



Satan Bound

A Thousand Years of Silence

The Angel, the Abyss, and the Imprisonment of the Deceiver.

Revelation 20:1-3, *Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ²He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.*

Overview.

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Introduction.

✦ The Silencing of the Great Propaganda Machine — Berlin, May 1945

On **May 8, 1945, at 11:01 pm**, the Nazi regime's unconditional surrender came into effect. In the days before that moment, the most powerful propaganda apparatus ever assembled **Joseph Goebbels' ministry**, which had controlled every newspaper, radio station, film studio, school curriculum, and public message in Germany for twelve years fell silent.

The voice that had deceived an entire nation, that had turned ordinary people into perpetrators of genocide, that had manipulated truth on a continental scale, simply stopped.

Survivors described the eerie quiet that followed. One German journalist wrote: *'We had lived inside a lie for so long that we had forgotten what silence sounded like. When the radio stopped broadcasting, when the posters stopped appearing, when the speeches ended we realised how total the deception had been. We had breathed it like air.'*

Revelation 20:1–3 describes a silencing infinitely more significant than the collapse of the Nazi propaganda ministry.

The greatest deceiver in history, the one who has been lying to the human race since the Garden of Eden, who 'deceives the whole world' (**Rev 12:9**), whose influence runs beneath every false religion, every corrupt ideology, and every distortion of truth in human history is seized, bound, and locked away.

For a thousand years, the great deceiver is silent. What the world will be like without his deception is what the Millennial Kingdom is for. And the silence, after six thousand years of his voice, will be the loudest thing the earth has ever heard.

Revelation 20:1–3 is one of the most contested passages in all of eschatology. **It is also one of the most important.**

The three millennial views:

- Premillennialism,
- Amillennialism, and
- Postmillennialism.

Are primarily distinguished by how they interpret these three verses. We hold firmly to historic premillennialism.

The binding of Satan described here is a future, literal, physical event that will occur at the return of Christ described in Revelation 19:11–21, inaugurating a literal **one-thousand-year reign of Christ on earth.**

Understanding why this interpretation is correct and why it matters is the work of this sermon.

Context: Three views of the Millenium.

Before expounding the text, we must understand the landscape of interpretation.

The premillennial reading is not one option among equals it is the natural, literal reading of the text, supported by the entire trajectory of Old Testament prophecy and the consistent grammar of Revelation 20.

View	What It Teaches	Problem
Amillennialism	The 'thousand years' is symbolic. Satan is already bound (through the cross). The millennium is the present church age or the intermediate state. Christ reigns spiritually now.	Satan does not appear 'bound' in the present age — he is described as a roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8), the god of this age (2 Corinthians 4:4), still deceiving the nations. The text says he is bound 'so that he should deceive the nations no more' this has not happened yet.
Postmillennialism	The church gradually Christianises the world through the gospel.	Ignores the consistent biblical picture of increasing apostasy before Christ's return

View	What It Teaches	Problem
	The millennium is a golden age ushered in by Christian influence before Christ returns.	(2 Timothy 3:1–5; Revelation 3:14–22). The world does not improve until Christ personally intervenes.
Premillennialism	Christ returns before (pre) the millennium. Satan is literally, physically bound. Christ reigns on earth for 1,000 years. Satan is released briefly, defeated finally, then the eternal state begins.	This is the natural reading of the text. No other interpretation does justice to the specificity of the language the chain, the key, the abyss, the seal, the thousand years (6 times in chapter 20).

The amillennial interpretation requires that we take "a thousand years" symbolically when there is nothing in the context to indicate symbolism, and that we take "bound" metaphorically when the explicit purpose stated that he should deceive the nations no more has self-evidently not yet been fulfilled.

To bind is to bind.

To seal is to seal.

To deceive no more is to deceive no more.

I. The Angel from Heaven — V 1

Revelation 20:1, *"Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand."*

***'Then I saw'* — The sequence of events.**

The transitional phrase *'then I saw'* connects this vision directly to what preceded in chapter 19.

The sequence is:

- The return of Christ (**19:11–16**),
- The battle of Armageddon (**19:17–21**), and
- Immediately following the binding of Satan (**20:1–3**).

This is chronological progression, not a recapitulation or a parallel vision.

The placement is theologically necessary. Satan cannot be bound before Armageddon because he is the one energising the beast and gathering the nations for the final battle (**16:13–14**).

Once the beast and false prophet are captured (**19:20**), their master must be dealt with.

The binding of Satan is the immediate sequel to the military victory of the returning Christ.

'An angel coming down from Heaven'

This angel is not identified by name. Some commentators have suggested Michael (who fought Satan in **Revelation 12:7–8** and in **Jude 9**), but the text does not specify.

The anonymity may be intentional.

The angel's identity matters less than his equipment and his commission. He comes from heaven authorised by God. He carries a key and a chain, the tools of imprisonment. He is sent to do one job.

The fact that an angel, not Christ Himself, performs the binding of Satan is significant.

It demonstrates that Satan is not the equal and opposite of Christ. He is not even the equal and opposite of Michael.

He is a created being who can be bound by an ordinary (if powerful) angelic servant carrying a key and a chain. The cosmic power of Satan, so terrifying to human experience, is trivial in the presence of heaven's authority.

The Key to the Bottomless Pit

The '*key to the bottomless pit*' has appeared before in Revelation.

Revelation 9:1, the **fifth trumpet** angel was '*given the key to the bottomless pit*' and opened it, releasing the demonic locusts.

Revelation 1:18, the glorified Christ declares: '*I have the keys of Hades and of Death.*'

The key belongs ultimately to Christ, here it is delegated to an angel for the specific purpose of imprisoning Satan.

The 'bottomless pit' (***abyssos***) is the same abyss that appears in **9:1–2, 11; 11:7; 17:8** the prison of certain demonic beings.

It is distinguished from both Hades (the realm of the dead) and the lake of fire (the place of final judgment).

It is a specific place of confinement for supernatural evil.

The key is the symbol of authority over the abyss. The chain is the instrument of binding. Together they represent the comprehensive, authorised, physical confinement of Satan. He cannot open the prison because the key is not his. He cannot break the chain because it is divinely supplied. The God who created Satan defines the limits of his freedom and at this moment, those limits close to zero.

II. The Four Names V 2

Revelation 20:2, "He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years."

Four Names — The Complete Indictment

The identity of the one being bound is stated with four names. An unprecedented accumulation of titles that constitute a complete theological indictment of the adversary.

Name	What It Reveals
The Dragon (ho drakōn)	His character: ferocity, malice, destructive power. The dominant title in Revelation (12:3–4, 7–9, 13, 16–17; 13:2, 4, 11; 16:13; 20:2–3). He is not a spiritual concept but a terrifyingly real personal being of immense power and pure evil.
That serpent of old (ho ophis ho archaios)	His history: Reaching back to Genesis 3. 'The serpent of old' (ancient, primeval) connects this being to the deceiver of Eden. He has been lying to the human race since the Garden. Every false religion, every distortion of truth, every act of spiritual deception across six thousand years traces back to this one.
The Devil (ho diabolos)	His method: <i>Diabolos</i> means the slanderer, the accuser, the one who throws (ballō) accusations across (dia). He is the prosecuting attorney of the spiritual realm (Job 1:6–11; Zechariah 3:1–2; Revelation 12:10) — accusing the saints before God day and night.
Satan (ho Satanas)	His function: From the Hebrew śātān, the adversary, the opponent. He is the personal enemy of God and of every human being made in God's image. Not an abstract force of evil but a specific, personal, relentless adversary with a specific target: you, and everyone you love.

The accumulation of all four names in a single verse is deliberate and climactic.

Each name carries centuries of theological weight.

To name him by all four simultaneously is to read the complete charge sheet before the sentence is executed.

- **The Dragon** — ferocious.
- **The Ancient Serpent** — ancient liar.
- **The Devil** — relentless slanderer.
- **Satan** — personal adversary.

All four converge in one being. All four are bound.

'Bound for a Thousand Years'

The phrase 'a thousand years' appears six times in **Revelation 20 (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)**. The repetition is not accidental it establishes the duration with emphatic precision.

Six occurrences of a thousand years in a single chapter is not the language of symbolism but the language of a specific, defined, measurable period of time. If John meant an indefinite long period, he would not have repeated the same number six times in fifteen verses.

The binding is for a thousand years not permanent yet. This is important. The lake of fire (**20:10**) is the final, eternal destination.

The binding in the abyss is a specific, temporary confinement that serves the purpose of the Millennial Kingdom. After the thousand years, there is one final episode before the eternal state.

III. The Abyss V 3

Revelation 20:3, *"and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while."*

Three actions — Comprehensive Confinement.

Three verbs describe the imprisoning of Satan:

- cast him in (ebalen),
- shut him up (ekleisen),
- set a seal (esphragisen).

Each adds a dimension of security.

Action	What It Means
Cast into the bottomless pit	Thrown in, the same verb (ballō) used for casting out demons (Matthew 8:16), casting the beast and false prophet into the lake of fire (19:20). Decisive, forceful, complete.
Shut him up	The door is closed and locked. The same word used for shutting the door at the end of Matthew 25:10 ('the door was shut'). No exit.
Set a seal on him	The seal (sphragis) is the divine guarantee — the official closure. The same word used for the seal on Christ's tomb (Matthew 27:66) and for the sealing of the 144,000 (Revelation 7:3–4).

Action	What It Means
	The seal means: authorised, official, tamper-proof.

The three actions together: cast in, shut up, sealed form a triple guarantee of confinement. This is not a loosely supervised house arrest.

This is maximum security, divinely guaranteed imprisonment. The One who sealed the tomb of His own Son has now sealed the prison of the deceiver.

As the seal on the tomb could not prevent the resurrection it was meant to stop, the seal on the abyss cannot be broken by any power other than the One who authorised it.

'That he should deceive the nations no more'

The purpose of the binding is stated with crystalline clarity: *'so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished.'*

This is the definitive answer to the amillennial claim that Satan is already bound. If Satan were bound in the current age, he would not be deceiving the nations. He is.

Therefore, he is not bound.

Therefore, the binding is future.

The binding has a specific purpose: the cessation of Satanic deception on a national and global scale.

The Millennial Kingdom is characterised precisely by the absence of the deception that has dominated human history. Nations will not be deceived. Knowledge of God will cover the earth as waters cover the sea (**Isaiah 11:9**). The binding of Satan is the necessary precondition for this condition.

What the world will be like without Satan's Deception?

The removal of Satan's deception does not produce a world of sinless perfection, human nature is still fallen, and the Millennium will reveal that.

But it will produce a world dramatically different from anything in recorded human history. Consider what the Old Testament prophets describe for the Millennial age.

OT Millennial Promise	Reference
'The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb... the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD'	Isaiah 11:6–9
'They shall beat their swords into plowshares... nation shall not lift up sword against nation'	Isaiah 2:4
'I will make a covenant of peace with them... I will place them and multiply them'	Ezekiel 37:26
'The LORD will be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be: the LORD is one and His name one'	Zechariah 14:9

OT Millennial Promise	Reference
'Everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King'	Zechariah 14:16
'Your eyes will see the King in His beauty; they will see the land that is very far off'	Isaiah 33:17

'He must be released for a little while'

The binding is temporary. *'After these things he must be released for a little while.'*

Divine necessity, the same word used for the necessity of Christ's suffering (**Luke 9:22**). Satan's release is not an accident or an escape it is part of God's sovereign plan.

Why must Satan be released?

The purpose is revealed in **V 7–9** (which we will study in future) to expose the remaining rebellion in human hearts that even a thousand years of Christ's visible reign could not transform.

The Millennium will prove that the problem of human sin is not environmental, but it is not caused by Satan's presence, poverty, ignorance, or injustice.

Even in a perfect environment, under perfect governance, with Satan removed, unregenerate human hearts remain in rebellion.

The release of Satan simply provides the occasion for that rebellion to manifest.

The Millennium does not prove that a better environment makes better people. It proves the opposite.

Given the best possible environment — Christ on the throne, Satan in the abyss, justice everywhere, abundance for all — unregenerate human beings will still rebel.

The binding of Satan exposes that human sin is radical and ineradicable except by the sovereign grace of God in regeneration. The Millennium is the final proof of total depravity.

Application: Satan is a real Person, not a metaphor and his influence is real.

The description of Satan's binding requires a literal, personal, spiritual being who can be seized, bound, cast into a pit, and sealed in. This is not compatible with any view that treats Satan as merely a symbol of evil or a personification of human darkness.

The same Jesus who will send an angel to bind Satan for a thousand years said in **John 8:44**, *'He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.'*

- He is personal.
- He is active.
- He is deceptive.
- He is the active enemy of every person in this room.

1 Peter 5:8, *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."*

Application: The silence that is coming should shape how you live now.

The day is coming when 'the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world' will deceive no more. His voice, which has been the background noise of human civilisation since Eden will be silenced.

That coming silence is a call to live differently now.

The lies you believe about yourself, about God, about the world many of them are the whispers of the one who will one day be unable to whisper.

The deceptions that have distorted relationships, damaged faith, undermined the church that they come from the one who is coming to his end.

Don't live as though his lies are permanent. They are not. They have an expiry date. Live in the light of the silence that is coming.

Romans 16:20, *"And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly."*

Conclusion.

Three verses. Three actions. One prisoner.

Revelation 20:1–3 tells us that the being who has dominated human history since **Genesis 3**, who has lied, stolen, killed, and destroyed across six thousand years will be seized by a single angel, bound with a chain, thrown into the abyss, locked in, and sealed up.

- It will take one angel.
- It will take a key and a chain.
- It will take three verbs.

That is all. The terror that fills the nightmares of human experience, the adversary before whom nations tremble, the deceiver who has corrupted every civilisation is arrested by a servant carrying a chain.

This tells us everything about the ultimate power dynamic of the universe.

Satan is not the equal and opposite of God.

He is a created being on a leash, and the leash is about to become a chain in an abyss.

◆ **The Final Broadcast — Radio Berlin, May 1945**

On the night of **April 30, 1945**, Radio Berlin broadcast its final programme before going silent. It played **Bruckner's Seventh Symphony** a piece of enormous, soaring, tragic grandeur.

When the music ended, the announcer said simply: *'Our Führer, Adolf Hitler, fighting to the last breath against Bolshevism, fell for Germany this afternoon.'*

Then silence.

The voice that had promised a thousand-year Reich. The ideology that had convinced millions to follow it into catastrophe. The propaganda that had filled every airwave, every classroom, every public space for twelve years. Finished.

Revelation 20:3 describes a silence beyond that. The voice that has been broadcasting since Eden — that has whispered to Cain, seduced Nimrod, corrupted Babel, filled the temples of Baal, energised the Roman emperor cult, animated every false religion and every distortion of truth in every culture in every century — that voice will be locked in an abyss, the door sealed.

And the earth will hear, for the first time in six thousand years, what it sounds like when only the voice of God fills the air.

He must be released for a little while, but he will not be released forever.

The silence of the Millennium becomes the permanent silence of the lake of fire. The deceiver is coming to his end.

And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. Shortly. But not yet. While you wait — stand firm.

Study Questions

Question	Insights
What is the strongest argument against the amillennial view that Satan is already bound?	The purpose clause: he is bound 'so that he should deceive the nations no more.' If this is already fulfilled, why does 2 Corinthians 4:4 describe him as 'the god of this age who blinds minds'? Why does 1 Peter 5:8 call him a roaring lion seeking to devour? The current age is characterised by pervasive Satanic deception exactly the opposite of what Revelation 20:3 says the binding achieves.
Why does the text give Satan four names at the moment of his binding?	The four names constitute a comprehensive indictment. Dragon (ferocity), Ancient Serpent (history since Eden), Devil (slanderer), Satan (personal adversary). John is identifying this being fully so there is no ambiguity about who is being imprisoned. It is also climactic, all his accumulated titles are named at the moment of his defeat.
What does Satan's binding reveal about the nature of spiritual warfare in the current age?	That it is real, personal, and costly. If an angel with a chain and key is needed to bind Satan in the millennium, then the current age when he is unbound, is a period of genuine spiritual danger.

Question	Insights
	Paul's armour passage (Ephesians 6:10–18) is not metaphorical enhancement language but it is survival equipment for a war against a real adversary.
Why must Satan be released after the thousand years?	To demonstrate that the human heart is not transformed by environment even a perfect environment. The Millennium proves total depravity given ideal conditions. Unregenerate humanity will still revolt when given the opportunity. This vindicates God's justice in the final judgment, and no one can say their rebellion was caused by circumstances beyond their control.