must lay hold of the dragon. Second, he must bind him for 1000 years. Third, he must cast him into the bottomless pit (the abyss). Fourth, he must shut up Satan so he is unable to deceive the nations during Christ's Millennial Kingdom. This is the main purpose for binding Satan. Fifth, he must set a seal over him. Sixth, he must release him after the 1000 years for a little season. He will tempt those who were born during the thousand-year reign of Christ. He will successfully lead many of these people away from Christ to join him in a revolt against Christ. He will create in these people a discontent with Christ's rule possibly by deceiving them with promises that he will be a better king than Christ has been.

## **II. Saints Resurrected to Reign with Christ – 20:4-6**

**A. Concerning the judges – 20:4**

20:4 – John sees thrones and those sitting on them are judges (cf Dan 7:9-10, 22). This is the fifth vision that John received after the seventh bowl was poured out. Who are these judges? Some say they are the believers that are martyred during the Tribulation because they are the subject of the latter part of this verse. They are mentioned a couple of times in Revelation (6:9-11; 7:9-14). Others say these judges are the believers in the armies that returned with Christ a few verses earlier when He fought against the armies of Antichrist (19:11-21). If so, they would be the Church believers that will someday judge the world (1 Cor 6:2). This would go along with Jesus Christ's promise to His disciples that they will judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Mt 19:28). So it seems likely that the Church believers are the judges and they will do this work when they reign with Christ during His Millennial Kingdom (2:26-27; 3:21).

John sees the souls of those beheaded for their testimony of Jesus Christ and for the Word of God. They are the martyrs during the last half of the Tribulation when all people are told to worship the image of Antichrist or be killed. The believers that refuse to worship the image and receive the mark of Antichrist will have their heads cut off. However, they will be resurrected after the Tribulation and they will reign with Christ for a thousand years along with the Church believers.

**B. Concerning the resurrection – 20:5**

20:5 – The rest of the dead is taken by most conservatives to refer to the unbelievers of all ages. This includes all those that lived during the Millennial Kingdom, but did not receive Christ as their Savior. They will join Satan in his attack on Jerusalem, but lose their lives in a fiery blast from heaven (20:7-9). All unbelievers will be resurrected at one time to be judged at the Great White Throne (20:11-12).

Then John addresses the first resurrection, which is the resurrection of believers. Believers will be resurrected at different times, but all are a part of the first resurrection (see the introduction to this chapter). Scripture teaches that both the saved and unsaved will be resurrected, but the saved will be in the first resurrection and the unsaved will be in the resurrection of damnation (Jn 5:29). All times of the first resurrection occur before the Millennial Kingdom, but the time of the resurrection of damnation will be after the Millennial Kingdom. Paul reveals the order of these resurrections (1 Cor 15:20-24).

1. Christ is called the first-fruits of the first resurrection (1 Cor 15:20-23a). In Old Testament worship, the first-fruits offering was a contribution given to God at the beginning of the harvest. It was given first as a demonstration of their faith in Him to provide their necessary food from this harvest. Christ's resurrection is the first-fruits of the resurrection of all believers. A person's faith in His resurrection gives him confidence that God will satisfy his need to be resurrected to live with Christ. Christ's resurrection was accompanied by the resurrection of a select number of Old Testament saints (Mt 27:52-53), which gives believers a double reason believe their resurrection will occur in due time.
2. Those that are Christ's will be resurrected at His coming (1 Cor 15:23b). There are three resurrections of believers that will occur at His coming before and after the Tribulation. (1) Church saints will be resurrected at Christ's coming in the air before the Tribulation begins; they will be raised to meet Him in the air at the Rapture and taken to Heaven (1 Th 4:13-17). Then Christ will marry His Bride (the Church) in Heaven before He returns to earth with His Bride at the end of the Tribulation. They will reign together in the Millennial Kingdom (Rev 2:26-27; 3:21). (2) Old Testament saints are resurrected after the Tribulation. Their souls in Heaven will be joined with their resurrected bodies on earth and then they will eat of the marriage supper of the Lamb in the Millennial Kingdom (Dan 12:1-2; Isa 26:19-21). (3) Tribulation martyrs also are resurrected after the Tribulation, both Jewish and Gentile believers, and they will reign over the earth with Christ in His Millennial Kingdom (Rev 20:4).

In addition to these, there are two mighty witnesses that will oppose Antichrist during the last half of the Tribulation. Near the end of the Tribulation they are killed by Antichrist and left on the street of Jerusalem, but after 3½ days they are resurrected and taken to Heaven (Rev 11:7-12). Their death and resurrection are in a special category. They had lived in Old Testament times and were sent to earth by God on a special mission to defend His Temple from Antichrist's attacks (11:1-2). They will join the Old Testament saints when they enter the Millennial Kingdom.

3. Then comes the "end" (I Cor. 15:24). The "end" refers to the time when life on the present earth will cease. It will be after the thousand years are finished and after the attack of Satan on the city of Jerusalem (20:7-8). Then all the unsaved from the beginning of time will be resurrected to stand before Christ at His Great White Throne and be judged (Rev 20:5, 11-15; Jn 5:29).

The saved Jews and Gentiles who do not die during the Tribulation will enter Christ's Millennial Kingdom without being resurrected. They will live in their natural bodies and carry on the functions of a normal physical life. They will have children and repopulate the earth. All of the unsaved will be removed from the earth, so only believers will be in Christ's Kingdom at the beginning of the Millennium. However, children that are born to these believers during the Millennium will need to receive Jesus Christ as their Savior to be saved from their sins. Many will not make this decision even though they keep the laws of God well enough to stay out of trouble. Christ will rule the world with a "rod of iron" to keep unbelievers under control in His Kingdom (Ps 2:6-9; Rev 12:5).

### C. Concerning the Kingdom – 20:6

20:6 – John calls those who participate in the first resurrection as "blessed." This is the fifth time that this word is used to describe the happy state of believers (1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9). There are two reasons why believers are blessed. First, the second death (Lake of Fire) has no power over them. Second, they will be priests of God and rulers with Christ in the Millennial Kingdom (1:6; 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:9-10).

Concerning the Kingdom of Christ as taught in Scripture, there are three major views. First, there is the post-millennial view. Those who hold this view believe that Christ will come to earth after the believers have established the Kingdom. They teach that believers will bring in the Kingdom through evangelistic, political and social efforts. Liberal theologians will limit their efforts to political and social works. This view was quite popular before the two world wars, but most theologians turned away from this view since then realizing that man by himself can never establish such a utopia. However, there has been a revival of this view recently. Second, there is the amillennial view. Those who hold this view believe that there will be no literal Kingdom of 1000 years on the earth. They teach that Israel forfeited God's promise of an earthly Kingdom, when she rejected Christ and asked for His crucifixion. They say His promise to Israel has been transferred to the Church ("spiritual Israel"). Instead of giving believers an earthly kingdom, God is giving them a heavenly Kingdom; instead of a thousand year Kingdom He is giving them an eternal Kingdom. They interpret God's promises for the future in a spiritual sense instead of literal sense. Third, there is the pre-millennial view. Those who hold this view believe that Christ will come to the earth before the Kingdom to establish it in Jerusalem for a thousand years. All nations will be subject to Him. This view is held by those who interpret the Bible literally, understanding that figures of speech are used, but they are based upon literal facts, so the words that God uses can be understood to mean what they say. The Millennial Kingdom will be followed by the Eternal Kingdom (Rev 21-22).

As to the literal interpretation of the Kingdom, note six important characteristics of the Millennial Kingdom that are taught in other Scriptures. First, it is a Kingdom that will begin with citizens who are saved and will continue to have a godly impact on the world throughout the 1000 years (Isa 55:4-7; 66:18-24; Zech. 12:10-13:1; 14:16-19). Second, it is a Kingdom that will have ethical standards of right and wrong (cf. Isa 5:20-23; 32:5-7). Third, this Kingdom will have peace and prosperity for all people (Hos 2:18; Mic 4:4). Fourth, this Kingdom will abolish war among the nations (Ps 46:9; Isa 2:2-4; Mic 4:3). Fifth, Christ's

Kingdom will be very fruitful (Isa 11:6-9; 32:15; Ezk. 34:26-27; Joel 2:21-24; Am 9:13-15). And sixth, this Kingdom will have a theocratic government with Christ as King (Ps 2:6-9; Dan 7:13-14), with Israel as His favored nation (Ex 19:6; Isa 60:14; 61:6, 9; Zech 8:22-23) and with Jerusalem as its religious and political center (Ps 2:6; 132:13-14; Jer 33:16-26; Zech 8:3). With such a marvelous Kingdom promised to them, it is no wonder that the participants of the first resurrection are “blessed.”

### **III. Satan Loosed for a Little Season – 20:7-10**

#### **A. Satan’s Final Deceit – 20:7-9**

20:7-8 – At the end of the thousand-year reign of Christ, Satan will be released from the abyss for a short period of time. His thousand-year imprisonment in the abyss will not change him in any way. He is still an enemy of God and will still attempt to take from God the control of the earth. To do this he will go forth to deceive the nations as he did before (20:3). He will lie to the people and convince them to attack and conquer Jerusalem, the capital of Christ’s Kingdom. Those who are born during Christ’s thousand-year Kingdom, but never received Christ as their Savior; they will be deceived by Satan. All children are born with a depraved nature (Eph. 2:1-2), even those born during the thousand-year reign of Christ. Even those born in a Christian home and live in the near perfect environment of the Kingdom will need to receive Jesus Christ as their Savior to successfully resist the devil. They need to receive the divine nature so they can withstand the deceitfulness of the devil (2 Cor 5:17; 2 Pet 1:4; Eph 6:11). Outwardly they may appear to be strong law-abiding citizens during the Kingdom, but when Satan deceives them it will be evident that they are weak and will become rebellious citizens under his control.

People will need to be evangelized in the Millennial Kingdom. There will be a need for people to be saved in Christ’s Kingdom as there is today. Godly parents and a good environment are desirable assets, but that will not solve the fundamental problem of every person born in the Kingdom. The old, depraved nature that he received when he was conceived is still the problem. He must crucify this old nature and receive the new nature that Jesus Christ provides in the new birth (John 3:1ff; Eph 4:22-24; Gal 2:20). This is the only way that he can be victorious over the deceptive appeals of the devil.

20:9 – Satan will find a great number of unbelievers that lived during the prosperous reign of Christ. He will deceive multitudes that are like the sand of the seashore. They will listen to Satan’s lies and believe them to their own destruction. Satan will gather them together to make war against Jerusalem, the beloved city of God. He will have his armies encircle Jerusalem to destroy it. Satan will make this bold attack so that he can reclaim the earth from Jesus Christ. He wants to take the earth away from God and lift himself above God (cf. Isa. 14:12-14), but he will fail. Once again God will destroy His enemies with fire as He did to Babylon a thousand years earlier when He destroyed Antichrist’s capital by fire (18:8-9).

#### **B. Satan’s Final Destiny – 20:10**

20:10 – After this revolt of Satan, God will cast him into the Lake of Fire to join Antichrist and the False Prophet. They were sent there a thousand years earlier, before the Millennial Kingdom. Satan will be tormented day and night with them forever and ever.

### **IV. Sinners Cast into the Lake of Fire – 20:11-15**

#### **A. The Gravity of this Judgment – 20:11**

20:11 – John was given a sixth vision that followed the judgment of the seventh bowl: he saw a Great White Throne. Scripture clearly indicates that all judgment has been committed to Christ (Jn 5:22, 27; Mt 25:31). This event clearly occurs after the thousand-year reign of Christ has ended (compare 20:5 with 20:11-12). The statement that the earth and heaven fled away probably refers to the final purging of the



present universe by fire because of Satan's contamination of it since the Garden of Eden (Mt 24:35; 2 Pet 3:10-13). The whiteness of Christ's throne indicates the holiness of His judgment. There is no colorful rainbow surrounding this throne (cf. 4:3). The rainbow as far back as the days of Noah represented God's mercy. The absence of the rainbow indicates there will be no mercy at this judgment. The day of God's mercy and grace will be past when they stand before the White Throne of judgment.

### **B. The People of this Judgment – 20:12-13**

20:12 – John saw the unsaved, small and great, stand before Christ's throne. This is the seventh vision that John received after the seventh bowl of wrath was poured out. All the unsaved from Cain to the last unrepentant sinner on earth will be there. The books will be opened, which are a record of all of their deeds. The unsaved will be judged according to their works. If anyone keeps the whole Law and yet offends in one point, he is guilty of breaking all the laws of God (Jam 2:10); all will be found guilty. Christ's judgments will be infallible. Sinners may be religious, but if they do not have His righteousness, He say to them, "I never knew you" (Mt 7:21-23). Also consider the fact that even their best deeds are accounted as filthy rags in His sight (3:17-18; Isa 64:6). They critically need the white robes of holiness, which Christ freely offered them during their life on earth, but alas they rejected His offer.

Another book will be opened as well. It is the book of life. In this book are the names of those who have received Jesus Christ as their Savior. Anyone's name in this book will give them the right to enter the Eternal Kingdom of God. The people before the Great White Throne of Jesus Christ will discover that their names are not recorded in the book of life. The absence of their name will prove that they never repented of their sins and received Jesus Christ as their Savior.

20:13 – All of the unsaved dead will be resurrected at the same time (cf 20:5) to be judged by Jesus Christ. He will judge them according to their deeds. He is not going to put a person's deeds on a balancing scale to see which outweighs the other—the good deeds on one side of the scale and the bad deeds on the other side. If the good weighs more than the bad, the person goes into the Kingdom and if the bad weighs more than the good the person goes to the Lake of Fire. Not so! It will take only one bad deed to condemn a person to the Lake of Fire (Jam 2:10). That means no one can be saved from the Lake of Fire by their good works. It takes only one small insignificant bad deed to condemn them. The only way a person can be saved from the White Throne judgment is by accepting God's offer to exchange his unrighteousness for His Son's righteousness: His bad deeds for His Son's good deeds (2 Cor 5:21). He died on the cross taking the sins of the whole world and paid the death penalty for those sins (1 Pet 3:18). Those who accept Jesus' death on their behalf are free from condemnation (Rom 8:1) and will not face the Judge at the Great White Throne.

The resurrection reunites the soul and the body. Hades is the abode of all lost souls of all ages. Those who have been buried in the sea as well as in the earth will be resurrected and summoned to this judgment.

### **C. The Result of this Judgment – 20:14-15**

20:14-15 – The unsaved will then be cast into the Lake of Fire, the eternal penalty for those that rejected Jesus' sacrificial death on their behalf. Jesus called this place Gehenna after the burning dump outside of Jerusalem (Mt 5:22, 29-30; 10:28; 18:9). The Lake of Fire is called the second death, which is to be distinguished from the first. The first death is a separation of soul and body for a season. The second death is separation of the sinner from God forever. The wages of sin is death in the Lake of Fire (Rom 6:23). The resurrected body of an unsaved person will not be burned up in the fire; it will suffer the pain of the fire forever. This punishment is not God's choice for the sinner, but the choice of the sinner that rejects God's offer of salvation. God has done all that He can do to keep the sinner from the Lake of Fire. Now it is the sinner that must do what God tells him to be spared from such a place.

## THE GREAT WHITE THRONE

### THE JUDGMENT OF GOD

#### Two Books Are Used

##### 1. The Book of Works

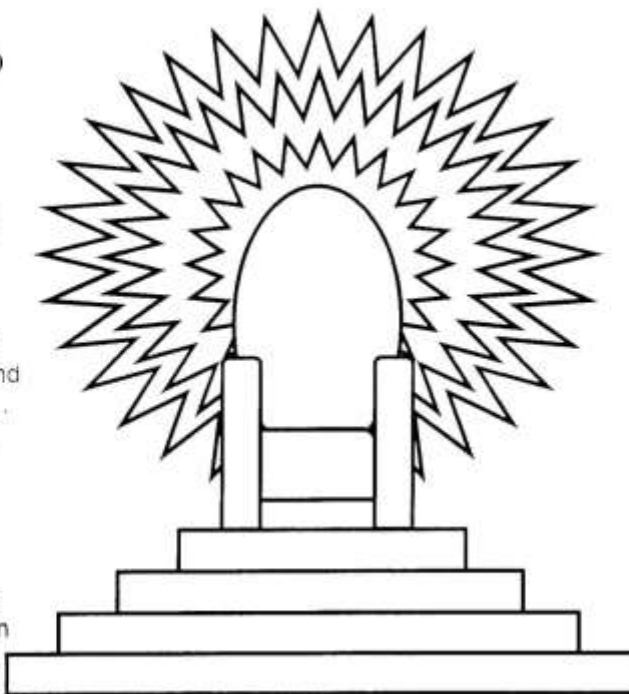
The works of unbelievers are recorded in books and they will be used to judge them by the laws of God.

"I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: . . . and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

Revelation 20:12

"Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

James 2:10



##### 2. The Book of Life

Believers who overcame their sins by faith in Jesus Christ, have their names written in the book of life.

"He that overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life." Revelation 3:5

"Whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire." Revelation 20:12

UNBELIEVERS  
of all time will be  
tormented in Hell

**All unbelievers will wait for final Judgment In Hell after they die.**

"And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, . . . and he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." Luke 16:22-24"

UNBELIEVERS  
will be tormented in  
the Lake of Fire  
for all time

**All unbelievers will be judged before God after Christ's Millennial Kingdom.**

"The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Revelation 21:8