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## Reasons why the binding of Satan in Revelation 20:1-4 cannot refer to his defeat at Calvary

*"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years,"* Revelation 20:1-4.

I understand that it is generally believed among A-millennialists that the binding of Satan, in Revelation 20, is a reference to what happened to him at Calvary.

I have heard that stated myself in an exposition of these verses.

Now I find it hard to believe that anyone can be satisfied with such an explanation of this passage of God's Holy Word. Such an interpretation leaves so many unexplained verses and generates so many contradictions and incredible implications that it cannot be seriously regarded as a proper exegesis of this passage.

God's Word always makes good sense. It is true that we may not be able to fully comprehend at all times what it is that God is saying in His Word, but it is never contrary to reason. The virgin birth of Christ was beyond the full comprehension of the Old Testament believers, but the revelation of how that came about, as recorded for us in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, indicates that the mystery, while outside the realm of human experience, was not outside the realm of the possible and the reasonable. With God all things are possible and when finally understood by men, perfectly reasonable.

For the post-tribulation Pre-millennialist, Revelation 20:1-4 is a plain record of a future event that will take place AFTER the return of Christ in glory to claim for Himself the kingdoms of this earth and reign over them for 1000 years. The various incidents recorded here:— the binding of Satan with a great chain, his casting into the bottomless pit, his prevention by a seal from deceiving the nations until the 1000 years are ended, the martyred dead from the time of the Antichrist reigning with Christ upon the earth, are all literal statements of what will take place after Christ returns.

The mystical, symbolic and figurative method of interpretation which many unfortunately indulge in, would have us believe that this refers to a past event and that the restrictions imposed upon the devil in are operation NOW!

That is just impossible to believe for those who treat the Word of God REVERENTLY, SERIOUSLY and who simply TAKE GOD AT HIS WORD.

I have some questions for those who hold to the notion that Revelation 20:1-4 refers to Calvary and its aftermath.

### Question 1: If the binding of the devil refers to the Saviour's victory at Calvary does not this imply that he was not bound before Calvary?

Such an idea is totally erroneous. The devil has always been under restraint. This certainly was the case in Job's day.

"And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand," Job 1:12.



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"And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life," Job 2:6.

What of the statement of Joseph when questioned by his frightened brethren? "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive," Genesis 50:20. Here is God ruling over the actions and intentions of the devil and wicked men.

What the wise man says in Proverbs 16:4: "The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil," is high doctrine indeed but it makes clear that God overrules all things for His own eternal purpose and glory.

These restrictions continued in New Testament times as is evident from the following verses.

"And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him. And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep. And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked," Luke 8:30-33.

The devils were required to seek Christ's permission before they could enter the swine. This denotes the degree of submission to Christ under which they existed.

"And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him," Mark 1:23-27.

This is but one of the many instances in which the devils were compelled to submit to Christ.

The Saviour's words to Peter when he very foolishly rebuked the Saviour indicate His sovereignty over the devil.

"Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men," Matthew 16:22-23.

Later, just before His betrayal, the Saviour's words to Peter again indicate His power over Satan.

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren," Luke 22:31-32.

Paul tells the Corinthian believers that the degree to which they can be tempted by the devil, the great tempter (1 Thessalonians 3:5), is under the restraint of God.

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it," 1 Corinthians 10:13.

The devil cannot do all that he would desire to do with God's people today and has always been under this restriction. But that is very different from the restrictions that are listed in Revelation 20:1-4.

**Question 2: If at Calvary, Christ took the devil and "bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled," then how can Peter, subsequent to**



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**Calvary, be inspired by the Holy Ghost to state clearly: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world," 1 Peter 5:8-9?**

How can Satan be walking about and threatening Christians with destruction, some 30-odd years after Calvary if he was there bound, shut up and sealed "that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled?" And how can he who is so bound and imprisoned be resisted by the child of God today?

"Neither give place to the devil," Ephesians 4:27.

"Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil," 1 Timothy 3:6-7.

What are we to make of Christ's words to the church in Smyrna when He said: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," Revelation 2:10?

How can the devil be "cast . . . into the bottomless pit, and shut . . . up," and a seal set upon him, "that he should deceive the nations no more" and yet be free to cast some at Smyrna into prison?

This interpretation of Revelation 20:1-4 just does not make sense and makes a mockery of God's Word. Indeed, the propagation of such a notion is but further evidence of the devil being on the loose and deceiving the nations, and some believers, still!

Does this not make a farce of God's Word and make the cross-work of Christ a vain, meaningless and empty thing? The binding of Satan which Christ is alleged to have carried out is seen to be most ineffective.

How this teaching shames the Saviour and His cross work!

**Question 3: If Christ has shut the devil up so that "he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season", what is the source of the deception that has marked this Christian era and has made the task of evangelising the nations so incredibly difficult?**

I know what the Bible says in answer to this question. Consider these verses:

"But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?" Acts 5:3.

"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them," 2 Corinthians 4:3-4.

"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience," Ephesians 2:2.

"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand . . . .



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Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked," Ephesians 6:11-13, 16.

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils," 1 Timothy 4:1.

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you," James 4:7.

"And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness (or the arms of the wicked one)," 1 John 5:19.

All of these verses carry only one meaning and that is that the devil is UNBOUND, UNCHAINED and to a large degree UNRESTRICTED in his activities against the people of God. He presently poses a major threat to Christ's cause and is depicted as such by the post-Calvary writers of the New Testament and his activities are in complete contrast to that restraint which the A-millennialist says is presently imposed upon him as set forth in Revelation 20:1-4.

How can this be so if the restraints depicted by John in the Apocalypse were imposed at Calvary?

The answer is obvious surely. These verses all speak of a very active devil and the people of God are exhorted by Christ to resist him and battle against him.

How would that be at all possible if we are presently in that era when the devil is bound and chained?

## **Question 4: If the events of Revelation 20:1-4 are current, how can it refer to those who suffered death under Antichrist as having been resurrected and reigning with Christ?**

The resurrected saints are described as those "which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." If we are presently in the period referred to in these verses, and we must be if verses 1 and 2 refer to Calvary, then where are these resurrected saints who perished under Antichrist having refused "his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands?"

It just does not make sense!

## **Question 5: If Revelation 20:1-4 refers to Christ's victory over the devil at Calvary, what do the words, "and after that he must be loosed a little season," mean?**

Does this mean that there is to be a rescinding of Calvary's victory? Will the benefits, the blessing of the victory of the cross be cancelled for a time?

The thing is too blasphemous, too ridiculous to contemplate.

I repeat, the circulation of such an absurd and unscriptural notion as that propounded by the A-millennialist with regards Revelation 20:1-4, is in itself a clear evidence that the old propagator of falsehoods, or as the Saviour calls him, "the father of lies", John 8:44, is far removed from imprisonment but is very actively pursuing his plan of deceit.

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20th June, 2014.