

# The Binding of Satan and the Reign of the Saints

(Part I)

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

<sup>2</sup> And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years,

<sup>3</sup> and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.

<sup>4</sup> Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

<sup>5</sup> The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection.

<sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

(Rev 20:1-6)

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# The Gates of Hell ...

In one of the most famous and in some ways misunderstood passages in the Bible, Jesus heads up to the district of **Caesarea Philippi**, the Northern most recesses of today's nation of Israel in the Golan Heights. Today it is called Banias, but in more ancient times it was called Paneas, due to what my friend Judd Burton describes as “the central feature of the site ... a great yawning cave, once a shrine to the woodland deity Pan. The Greeks passing through in the wake of Alexander the Great took the cave to be a haunt of the god and established a simple shrine in his honor. It was known as Paneas for centuries, before Philip, son of Herod the Great, expanded the settlement around 4 BC, building the polis of Caesarea Philippi in honor of Augustus and of course, himself.”<sup>1</sup> At this place—which also happens to be **the foot of Mt. Hermon**, the site of the most terrible act of the ancient world when the heavenly Watchers came down to earth, transgressing their proper domain—Jesus poses a question to his disciples, “**Who do people say that the Son of Man is?**” (**Matt 16:13**). They responded, “**Some say John the**

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<sup>1</sup> **Judd H. Burton**, *Interview with the Giant: Ethnohistorical Notes on the Nephilim* (Burton Beyond Press, 2009), 78

Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets” (14).

The Lord immediately poses a second question. “But who do you say that I am?” (15). Clearly, the revelation of his identity is something deeply on his mind. They didn’t all answer together. In fact, only the impetuous Peter (*Simōn Petros*) spoke up. “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (16).

Ahh, very good, my friend. “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah!” Jesus responds not with his name Peter, but with his father’s name—Jonah. “For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter (Petros) ...” Peter’s name is now in view. “And on this rock (*petros*) ...” Jesus makes a word-play on Peter’s name with the Greek word for a rock. “... On this rock I will build my church (*ekklesia*), and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (17-18). This is the first time the word “church” appears in the New Testament, and one of only two places it appears in any of the four Gospels.

The Lord is not finished with Peter. “I will give you [first person singular] the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (19). He talks about *keys* and *binding* and *loosing*. And this,

few seem to notice, comes in the context of having just said the *gates of hell* will not prevail. All gates have something in common with part of Jesus' monologue. They all have locks. Therefore, they all have *keys*. *Jesus gives Peter the keys*. After this, the movement from people, to the disciples, to Peter quickly moves back out again, first to the disciples and then to all people. “*Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ [Messiah]*” (20).

Curiously, the only other time that “*church*” (*ekklesia*) appears in the Gospels is two chapters later, in Matthew 18. Even more curious, some of the same language is used here. The context is church discipline. “*If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven*” (Matt 18:17-18). This is so similar that most commentators realize there is *some kind of mutual interpretation* that is supposed to take place. Unfortunately, much of this is simply theological guess work not driven by much more than the similarities in the statements.

As we have been going through Revelation, I've become almost hypersensitive to looking for *repeating*

**structures.** That is, when I see something repeating like this, I'm alerted that there is very often some kind of chiasmic arrangement taking place. So, I went looking to see if anyone had seen such a thing in these two passages and what comes between them. Sure enough, an entire dissertation was recently published on this.<sup>2</sup>

First, the structure he sees is rooted both thematically and grammatically. I think it works:

- A. "Church," "bind," "loose" (Matt 16:13-20)
- B. "hindrance" or "stumbling block" (*skandalon*) (21-23)
- C. "Kingdom" (*basileia*) (24-28)
- D. Transfiguration (*heavenly glory*) (17:1- 8)
- E. "Son of Man" is "raised" (*egeiro*) from the dead (9-13)
- F. "faithless and twisted generation" (14-18)
- F<sup>1</sup>. "Your little faith" (19-21)
- E<sup>1</sup>. "Son of Man" "raised" (*egeiro*) on the third day" (22-23)
- D<sup>1</sup>. "Kings of the earth" (*earthly glory*) (24-27)
- C<sup>1</sup>. "Kingdom" (*basileia*) (18:1-6)
- B<sup>1</sup>. "Temptations" (*skandalon*) (7-14)
- A<sup>1</sup>. "Church," "bind," "loose" (15-20)<sup>3</sup>

Seeing these links provides solid exegetical evidence that in fact **our two passages are meant to be read together.** But making this firmer, Dodson notices that both of our passages

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<sup>2</sup> **Nicholas A. Dodson**, "The Matthew 16:13-18:20 Chiasm as the Fountainhead of Matthean Proto-Ecclesiology," A Dissertation to Liberty University Rawlings School of Divinity (March 2019), <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3063&context=doctoral>.

<sup>3</sup> Dodson, 61-80.

are also chiasmic, and that both do this according to movements between groups and individuals:

A: 16:13-20	A': 18:15-20
<p>A. <b>Men/People</b> (13-14)</p> <p>B. <b>You (plural)</b>: Disciples (15)</p> <p>C. <b>Peter</b> (16)</p> <p>C<sup>1</sup>. <b>Peter</b> (17-19): Church, gates of hell, binding/loosing, keys, binding/loosing</p> <p>B<sup>1</sup>. <b>The Disciples</b> (20a)</p> <p>A<sup>1</sup>. Tell <b>no one</b> (20b)</p>	<p>A. One individual (15)</p> <p>B. One or <b>Two witnesses</b> (16)</p> <p>C. The <b>church</b> (17a)</p> <p>D. Gentile/tax collector (17b)</p> <p>C<sup>1</sup>. <b>“You” (plural)</b>: (18): binding/loosing</p> <p>B<sup>1</sup>. <b>“Two of you”</b> (19)<sup>4</sup></p>

## The Binding of Satan: Seven Questions

We are in the middle of a **short mini-series** on Revelation 20. Last time we had **an overview of millennial views** as a way of calibrating us to my reading of this vital chapter. Originally, I had thought about doing this sermon on **vv. 1-3** and then the next on **vv. 4-6**. They are clearly **separate units**, and it would work to do it that way. But I have too much on my mind today to be able to make that work for a single sermon. So instead, I'm going to take us through all six verses over the course of at least two sermons. I want to do this through a series of seventeen questions that

<sup>4</sup> This was my reading of the two structures. His (pp. 88-89) has a neat a/b/c/b/a in each. Both of us see c1. As where the “binding” and “loosing” are found.

I will ask about them. Here they are in order of their appearance in the text:

1. Who is “the angel” that comes down out of heaven? (1)
2. What is “**the key**” that he holds? (1)
3. Where is the “bottomless pit?” (1)
4. What is the “chain”? (1)
5. What does it mean that “**Satan**” is seized? (2)
6. What does it mean to be **bound**? (2)
7. How long is a thousand years? (2)
8. What does it mean to seal and shut the pit? (3)
9. Why does it say, “so that he might not deceive the nations?” (3)
10. What does it mean that Satan will be released? (3)
11. What are the thrones? (4)
12. Who are seated on them? (4)
13. Who are the “souls?” (4)
14. When and from where do they “reign with Christ?” (4, 6)
15. Who are “the rest of the dead” (5)
16. What is the “first resurrection?” (5, 6)
17. What is the “second death?” (6)

Today, I want to ask **eight questions** that will take us back around to the passage in Matthew 16. Then, next time, I hope to use the next set of questions to see how this fits with Matthew 18. Together, I think this will help us realize that in fact just as Matthew 16 and 18 go together, so also Rev 20:1-3 and 4-6 are meant to go together. They occur simultaneously, and understanding Jesus’ teaching in

Matthew can be of service to our understanding what they are talking about.

To telegraph the ending, my hope is that when we are done with each sermon, **you will have no doubt** in your mind that **these things have already taken place**. This in turn has massive implications for your reading of Revelation as a whole, as well as your understanding of what it means that we are in the millennium right now.

***Q. 1: Who is “the angel” that comes down out of heaven?***

The passage begins with an angel coming down out of heaven. **Who is he?** The answer is: **Jesus**. This answer fits with the parallel in Revelation 12, where we saw that Michael cast the Dragon out of heaven. I believe that Michael is Christ. But ch. 20 gives a different perspective. Rather than casting the dragon out of heaven, now the language is “**coming down out of heaven.**”

“**Coming down from heaven**” has appeared **twice** in Revelation (**10:1; 18:1**). “**Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire**” (**10:1**). “**After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was**



made bright with his glory” (18:1). Both times it has referred to Christ in his angelic glory. It is rarely found elsewhere, however, it is similar to *Jesus’ own words* as reported by the same author (John) in a different book. A perfect seven times in John 6 Jesus says, “I have come down from heaven.”<sup>5</sup> This is also the progression from ch. 19. John sees the White Rider as “heaven opened” (19:11). Next, he sees “an angel standing in the sun” (17). Now, the Angel descends.

Now, the proverb asks, “Who has ascended to heaven and come down” (Prov 30:4). The NT provides the answer, “No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man” (John 3:13). What I believe John is saying in using this language of descending from heaven—and this point is reinforced in our study of how Revelation is the parallel book of John’s Gospel, is that the angel descends from heaven *to become a man*. As Rev 20 begins a new cycle, this language refers to the incarnation of Jesus from angel to man. This parallels Revelation 12 where the pregnant woman gives birth to a male child, “one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron” (12:5), a quote about the Messiah from Psalm 2.

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<sup>5</sup> John 6:33, 38, 41, 42, 50, 51, 58. The Greek words are all the same as Revelation 20:1.

This is extremely important to understand, for it is *as a man* that Jesus binds Satan. How can that possibly be? Because this was the original duty of Adam. He was to serve and to guard the holy place of Eden. But he refused, and in the process the hosts of Satan were unleashed upon earth. Jesus came as the second Adam to undo the damage. This happens with the things that follow in the text, beginning with the keys to the abyss.

### ***Question 2: What are ‘the keys’ that he holds?***

After the angel comes down out of heaven, it says that he holds in his hand *the key* to the bottomless pit and a great chain. What is this “key?” The OT does not use the term a single time with any kind of reference to spiritual entities or places. The NT uses it rarely, the most cases being in Revelation.

In **Revelation 1:18** Jesus says, “*I have the keys of Death and Hades.*” This seems to be very relevant since the key in our verse is to *the bottomless pit*. Death and Hades (OT *Sheol*) are both part of the underworld. They are also personified as angelic beings, as we have seen for instance when we looked at **Apollyon** and **Abaddon**. Speaking of them, in **Revelation 9:1**, the fifth angel blows his trumpet and “*a star*

fallen from heaven to earth” is given “the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit.” Stars falling from heaven to earth is not the language of descent, but fall, as in Lucifer in the Garden. When this shaft is unlocked, all sorts of menacing creatures are allowed to wreak havoc upon the earth. Over them is Apollyon, the Destroyer.

The other “key” verse is **Revelation 3:7** which refers to Jesus again. This time it is the “key of the house of David,” an unmistakable picture of kingly authority as a quote from **Isaiah 22:22**. This demonstrates that the keys have something to do with **Christ’s authority**. Outside of Revelation, “keys” only appear one other time in any kind of a related context. This is **Matthew 16:19**, “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” There is a reason I opened with this passage.<sup>6</sup>

### ***Question 3: What is the bottomless pit?***

The key that Jesus holds opens the “bottomless pit.” This is one of the most important things to understand in the whole of this passage. Few commentaries have bothered to look into the OT usage of this place as it regards the Devil.

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<sup>6</sup> One of the few references in Jewish literature to the holder of the keys is **3 Baruch 11:2**, which curious says that **Michael** is their holder. “The angel said to me: ‘We cannot enter until Michael comes, who holds the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.’”

First, let's look at the word itself. **Revelation 20:1** and **20:3** use *abussos* (abyss). This Greek term is found **34 times** in the LXX. **30 times** (or **88%** of the time) it translates *těhôm*, which we most often translate in English as “**deep**” (i.e. “**the (great) deep;**” **Gen 1:2**). Only one time (“**the depths of the earth;**” **Ps 70:20**) does it appear to be a synonym for Sheol/Hades.<sup>7</sup> We do find the idea of the abyss of fire in 1 Enoch (**10:13; 18:11**). For reasons I do not understand, “bottomless pit” has become the preferred translation of the word in many prominent English Bibles,<sup>8</sup> but only in the book of Revelation!

The “**bottomless pit**” translation seems to come from a belief that this is the same place as we find in ch. 9 (“**keys to the bottomless pit**”). It is possible they are the same place, however, there is a word there not found here. **Rev 9:1** has the adjective: *phrear*. While *phrear* could mean a **shaft** (as in a passage leading somewhere), the normal translation is a **well or cistern**, that is a deep hole which has water in the bottom of it! Perhaps “**deep well**” would be better than “**bottomless pit.**” If the a cistern-shaft were meant here, I would think

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<sup>7</sup> **Herbert G. Grether**, “Abyss, The,” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 49.

<sup>8</sup> So: NAS, ESV, GNV, KJV, NKJV, RSV, NRS, NLT. A few do have “abyss”: YLT, NET, ASV, NIV, NAB, and importantly the NJB (New Jerusalem Bible, a Jewish-English translation). The last two also translate *těhôm* as “abyss” in a few OT instances, thus giving the impression that what John sees is not new.

John would have used the word, as ch. 9 and John 4 (the woman at the well) are the only times it is found.

But it is the translation that gets me. Given that we find such a translation no place else, the **unspoken assumption** seems to be that this is *not* a place described by OT prophets! Thus, if you are like me, when you think of a Satan falling into a bottomless pit, you think of him flying through the air like **Galdalf and the Balrog** in the *Two Towers*, except he is tied up and never hits the bottom (which in the movie happens to be water!). The point I am making here is that this is not an eternal falling through the air—a bottomless pit.

Interestingly, if it isn't the extrabiblical place of fire in mind, then the abyss—the deep—is the natural habitat of **Rahab** (Isa 51:9-10), **Leviathan** (Job 41:23-24; Ps 73:12-13), and the **Nachash** (Amos 9:3).<sup>9</sup> Remember that Leviathan is the sea-monster, so it should come as no surprise to discover that Jewish literature uses water to describe the place: “**Waters of the abyss**” (1En 17:17), and “**mouth of [the rivers of] the abyss**” (17:8), and “**the water went up from the abyss**” (HistRech 10:7).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Also Job 7:12; 26:12; Ps 88:10; Isa 27:1; Ezek 32:2 (3 Baruch 5:2; TAsH 7:3; J&E 12:10; by virtue of the synonymous relationship between the “deep” (*tehom*) and the “sea” (*yam*) in Job 28:14; 38:16; 41:23; Ps 32:7; 105:9; 134:6; Isa 51:10; Odes 12:3; Sir 24:29 (these are all LXX references).

<sup>10</sup> Recall also that the Beast that rises out of the abyss with seven heads is a sea-monster (Rev 17:7-8; 13:1; Dan 7:3-7).

This would explain why John gives us **four names for Satan** (dragon, serpent, devil, Satan) in **Revelation 20:2**, two of which (“serpent”: *ophis* and “dragon”: *drakon*) are synonyms for leviathan in the OT (see FIGURE below). The point is that this abyss is, throughout the OT, the habitat of Satan on the earth. It is his “home.” As one dictionary puts it, “Satan is bound in his own sphere, which is also his ‘prison’ [from vs. 7 *phulakē*, which means the place of his guarding].”<sup>11</sup> And thus, this picture John sees is one of Satan being put under “**house arrest**.”<sup>12</sup>

Synonyms for Satan					
Scripture	Satan	Serpent			
	Heb: <i>satan</i>	<i>nachash</i>	<i>tannin</i>	<i>leviathan</i>	<i>rahab</i>
	Gk: <i>diabolos</i>	<i>ophis</i>	<i>drakōn</i>	<i>drakōn</i>	<i>ketos</i>
Ex 7:9-15					
Job 26:12-13	(?)				
Ps 74:13-14	(?)				
Isa 27:1	Implied				
Isa 51:9-10	(?)				
Rev 12:13-14					
Rev 20:2					

How can we explain that in John’s vision he sees Satan going to a place that the OT says he is in already? The answer has to do with the next part. It says that he is now “**chained**.”

<sup>11</sup> See **Georg Bertram**, “*phulakē*,” in *TDNT*, 9:244.

<sup>12</sup> Thank you to **Tony Jackson** for this great insight.

## *Question 4: What is the chain?*

The other thing that Jesus holds is a “**chain**.” When trying to understand what this chain does, it is a common mistake to conclude that it implies **complete restriction** of activity. Of course, this does not necessarily work if Satan is being put under house arrest. Think of someone like **Martha Stewart** who was chained up (with a modern location device on her ankle), but allowed to serve part of her sentence from the comfort of her own home. From there, she was able to continue operating her huge empire even while imprisoned.

Beyond this, it is helpful to see how the language of chaining spiritual entities is used in the ancient world. Let’s look at **Job 38:31**. Here God asks Job, “**Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades or loose the cords of Orion?**” What could it possibly mean to bind with **chains the constellations** of outer space? It is fascinating enough that “binding” and “loosing” are used together with the chains here. What makes this even more interesting is that the Pleiades and Orion are **stars**. We have seen throughout Revelation how stars refer to **the heavenly host**, of which Satan most surely is one. Therefore, the relationship between constellations and Satan is surely not irrelevant.

The next further points to a relationship between it and Revelation 20. “Can you lead forth the Mazzaroth in their season, or can you guide the Bear with its children?” (Job 38:32). This verse further explains binding and loosing the chain. The Bear is a **third constellation** that needs to be “*guided*.” The word “*Mazzaroth*” is a transliteration because its meaning is debated. It may mean “**planets**.” Curiously, the Vulgate (Latin) reads, “**Lucifer**,” which is the morning star or Venus. The meaning is that these constellations rise “*in their own time*” or “*at the proper time*.” In our contemporary mindset, we would say that these things happen because of fixed laws. Older people believed it was due to **an oath or covenant** that God made with the angelic host. I’ll come back to this with the “binding.” The point is, to be chained means that **you act in accordance with God’s decree**. You do what he tells you to do.

The book of **2 Enoch** (which is not related to 1 Enoch) has this fascinating passage. “**I wrote down the rumble of the thunder and the lightning; and they [the angels] showed me the keys and their keepers, and the places where they go, where they go in and where they go out, by measure. They are raised by means of a chain, and they are lowered by means of a chain, so that he does not drop the clouds of anger with**



terrible injuries and violence, and destroy everything on the earth” (2En 40:9). “Raised and lowered” is similar to “bind” and “loose” in other passages such as earlier in Job 38 where God “*shut the sea with doors*” and “*set bounds to it, surrounding it with bars and gates*” (cf. Job 38:8-10). Obviously, the sea does not have bars and gates. This is poetic, figurative language that represents something working according to the laws God gave it.

Chaining up the heavens and earth means to set it in place, giving it laws that it cannot transgress, rules that it must abide by in a covenant. **This is why creation works in an orderly predictable fashion.** The same may very well be true of the chaining of Satan. By a decree of God, a covenant was put into effect through the blood of Christ. Satan is forced to obey his law and not transgress it during the entire time of his binding on earth. This is also due to the authority of Christ.

### ***Question 5: What is does it mean that Satan is seized?***

With the key in one hand and the chain in the other, our Angel “*seized*” the dragon. There is a rich history of the usage of this verb “*to seize*” (*krateō*) along with its noun form (*kratos*). In the world of the Greek myths, *kratos* describes

innate presence of **force and strength**, not just the exercise of it. It can mean “**to take by storm**,” or the “**power**” which the gods give to men. It can mean “**supremacy**” or “**victory**.” In the Bible, the overwhelming usage of the word applies to **the power of God**. “**In the NT, there is no place where man either has or can gain *kratos***.”<sup>13</sup> The verb has most of the same meanings. In the NT, men do sometimes carry out *krateō*. But in our passage, it is clearly the Angel who “seizes” the dragon.

What is being signified? It is **not merely that he carries Satan off to jail**, like some prison guard might do. It is that **he has the authority and power** in himself to do this. This word thus speaks directly to the authority (*exousia*) which Christ which is his due to his resurrection from the dead. In a remarkable reversal of power, **Hebrews 2:14** says, “**Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power (*kratos*) of death, that is, the devil**.” Satan had *kratos*-power, the power over death, but *now*—**through the death of Christ**—this power has been rendered *powerless*. Thus, the seizing of the Dragon is a reversal of his fortunes. It is a signal that his ruling is ending.

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<sup>13</sup> **Wilhelm Michaelis**, “*Kratos/krateō*”, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament vol. 3*, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964): 905-15.

It will no longer be Satan, to whom “all the kingdoms of the world” belonged (Matt 4:8). But as John says, “*Now* the ruler of this world shall be cast out” (John 12:31). I take “now” to mean just what it says. This is an historical fact. Something terribly significant for us living right now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is being described by John’s vision in Revelation 20. We don’t have to wait until some future catastrophe to see the power of God finally manifested.

### ***Question 6: What does it mean to be bound?***

After our Lord Jesus seizes the Dragon, he then “binds” him. What does it mean to bind Satan? This is an extremely important question that I believe becomes the interpretive crux of Revelation. Let’s begin by looking at how “binding” is used in other places.

A good place to start is Jude, because he uses binding language in reference to angelic beings. Jude 6 says, “The angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day” (NIV). Jude is referring to the story of the Watchers, which took place on top of Mt. Hermon. Here are the relevant parts as told in the book of 1 Enoch.

**Azazel** and **Semjaza** see how beautiful human women are, so they “**bind**” themselves in an oath with 200 Watchers to come down to earth to have children with them (**1En 6:4-6**). For their treachery, the Lord sends Raphael<sup>14</sup> and Michael to “**bind [them] hand and foot, and cast [them] into the darkness**” “**for seventy generations**” after which “**on the day of the great judgment [they] shall be cast into the fire,**” **bound** and tormented in “**the prison**” of “**the abyss**” (**10:4-13**; see also chs. **54-56; 69:28**).

Before the punishment, Enoch gets wind of the Watcher’s courtroom plea, so he settles himself in a very specific place: **the waters of Dan**, southwest of **Hermon** (**13:4-8**). There, there word comes to him that he gets to speak righteousness and reprimand to Azazel and his cohorts. Back to the sentence carried out by Michael and Raphael, we learn that Azazel is cast into “**an opening in the desert, which is in Dudael.**” As Dr. Burton points out, that “yawning cave” is very clearly an opening. In fact, it was considered by the ancients “that gate of hell.” Was Azazel thrown in at this very spot?<sup>15</sup>

It’s very interesting that Azazel shows up in Leviticus 16, the center chapter of the Pentateuch, in the Day of

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<sup>14</sup> Raphael also has the task of binding the demon Asmodeus in **Tobit 3:17; 8:3**; cf. **TSol 5; 13:6**.

<sup>15</sup> Burton, 19.

Atonement ritual. Here, he is described as a **goat-demon**. That's precisely what Pan, the entity worshiped at this very cave also was. More interesting is that this means that Azazel, though bound, was somehow able to keep his worship alive and well for millennia after his binding.

Another binding to mention is found in Revelation. **Revelation 9:14** says, “‘Release the four angels who are *bound* at the great river Euphrates.’ So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, were released to kill a third of mankind.” Those who are “bound” here are **angels**. If their binding is absolute inability to do anything, we must ask why God would do this to his angels? Therefore, the binding here is to be understood as a *restraint from carrying out their task before the appointed time*. The binding does not comment on their ability to do anything else while they are “bound.” As **Beale** says, “That the four angels had been ‘bound’ means that they had not been allowed to carry out the function for which they had been waiting. They ‘had been prepared’ to kill a third of humans” at the appointed time.”<sup>16</sup>

We can also look at this from the perspective of OT covenants, specifically what I believe is the relationship of

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<sup>16</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 508.

the covenant of works with creation. Jeremiah referred to a “covenant with day and night and the fixed order of heaven and earth” (Jer 33:25). This covenant was “an eternal decree” that “binds” the entire physical/material universe together with chains (we saw this in Job 38:31-32 with the chains). How could God make a covenant with nature, an unintelligent force? Because they did not think of nature as just “things,” like we do. They were not materialists and naturalists. Earlier in that same chapter, those stars we called the “sons of God” (38:7), heavenly beings. Job 38:33 refers to this “binding” as “ordinances of the heavens.” Ordinances are “laws.” And the law is a vital part of any covenant. Thus, Proverbs 8:27-29 says, “He set for the sea its boundary, so that the water should not transgress his command.”<sup>17</sup> This now sounds an awful lot like the chains.

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<sup>17</sup> “Consider all the works in heaven, how they have not changed their way, and the stars that are in heaven, how they all rise and set, each ordered in a set time, and shine in their festival times, and transgress not against their appointed order” (1En 2:1). Or, “All his works go on thus from year to year for ever, and all the tasks which they accomplish for him, and their tasks change not, but according as God has ordained so it is done” (5:2).

The most interesting part of 1 Enoch relating to this has to be found in chapter 69. Here, this “ordained” decree, this “appointed order” which is not “transgressed” is called an “oath” (1En 69:13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 25). Again, this is the language of covenants. In this chapter, angelic beings are in charge of the oath. Kasbeel or “He who lies to God” is the “chief of the oath” (69:13). He seems to also be called Akae or “to boil” and is referred to as the evil one. He places the oath in Michael’s hand (69:15). But what are the secrets of the oath? That heaven is suspended before creation. That earth is founded upon water. That the sea was created with a foundation of san which cannot be transgressed. That the depths are made firm and stand still and do not move. That the sun and moon and stars complete their courses of travel. And that the weather (wind, storms, hail, frost, mist, and rain) are reserved according to God’s will (69:16-25).

A couple of Jewish writings can help us better understand how they thought. 1 Enoch says,

And I saw the chambers of the *sun and moon*, whence they proceed and whither they come again, and their glorious return, and how one is superior to the other, and their *stately orbit*, and how they do not leave their orbit, and they add nothing to their orbit and they take nothing from it, and *they keep faith with each other*, in accordance with *the oath* by which they are *bound* together (1 En 41:5).

What is remarkable about this is how these things are said to be “*bound together*” by the oath or covenant. This is just like Job which said that the constellations are bound with chains. In this case, the binding of such things does not mean that they cease to be seen or do anything, but rather that they cannot wreak havoc, but must abide by the laws God gave to them for the orderly preservation of the world.<sup>18</sup>

This was all summarized in the Prayer of Manasseh which says, “*He who bound the sea and established it by the command of his word, he who closed the bottomless pit and*

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<sup>18</sup> There is a curious reference in 1 En 18:14-15 of “*stars*” which “*roll over the fire*” because they “*transgressed the commandment of the Lord in the beginning of their rising, because they did not come forth at their appointed times.*” This is a classic instance of the stars and heavenly beings being linked together in some mysterious way that I do not as yet understand. However, Jude seems to be familiar with the same idea when he refers to “*wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever*” (Jude 13). This is another reference to the fall of the Watchers.

*sealed* it by his powerful and glorious name” (PrMan 3). Chaos cannot reign.

The glorious name is the angel of Yahweh who bears the name of God—Christ. This power of restraining the chaos of creation, especially the sea (and behind it, Leviathan) finds a remarkable parallel in **Matt 8:27** where Jesus binds the storm and causes the Disciples to ask, “**What sort of man is this, that even the winds and sea obey him?**”<sup>19</sup>

There is another binding that Jesus says he performed (past tense) which is vital to study. Jesus said that he the strongman. **Matthew 12:27-29** says,

If I cast out demons by **Beelzebul**, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can someone enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first *binds* the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house.”

The word “bind” here is the same as in **Rev 20:2** where Satan is bound. This is not coincidental. The **strong man is Beelzebub**, who is none other than **Satan**. In other words,

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<sup>19</sup> For more see **Margaret Barker**, “The Book of Enoch and Cosmic Sin,” *The Ecologist* (Jan 2000): 30ff.



Jesus *has bound* Satan! His casting out of demons proves it, for this is the plundering of Satan's house. In fact, the context is **the Gentiles being freed** from their slavery to Satan through the Gospel (12:18). We will at this passage at **a later time when we look at saints ruling in Christ's kingdom.**

A related text is **Luke 10:18-20.**

Jesus said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

*When* did Jesus see Satan fall like lightning from heaven? This is not an easy thing to figure out. Here is where Revelation 12 is so important to our discussion. Again, Rev 12 and 20 are virtual parallels.

Revelation 12:5-12	Revelation 20:1-3
The birth of Messiah (vs. 4) the ruler (5)	The incarnation ("an angel coming down from heaven") with keys (vs. 1)
War between Michael and Satan (7)	(Presupposed) war between the angel and Satan (1-2)

Throwing down of “that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan” (8-9)	Binding of “that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan” (2)
Satan thrown into the sea (12)	Satan thrown into the abyss (3)
“The deceiver of the whole world” (9)	“That he might not deceive the nations” (3)
1,260 days of nourishment (6)	1000 years of binding (2)
He rages in great wrath now that he is thrown down (12ff.)	He must be released for a little while (3)

The relevant scene depicts Michael fighting against the dragon (12:7), the same dragon, the same dragon who is being bound in Revelation 20. Michael wins the battle and there is no longer any place for them in heaven (12:8). It then says, “The great dragon was thrown down” (12:9). This is exactly like Jesus’ comment, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.” A description of Satan is then mentioned. He is “the deceiver of the whole world.” Then, “I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, ‘Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers have been thrown down’” (vs. 10). This is the key interpretive point of the chapter and of the entire book, as it is the very center of Revelation. “Now” refers to “the coming” of Christ, the birth of the woman’s Seed. That is, the moment Christ came down from heaven (as we saw in

the phrase “I saw an angel coming down from heaven”), this was the time when Satan was thrown out of heaven!

Next, the authority of Christ is transferred from himself to his people at the moment of his death, as it says, “They [the saints] have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb” (12:11). But the throwing down of Satan occurs, it says in the “earth and sea” (12:12): “Rejoice of heavens. . . but woe to you O earth and sea, for the devil has come down.” This is extremely important to catch. The sea (*thalassa*) is mentioned here. While a different word than the abyss, it is surely the same place, as the *thalassa* in the LXX is also the home of the Leviathan.<sup>20</sup> The conclusion is that the binding of Satan in the abyss is the same thing as the falling of Satan to the sea. Amazingly, Satan gets so furious at this that he rages against the woman and the child, but is not allowed to destroy them for the same period (1,260 days) called now “a time, times, and half a time” (12:14).

Now remember what Jesus says in the parallel of this to John’s Gospel. “Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler/prince of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” (John 12:31-32). Jesus’ death (his being “lifted upon on the

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. Gen 1:21-22; Job 7:12; Ps 74[73]:13; Ezek 32:2; Amos 9:3.

cross” as the *nachash*-serpent was in the wilderness) is the culmination of the “casting out” and “binding” of Satan.

It is also important here to look at Jewish expectations that are virtually identical to **Revelation 20:1-2**. **Testament of Levi 18:12** is fascinating. “**And Beliar will be bound by [Messiah], and he will give authority to his children to trample upon the evil spirits.**” The parallels between this and **Luke 10:18-20** and **Rev 20:1-2** are striking:

Luke 10:18-20	Testament of Levi 18:12	Revelation 20:1-2, 4
<p>And [Jesus] said to them,  <u>I saw Satan</u> fall like lightning from heaven.</p> <p>Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.</p> <p>Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.</p>	<p>And Beliar will be bound by [Messiah],</p> <p>And he will give authority to his children to trample upon the evil spirits.</p>	<p>I saw <u>an angel</u> coming down from heaven. . . and he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. . . that he might not deceive the nations ...</p> <p>[The saints] came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.</p>

If the Testament of Levi is actually a Christian addition to the Jewish book, then all that means is that some very early Christian saw Revelation 20 as fulfilled in Luke 10. If it is Jewish, well, that's even more incredible. The conclusion of our question then is this: Satan's binding is not absolute in every sense, yet it is clearly **a present reality**. This is very clearly attested in the early Christian document **The Gospel of Nicodemus**, "Then the King of glory seized the chief ruler Satan by the head and handed him over to the angels, saying: 'Bind with iron fetters his hands and his feet and his neck and his mouth.' Then he gave him to Hades and said: 'Take him and hold him fast until my second coming.'"<sup>21</sup>

### ***Question 8: What Does it mean to seal and shut up the pit?***

Our passage says that Satan was bound and thrown into the abyss, which then was "shut" and "sealed" over him. First, this is a fulfilment of prophecy directed at Satan (and others) in Isaiah. "On that day the LORD will punish the host of heaven, in heaven, and the kings of the earth, on the earth. They will be gathered together as prisoners in a pit;

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<sup>21</sup> **GospNic, "Descent into Hell," 22(6):2.** This is a 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD Christian document that scholars have put into the NT Apocrypha.

they will be shut up in a prison, and after many days they will be punished” (Isa 24:21-22).

What do these words signify? Most of the time “shutting” refers to the shutting of doors whether they be metaphorical (cf. Matt 6:6; 25:10) or physical (Luke 11:7; John 20:19; Acts 5:23). It can mean shutting people out of something, as in the Pharisees who shut off the kingdom of heaven from men (Matt 23:13). The sky was shut up for 3½ years in Elijah’s day because the man of God prayed and God listened (Luke 4:25; cf. Rev 11:6).

In every case, the shutting has to do with power and authority to close something. This is made clear in Rev 3:7 where Jesus has the keys of David (the king) which allow him to shut and open what he wants, and no one can do anything about it. We saw earlier that this is a quote from Isaiah 22:22. One commentator writes, “Obviously, this authority constituted tremendous power and required great character if it was not to be abused.”<sup>22</sup> Abusing this power is a grave sin. The context reveals that this is Christ’s sovereign power over the sphere of “death and hades” (Rev 1:18). We will see how this relates to the binding of Satan in the next question.

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<sup>22</sup> John Oswalt, The Book of Isaiah 1-39, *New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 422.

The seal is similar to the shutting. When Daniel was thrown to the lions, the king shut the tomb and sealed it with his ring (**Dan 6:17**). Obviously, the wax seal is not what holds the tomb tight. Rather, this is a **symbolic gesture** that demonstrates the king's sovereignty over the verdict. To shut and seal Satan in the abyss, therefore, is more than closing it so that it can't get out. It is a sign that Christ has the authority to bind Satan in whatever way he chooses to do so. Now, if Satan is bound today, yet he prowls around like a roaring lion and continues to wreak havoc upon the earth, we must ask in what way is this chain put upon him? What is he restricted from doing?

***Q. 9: Why does it say, "That he might not deceive the nations"?***

Critically, the passage tells us that Satan is bound in the abyss which is shut and sealed **for this reason**: "***So that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended.***" If the binding is the interpretive crux of the passage, this purpose clause is the central focus of the binding. It stuns me that so few people recognize what the text so plainly says while adding plenty that it doesn't say. Let's look at the parallel from **Rev 12:9**.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> There is an extra-biblical reference that is almost identical, and it involves Prince Mastema, yet another term for the Devil. See the Appendix below.

Revelation 20:3	Revelation 12:9
[Satan was thrown] into the abyss. . . so that he should not <i>deceive</i> the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed.	The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the <i>deceiver</i> of the whole world.

The parallel gives us further confirmation that the binding is very simple. **It keeps Satan from deceiving the world**, not from attacking it.<sup>24</sup> Now, the point is not that Satan is not able to deceive anyone any longer (for many remain deceived), but rather that if the Father wants to save someone out of the nations, Satan is not able to thwart this gift to the Son. This is a *legal* declaration, every bit as important as justification by faith. For this is the supernatural legal ruling that forces Satan not to keep people bound up in slavery to sin and death. We saw this earlier in Hebrews.

“**The nations**” is vital to this. The promise was that Christ would inherit the nations (*ethnē*). “**Ask of my, and I will make *the nations your heritage*** (birth right, inheritance)” (**Ps 2:8**). In another passage directed to the Son of God, it says, “**All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to**

<sup>24</sup> Remember, deception is what Satan has done since the beginning, “The woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate’” (**Gen 3:13**). Again, “The woman was deceived and became a transgressor” (**1 Tim 2:14**). Again, “I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ” (**2 Cor 11:3**). See also **1En 19:1; SibOr 3:63-70; ApocEzra 2:10-18; 4:31-32; ApocSed 4:4-5:2; 3Bar 4:8**.



the LORD, and all the families of *the nations* shall worship before you” (Ps 22:27).<sup>25</sup> Another says, “I will make you as a light to *the nations* that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth” (Isa 49:6). At some point, God (through Christ) will inherit/possess the nations (Ps 82:8). That was the promise.

Is this being fulfilled? Absolutely, and it is one of the most important teachings of the NT! “Repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to *all nations*, beginning from Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47). What did Jesus tell his disciples after his resurrection at the so called “Great Commission?” “All authority *has been given me*. . . go and make disciples of *all nations*” (Matt 28:18). “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved” (Mark 16:15-16).

You simply must come to realize the *stupendous* difference this makes for the nations who were in total darkness, ruled by evil powers, possessed (as in their possession by him as slave-owner and also demon possession) by them, prior to the coming of Christ. At his coming, the

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<sup>25</sup> Psalm 22 is, like Psalm 2, one of the most overtly Messianic Psalms there is, being referenced in Matt 25:24; 26:24; 27:35, 39, 43, 46; Mark 9:12; 15:24, 29, 34; Luke 23:34, 35-36; 24:27; John 19:24, 28; Heb 2:12; 1 Pet 1:11; Rev 11:15; 19:6 (bold indicates verses relevant to the present discussion).

demons flee, Satan is rebuked and bound, and the nations begin to have their own chains taken off through the power of the Gospel. It happens in the strongman passage.<sup>26</sup> It happens in Acts.<sup>27</sup> It happens today.

The Apostles say it frequently. God has “called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pe 2:9). Or “At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord” (Eph 5:8). A little later in this chapter Paul says, “Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you” (Isa 60:1).

Christ conquers and sits down with the Father on his throne (Rev 3:21) and is given full authority over the “rulers and authorities” when he died, rose, and ascended into heaven (cf. Col 2:15) far above all rule and authority and power (Eph 1:20-21) with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him (1Pet 3:21-22). Listen to the teaching of Scripture on this, because it is powerful. “The Father loves the Son and *has given* all things into his hand” (John 3:35). “God *has put* all things in subjection under his

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<sup>26</sup> See also earlier in Matthew 4:16 which quotes Isaiah 9:2 about the Gentiles, “It was said, ‘The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.’”

<sup>27</sup> “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you [Jews]. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles” (Acts 13:46). “Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen” (Act 28:28).

feet” (1Co 15:27). “At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Php 2:10-11).

Let’s bring all this back to Matthew 16, though I will only just begin to give us application from it today. Jesus told Peter that he would begin to build his NT church on this rock. I take this rock to be a triple entendre for 1. The Apostles; 2. Peter’s confession of faith in Christ; and 3. The literal rock of Mt. Hermon. The Apostolic teaching is what the entire church is founded upon. Without it or anything besides it, and we do not have the teachings of Jesus that give we need. The special message here is what Peter confessed, that Jesus is the Son of the living God—the Messiah come to deliver us from sin, death, and the devil.

With such a message delivered to us faithfully down through the generations, Jesus promises that the Gates of Hell will not prevail. It is not a coincidence that Jesus is making this statement withing eye-sight of the Cave of Pan at the foot of the mountain where Azazel and the others were already bound deep in the earth. Incredibly, Jesus gives to his church the power to bind and loose things and creatures in spiritual places. He transfers his authority to

them so that they reign now with him. This will be the focus of our next sermon,<sup>28</sup> because it shows very clearly that vv. 4-6 are not some future reality, but the present truth that accompanies the law and the gospel proclaimed by the Jesus' church. This is why Gentiles can now pass out of death to life, how they can be freed from the power of sin, and why Satan has no legal ground to keep them enchained any longer.

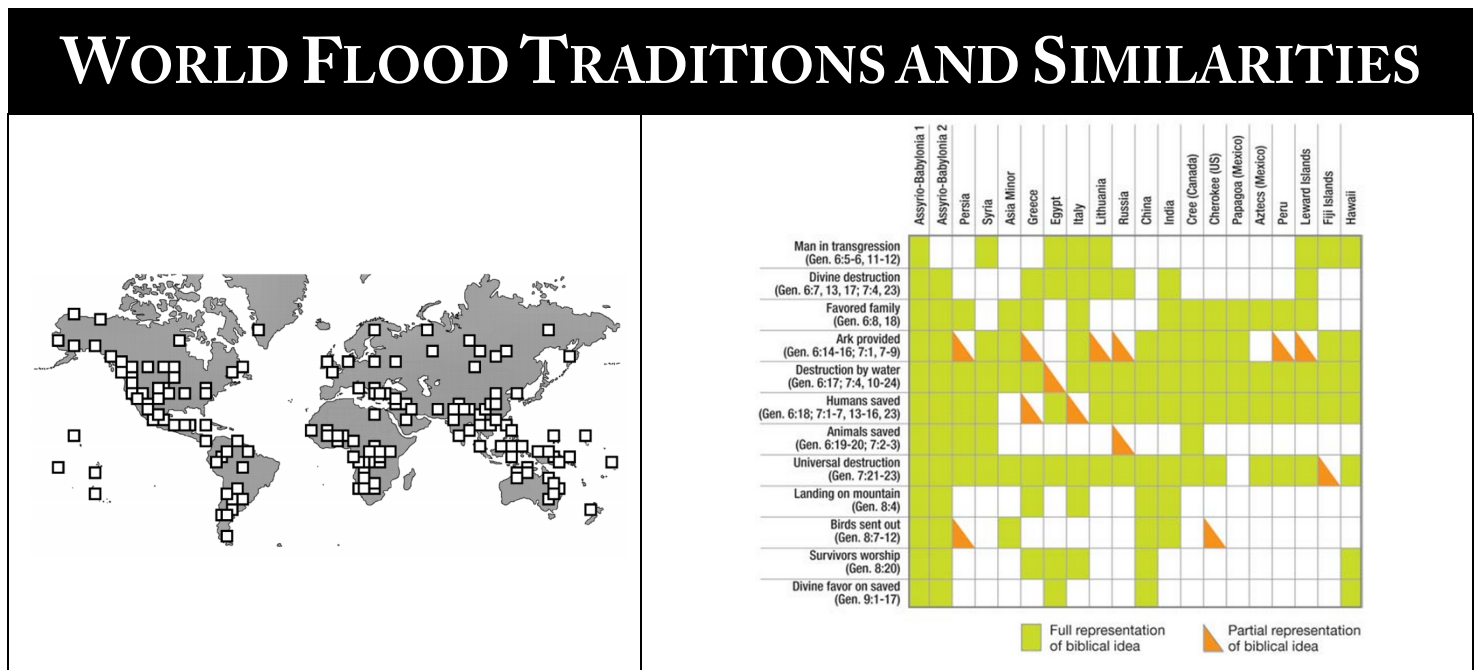
In light of these things, the Church must recover a passion for the good news and a knowledge of what exactly it is, so that they can tell it to people once again. The good news is not “be a better husband” or “have a happy marriage.” The good news is that Jesus Christ is the King and he sets people free from sin, death, and the devil when they turn to him in faith. Learn the story and tell it again, and the gates of hell will not be able to stand against the church. My prayer and hope is that this teaching might once again lead to a recovery of a truth that once toppled whole nations as people of zeal went forth into their lands and conquered souls for Christ through nothing more than telling them the good news of the King of kings.

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<sup>28</sup> We will focus especially on the transferring of the keys and how the church has great power in Matt 18.

# APPENDIX: Revelation 20 Language in Extra-Biblical and World Literature

Most Christians today are aware that nearly every culture on earth has a Flood story. There are many similarities among them, though the Biblical story has God's own unique truth on the spiritual matters of it. The fact of these stories won't go away even if someone doesn't like it. But why shouldn't they? I believe it demonstrates that the biblical story that so many disregard as myth is actual history.



What most Christians are not aware of is that Revelation 20, which parallels Rev 12, also (as we saw with 12) has

parallels with many stories of the ancient world. This should no more bother us than the Flood stories do, for it speaks to the truthfulness of the words of the seer, that he saw a mighty angel drag the dragon-devil down to the abyss with a chain where he was bound for 1,000 years. Not every story has all of these elements, but they each provide some fascinating similarities.

This appendix gives a sampling of such parallels along with a couple of articles on why the supernatural world is so important to understand with regard to chains and binding as we interpret Revelation 20. My only comments here is simply that the point isn't to say that the Bible "rips-off" myths to tell its story, but that the myths are rather, unconsciously or not, understanding the reality that is fulfilled, not in the gods, but in the God of gods, Jesus Christ, as Revelation and the rest of Scripture to plainly teach us. We've dealt with such parallels before, and I continue to point us to ideas like "subversion" and mythological universalism that we discussed in the sermon on ch. 12.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Two links in that sermon were C. S. Lewis, *Is Theology Poetry?* Oxford Socratic Club, 1944 (Samizdat University Press, 2014), 8-9, [http://www.samizdat.qc.ca/arts/lit/Theology=Poetry\\_CSL.pdf](http://www.samizdat.qc.ca/arts/lit/Theology=Poetry_CSL.pdf); Brian Godawa, "The Subversion of God in Aronofsky's Noah," *Thus Spake Godawa: God, Movies, Culture, Blah Blah Blah* (April 2, 2014), <http://godawa.com/subversion-god-noah/>; etc.

- (As we saw in Ch. 12) When the goddess **Leto** was **pregnant** with **Apollo** (**Zeus**' son), she was attacked by **Python the dragon**, because he knew that her child had been appointed to kill him. But she was carried to a safe island by winds send by Zeus. **Poseidon** then hid the island under the water so that Python could not find the woman and her child. Four days after Apollo was born, he found the dragon and **killed it**.<sup>30</sup>
- **Yima**, known as “**the fair Yima**,” and “**the good shepherd**,”<sup>31</sup> is the greatest hero of Persian mythology. His kingdom covered the whole world during a time when everything was good, and his rule lasted a **thousand years**. Throughout his reign there was neither cold nor hot wind, neither disease nor death.<sup>32</sup> It was prophesied that after he was gone, frost and cold lie in wait to enshroud his kingdom. So, Yima—the Persian flood-hero—begins to look after a man and a woman, pairs of the best animals and plants. One day Yima sinned by telling a lie, and the Divine glory that had surrounded him, fled in the shape of a bird.<sup>33</sup> Later, Yima is killed by **Azhi Dahaka**, the “**Fiendish Snake**” (for that is what “Azhi Dahaka” means).<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup> See **Beale**, *Book of Revelation*, 624.

<sup>31</sup> *Vendidad 2.21*. *Venidads* (dialogues between Ahura Mazda and Zoroaster against the demons) and *Yashts* (invocations of deities) are part of the *Avesta*, a collection of sacred texts of ancient Persia in the Zoroastrian religion. The *Bundahishn* (below) are the primary collections of Zoroastrian cosmology, drawing from the *Avesta*, but are not regarded as holy.

<sup>32</sup> *Vendidad 2.5*.

<sup>33</sup> *Yasht 19, 34*. See **Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis**, *Persian Myths* (Austin: TX, University of Texas Press, 1993), 25-26.

<sup>34</sup> The *Dictionary of Ancient Deities* says, “**His greatest desire is to exterminate mortals from the face of the earth. . . In the ‘Bundahish’ [“creation”] he is the son of fiendish demon Angra**

Along comes a second hero, **Thraetaona**, who **vanquishes the serpent by binding him with chains** in Mount Damavand, there to lie **in bonds until the end of the world**, when he will be **set loose**. At this time, the terrible dragon will devour one-third of the mortals on earth and one-third of the vegetation of the world. But then, a third hero, **Keresaspa**, will be resurrected from the dead and will **slay the dragon**.<sup>35</sup>

- The Chinese story of Holy Shu and Yü Lü, the gods to reside on top of the world (**peach**) **tree** on the Mountain **Tu-shuo** in the Ts'ang sea, are said to control the goblins so that whenever one does evil, they “**bind it with a reed rope**” and feed it to tigers where they are **expelled** from the mountain and the tree.
- In Aeschylus’ (525 – 455 BC) *Prometheus Bound*, the rebel Titan is taken into the wilderness and **chained hand and foot** to the side of a cliff.<sup>36</sup> Yet, he continues to be a thorn in the side of Zeus who opens up the rock and **entombs** him until later.<sup>37</sup> Meanwhile, prior to this, the god Ouranos (Heaven) is virtually omnipotent, “**the most terrible of kings and the least easily dethroned ... he ‘binds’, he chains up—his eventual rivals in hell.**”<sup>38</sup>

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Mainyu by Angra Mainyu’s mother, Autak. Azhi Dahaka, in an attempt to conquer Yima, was captured by Thraetaona and chained to Mount Demavand. He will remain there until the end of history. At that time, he will devour one-third of the mortals and one-third of the vegetation of the world. When Keresaspa is resurrected, he will slay Azhi Dahaka [see Bundahishn 29.9].” **Patricia Turner, Charles Russell Coulter**, *Dictionary of Ancient Deities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 85.

<sup>35</sup> *Bundahishn* 29.89.

<sup>36</sup> **Aeschylus**, *Prometheus Bound* 1-81, 142, 271, 618.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 1066. See also **Hesiod** *Theogony* 505-616; *Works and Days* 42-105.

<sup>38</sup> **Mircea Eliade**, *Images and Symbols*, 92.



- Closer to home, in 1 Enoch, **Azazel** (whom some scholars say may very well be Prometheus)<sup>39</sup> and **Semjaza** “**bind**” themselves in an oath with 200 watchers to come down to earth to have children with our women (**1En 6:4-6**). For their treachery, the Lord sends Raphael<sup>40</sup> and Michael) to “**bind [them] hand and foot, and cast [them] into the darkness**” “**for seventy generations**” after which “**on the day of the great judgment [they] shall be cast into the fire,**” **bound** and tormented in “**the prison**” of “**the abyss**” (**10:4-13**; see also chs. **54-56**; **69:28**). *Somehow, though bound, Azazel managed to keep his worship alive and well for millennia after his binding inside of a mountain!*
- In the book of Jubilees, Noah asks God to “**shut**” the demons of the earth in the place of judgment as he and his sons “**bind**” them (**Jub 10:5-6**), but “**Prince Mastema, the devil,**”<sup>41</sup> pleads with God to let him leave a tenth of them alone so that he might continue to exercise his will among men because men are so evil (**7-9**). Later, he himself “**was bound and imprisoned behind the children of Israel that he might not accuse them**” but “**we let them loose that they might help the Egyptians and pursue the children of Israel**” (**Jub 48:15-16**).<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> See **Nickelsburg**, *1 Enoch: A Commentary*, 191-193.

<sup>40</sup> Raphael also has the task of binding the demon Asmodeus in **Tobit 3:17; 8:3**; cf. **TSol 5; 13:6**.

<sup>41</sup> Mastema (we have the Latin *Mastima* and the Midrashic Book of Noah SR HMSTMH) is a Hebrew word that appears in Hosea 9:7-8. It means “hostility” or “hatred” or “persecution.” The Dead Sea Scrolls and other ancient Jewish texts like Jubilees use this word as a proper name for Belial or Satan. In fact, in this very spot, a Greek translation has *diabolos*. He is the leader of evil angels and the prince of the spirits.

<sup>42</sup> Notice in this particular passage how he is bound “**so that he might not accuse**” Israel and is then set “loose” so that he might do so again.

- In the very strange book the Testament of Solomon, God binds demons with unbreakable bonds (TSol 5:11-12) and then gives Solomon the same power (18:3) by granting him a magic ring of power which is given to him by Michael (1:6).
- It isn't just past, but future. In the Testament of Levi, we have a prophecy that Beliar (2Co 6:15), aka the Devil, will be bound by a coming Messiah (TLevi 18:12)<sup>43</sup>

From Greece to China to Persia to Israel, we have then in these stories: Angels, dragons, demons, the devil, serpents, accusing the brothers, keys, chains, binding, loosing, prisons, the abyss, the judgment day, eternal fire, a thousand-year reign, a great king who is God/god over it all. And this is but a small sampling.<sup>44</sup> Listen to how similar

<sup>43</sup> “And Beliar shall be bound by him.” TSim 6:6 is related, “Then all the spirits of error shall be given over to being trampled understood. And men will have mastery over the evil spirits” (see Luke 10:19). TZeb 9:8 is also related. “And thereafter the Lord himself will arise upon you, the light of righteousness with healing and compassion in his wings. He will liberate every captive of the sons of men from Beliar, and every spirit of error will be trampled down. He will turn all nations to being zealous for him. And you shall see [God in human form], he whom the Lord will choose: Jerusalem is his name.”

<sup>44</sup> Keener has a good summary, “Incantations for warding off demons are at least as old as the Egyptian Book of the Dead (e.g., Spells 40, 41, 136) and Persian sources (Olmstead 1959: 18, citing Vid. 8:21; 20:7). Although “binding” had wider figurative usages (e.g., 22:13; Plato *Cratylus* 403C; cf. sympathetic magic in *PGM* 12.160–78; mummification in *PDM* 14.256) and sometimes referred to demons’ present or future imprisonment (1 Enoch 10:4–6, 11–14; 13:1; 14:5; 21:3–4; Jub. 10:7; Test. Levi 18:12; Rev 20:2; cf. 1 Enoch 22:11; 90:23; Deut. Rab. 1:22; Mt 22:13), it became common in magical exorcisms (e.g., Tob 8:1–2; Smith 1978: 127; Twelftree 1986: 385; cf. Test. 3:7; 18). “Binding” demons appears as part of magical texts in Aram. incant. text 3.2, 7; 5.1–2 (“conquered ... bound”); 5.3–4 (“I am binding you with the evil and strong spell”); 10.1 (“Wholly bound and sealed and tied in knots ... that you ... depart from the house”); 27.2–3; 47.1–3; cf. *PGM* 3.99–100; texts also speak of demons binding persons (e.g., Tob 3:17; Deissmann 1978: 304–7); in Hom. *Il.* 5.385–91 mortals bind Ares in a jar. One could also “bind” demons to manipulate them to do one’s will in sorcery (e.g., *PGM* 4.384–85,

2246–48; 101/1–3; cf. also conveniently in Kraemer 1988: 108–9; cf. Alexander 1980: 36–40), or use such demons to “bind” people (e.g., *PGM* 4.355–56, 376–83, 395; 7.912–13; 15.1; 32.1–19; 101.8–9, 16–17, 36; *IG* 3.97.34–41 in Lefkowitz and Fant 1988: 258, §251).” **Craig S. Keener**, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009), 365 n. 78. For more see **D. C. Duling**, “Testament of Solomon,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, ed. James H. Charlesworth, (New York; London: Yale University Press, 1983), esp. 963: TSol 1:13 note p and the ref. to **Mircea Eliade**, *Images and Symbols* p. 94 n. 9; 967: TSol 5:12 n. p and link to art. By **Cyrus Gordon**, “Two Magic Bowls in Teharan;” 975: TSol 15:7 n. e.

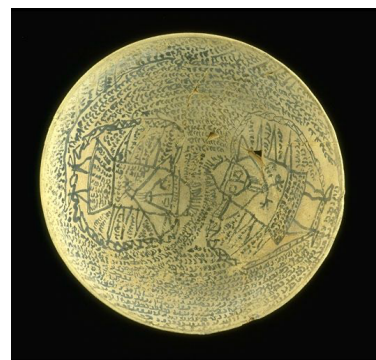
**Going Deeper:** The Gordon article has a fascinating translation of a magic bowl from Iran (these bowls were considered traps for demons; note how it looks like a creature at the bottom of an abyss):

“Ye are bound and sealed, all of you devils and demons and liliths, by that hard, (2) strong and mighty and powerful bond wherewith are bound SYSYN and SYSYN ‘DWD D’M’ PRYK PRQ BYSP (3) son of GW’L. The evil lilith that causes the heart of the sons of men to go astray and appears in the dram of night and appears in the vision (4) of day; that burns and casts down with nightmare, falls upon, kills boys and girls, lads and lassies – is conquered and sealed away from the house and from (5) the threshold of Bahram-Gusnasp son of Ist(a)ra-Nahid by the talisman of Metatron the great prince, who is called The Great Healer of mercies that bless the season, (6) who vanquishes devils and demons and black-arts and mighty spells away from the house and from the threshold of Bahram-Gusnasp the son of Ist(a)ra-Nahid amen, amen, selah. Vanquished are (7) the black-arts and mighty spells, vanquished are the enchanting women – they, their magic and their spells and curses and their invocation(s) away from the four borders of the house a Bahram-Gusnasp son of Ist(a)ra-Nahid. Vanquished and trampled down are the enchanting women, vanquished on earth and vanquished in heaven. Vanquished are their constellations and stars. Bound are the works of their hands. Amen, amen, selah.”



Incantation Bowl/Demon Trap (Jewish),  
Hershel Shanks, *BAS*

<https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-artifacts/magic-incantation-bowls/>



Other bowls with demons  
locked up and chained.

it all is to **Revelation 20:1-3**, “Then I saw *an angel* coming down from *heaven*, holding in his hand *the key to the bottomless pit (the abyss)* and *a great chain*. And he seized *the dragon*, that *ancient serpent*, who is *the devil and Satan*, and *bound him for a thousand years*, and threw him into *the pit*, and *shut it and sealed it over him*, so that *he might not deceive the nations any longer*, until *the thousand years* were ended. After that *he must be released for a little while*.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> **Nicholas A. Dodson**, “The Matthew 16:13-18:20 Chiasm as the Fountainhead of Matthean Proto-Ecclesiology,” A Dissertation to Liberty University Rawlings School of Divinity (March 2019),

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**Richard H Hiers**, “‘Binding’ and ‘Loosing’: The Matthean Authorizations,” *JBL* 104, no. 2 (June 1985): 233–50; [https://www.jstor.org/stable/3260965?read-now=1&refreqid=excelsior%3A6e95b6d415a4176ca5b918c0b13d70ff&seq=18#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/3260965?read-now=1&refreqid=excelsior%3A6e95b6d415a4176ca5b918c0b13d70ff&seq=18#page_scan_tab_contents).

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Venidad.