

A Study of Angels and Demons
Lesson 4 – How God Uses and then Defeats Satan
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Introduction: Men often ask about evil and why Satan is allowed to even exist.

- A. We have learned that God tells us what we need to know for our good.
 - 1. He assures us that evil will not prevail in this life and in eternity.
(Ps 37:1-3, 7-9)
 - 2. We are instructed to trust God to avenge wrong and to provide for us.
- B. One of the reasons Satan is allowed power to tempt and incite suffering is to unwillingly be a part of God's plan for good to His people.
 - 1. God consistently will take that which is evil and harmful from Satan and use it to teach and help us fight Satan. (Gen 50:20)
 - 2. As God used Pharaoh for His glory so He will use Satan. (Rom 9:17, 22-23)
 - 3. God wants us to clearly know the futility of serving "the evil one."
 - 4. The end of Satan and his allies are clearly revealed. (Mt 25:41)

I. God uses Satan to show than men can serve God in spite of Satan's attacks.

- A. Satan foolishly thinks he can defeat God and His people. Consider his nature.
 - 1. **Satan** - Σατανᾶς, ᾰ, ὁ - literally *Adversary*, the constant enemy of God and man, a supernatural evil being (Mt 16:23; 1Thess 2:18).
 - 2. **The Devil** - διάβολος, ον *slandorous* (2 Thess 3:3); substantively ὁ δ. *the slanderer*; predominately, as a specific name for Satan as the accuser *the devil* (MT 4.1)
 - 3. Satan is filled with pride and works against God's people with slander and accusations.
- B. God defeated Satan when he tried to crush Job.
 - 1. God provokes the pride of Satan to respond to His praise of Job. (Job 1:8-12)
 - 2. God knew Job would prevail but Satan was confident Job would fail.
 - 3. After this defeat Satan would try again. (Job 2:2-6)
 - 4. Why did God do this? While Job would be blessed for this experience (Job 42:5-6), the real purpose would be found in what we learn from this event! (James 5:11)
 - 5. We learn that Satan is limited by God in what he can do to us. We know that God knows what we can endure. (1 Cor 10:12-13)

II. God uses Satan to implement his own defeat

- A. Satan thought that he had defeated God's plan because all men have sinned. (Zech 3:1-3)
 - 1. Satan correctly knew God was holy and could not fellowship sin. (1 Jn 1:5)
 - 2. Satan also knew that all men had sinned and had no adequate sacrifice. (Heb 10:4)
 - 3. He thought that forgiveness then was not possible thus all he had to do was rightly point out the sin of any man before God and he would be condemned.

4. The filthy garments of the high priest Joshua represented the sins of God's people under the Old Testament system. Satan was not able to understand how God could forgive these sins. **(Zech 3:4-5)**
 5. What Satan did not know was that God had a plan to save man from the foundation of the world. **(1 Pt 1:20)**
 6. This plan was hid from Satan and his allies and even God's O. T. prophets and His angels. When the plan is revealed it will be the ultimate destruction of Satan's plans. **(Eph 3:5-9; 1 Pt 1:10-12)**
 7. Satan saw that somehow God could forgive and remain Holy and just. The future battle with Satan at the cross would make this possible. **(Rom 3:24-26)**
- B. God uses Satan to show the superiority of Christ and His power.
1. When Jesus was tempted He showed how He as a man could overcome the greatest of temptations through trusting God. **(Mt 4:1-11)**
 2. Jesus purposely became physically weak to make Satan take advantage of a perceived opportunity. Satan could not overcome a faith based in God's word.
 3. Satan "leaves" Jesus still looking for another opportunity.
 4. The casting out of demons shows the superiority of Christ over the realm of Satan. **(Mt 12:24-28)**
- C. God uses Satan to bring about the crucifixion of Christ.
1. Satan was again "coming" to Jesus. **(Jn 12:31-32; 14:30-31)**
 2. Satan may have believed the same false beliefs many had of Jesus over an earthly kingdom. If Satan had known he would not have cooperated. **(1 Cor 2:6-8)**
 3. The cross of Christ brings the final defeat of Satan. **(Heb 2:14-15)**

III. God uses Satan by allowing him to persecute the church

- A. When Satan sees that he is defeated at the cross, he then tries to destroy God's people. **(Rev 12:7-9; 13-17)**
1. Why would Satan use persecution? What can it accomplish?
 2. God also provides for the one who will "live by his faith." **(Hab 2:3-4; 3:16-19)**
- B. God uses persecution to refine the faith of his people and to spread the gospel.
1. Satan's attacking the church at Jerusalem was not wise! **(Acts 8:1-4)**
 2. The Jews also persecuted Christians in other places. **(Rev 2:9-11)**
 3. Christians were taught how to allow persecution to refine their faith. **(1 Pt 1:7-9)**

Questions

1. How has God used evil men and evil actions in the past?
2. How is Satan limited in his temptation of men?
3. What ultimate purpose did the suffering of Job serve?
4. What did Satan think he could defeat God's people through their sin?
5. What did God accomplish in allowing Jesus to be tempted?
6. What did Satan participate in the crucifixion of Christ?
7. What can we know about the outcome of persecution of God's people?

The Binding of Satan by Forrest D. Moyer

Some passages of scripture receive more than their share of speculative interpretation. Such is certainly true of Revelation 20. Millennial theorists have given all sorts of fanciful treatments of this chapter. One of the most often asked questions in our Bible study groups is, "What is meant by the binding of Satan?" First, let me dislodge from anyone the notion that I am approaching this with a dogmatic disposition. I would like to suggest some thoughts for your careful study. If anyone sees error in what I am writing, I should be most pleased to hear from you. So with that having been said, let us approach our study.

What the Text Says

"And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him in the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time." (Rev. 20:1-3)

Please observe carefully what the binding of Satan accomplished: "so that he should not deceive the nations any longer." So far as I am able to understand from the text, this is the restriction that was placed upon Satan by this binding. I don't believe that we should try to make the text say more than it does. He was to be bound in this area of activity. There are other areas of activity in which he continues to move. For example, "Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). The binding of Rev. 20 would not hinder the activity of 1 Pet. 5:8.

How Had Satan Deceived the Nations?

Sometimes the activity of Satan is clearly catalogued in the scriptures. At other times we must search more diligently to see what he is up to. Our text tells us that he had "deceived the nations." As we look back into the history of the people of God, we often see hostile nations rise up to seek to destroy God's people. Sometimes God used an evil nation to bring discipline upon His people. One case in point is Babylon. In Jer. 25 Jeremiah said, "I have spoken to you again and again, but you have not listened. And the Lord has sent to you all His servants the prophets again and again, but you have not listened nor inclined your ear to hear" (vv. 3-4). Then God spoke and said, "Because you have not obeyed My words, behold, I will send ... to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land ... and I will make them a horror, and a hissing, and an everlasting desolation ... and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years" (vv. 8-11). Babylon was a wicked nation. Yet God would use it to discipline Judah. "Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation ... for their iniquity..." (vs. 12). The extent of the iniquity of the king of Babylon (not just one king, but symbolic of all) is seen in Isa. 14:3-23. The king is a tool in the hand of Satan. This nation is deceived by the devil.

The Four Beasts of Daniel Seven

In Daniel 7 we read of Daniel's dream of the four beasts (vv. 3-11) which are interpreted as being four kingdoms (vv. 17-28), namely, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. In describing the fourth beast (Rome) he says, "It devoured and crushed, and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns." Then he tells of seeing a "little horn" come up that possessed eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth uttering great boasts." This "horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them" (vs. 21). "He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One..." (vs. 25). Quite obviously, this nation would be deceived by the devil.

This beast of prophetic of the same nation that Rev. 13 describes. Observe John's description of the beast that comes out of the sea as an instrument of Satan:

"And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names. And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast ... And there was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him ... And it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him." (Rev. 13:1-7)

It is not difficult to see the identity of this beast when we compare what John says with what Daniel says. Daniel tells us

that this beast is the fourth kingdom of the four he described. That makes it the Roman empire and its emperors. The little horn that would rise up and make war with the saints would be a persecuting emperor. Daniel said he would do this for a time, times, and half a time (3 1/2 times). John said it would be for forty-two months (3 1/2 years). This corresponds with the 1,260 days of Rev. 11:3, 12:6. The Roman Empire as a persecuting force against God's people — Christians — was under the authority of the devil.

We even see the devil using governments at other times to try to overthrow the plan of God. He used Herod in his effort to devour the man-child (Christ) after His birth (Rev. 12:1-5; Matt. 2). He used the decadent governing Jewish power along with Rome to crucify Jesus. But the greatest deception of all was that of Rome's persecution of Christians and the demand for emperor worship. It was this deceiving power that was to be limited by the binding of Satan.

The Battle of Armageddon

In conjunction with the binding of Satan there was to be another great event — the overthrow of Rome under the symbol of the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:16). This is not some future battle. It symbolized the overthrow of the persecuting beast — Rome. The details of this overthrow are seen in Rev. 19. Under the symbolism of the rider of the white horse, Jesus makes war with the beast (Rome). "The beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence ... these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone" (vs. 20). Please observe that this describes the destruction of the beast. That beast was Rome, so he is describing the overthrow of Rome. Let me repeat: this is not some future battle, but the overthrow of persecuting Rome. The saints of God were not defeated! God always wins the battle! No one can defy the saints of the living God and come out victorious. The beast is destroyed!

What Happens to Satan?

At the time of the destruction of the beast in the lake of fire, something happens to Satan, the one who had given the beast his authority. That brings us back to our text in Rev. 20. The devil is bound with a great chain and thrown into the abyss. Need I remind you that this is symbolic? He is not thrown into the lake of fire where the beast and false prophet are — not at this time. He is cast into the abyss. So at the time (if we can put a time on symbolic events!) that Rome is destroyed, Satan is bound. (Let me suggest just here that we should not equate this binding with that mentioned in Matt. 12:25-29. That was another area of Satan's work that was limited.) Now, remember, he is bound in the sense that "he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed." He had been able to do something that now he cannot!

The 1,000 Years

Are these literal years? Of course not. This is symbolic language and we cannot count out a literal 1,000 years. The figure 1,000 is used in the book of Revelation to indicate completeness. Insofar as the devil's power to control Rome, he was completely bound. It's hard for us not to think in terms of a time span and then try to find literal periods for the symbolic language, but let's just think of a complete time. What happens after the thousand years of being bound? "After these things he must be released for a short time" (vs. 3). "And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of seashore" (vv. 7-8). After his release, Satan once again will try to deceive the nations. He wants to overthrow God's kingdom. That's what he tried to do over and over again. When he could no longer do that, he brought his attack against individual Christians (Rev. 12:17). Now, he tries to overthrow Jesus. But this time he goes too far! "Fire came down from heaven and devoured them (the armies). And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever" (vv. 9-10). In his final battle, Satan goes down to everlasting defeat. He is this time thrown into the lake of fire where he will be tormented forever. The poor guy never wins! Sometimes it may seem like he is winning, but ultimately the victory belongs to the Lord and His Christ! And the victory belongs to those who belong to Him. You can be victorious only when you are under the banner of Jesus Christ. That is the message of the book of Revelation and it is God's message over and over in Holy Scripture.

The devil still has power today. He is as a roaring lion seeking to devour you (1 Pet. 5:8). He is the "prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2). He is the shrewd and cunning tempter (2 Cor. 11:3, 13-15). He tempts, blinds (2 Cor. 4:34) and lies (John 8:44). He is after you! To overcome him we must submit to God, and resist the devil; then he will flee from you (Jas. 4:7). The first step is in our submission to God. We must watch and pray (Matt. 26:41); put on the shield of faith (Eph. 6:16) and then fight against him and the wickedness that he promulgates in this world. He is a mighty foe, but his doom is certain. If you are on his side, your doom is also certain. Let us all align ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ! (1987)