

# KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

*"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."*

## FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 219

### THE BINDING OF SATAN (continued)

“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” (Rev. 20:1-3).

The seer beholds an angel coming down out of heaven, carrying a key and a great chain. With the chain he binds the dragon. Then he opens the door to the abyss, thrusts his prisoner in, locks the door over him, and, for extra security, seals it, so that it cannot be secretly tampered with without discovery. We will not comment here about how Satan, being a spirit, can be bound with a chain or shut up behind lock and key. In an apocalyptic vision this presents no more difficulty than for a lamb to take a book and open the seals upon it, or for a beast to rise up out of the ocean and rule over the nations, or for garments to be washed white in blood. It is the *spiritual truth* couched in the figurative language of the symbols to which the spiritual mind is directed!

Of the dragon, the ancient serpent, it is expressly said that he is Satan. And he was now bound by the angel for a thousand years. Let us place this picture before us vividly, for John says he saw it; we therefore can also form a living mental image of the same. Therefore, right before his eyes, while John was viewing the picture, the dragon, namely the devil, was actually being bound by the angel with the chain, so that he could neither stir nor move. This John sees! The fact that the dragon was bound a thousand years could naturally only be communicated to John as information revealed within himself by the Spirit; for the picture did not last a thousand years. I have experienced the same thing when the Lord has spoken to me in a dream or a vision and I simply knew or inherently understood something about the vision that was not communicated to me by anything I saw in the scenes shown me. If we ask — Was Satan actually being bound at the precise moment in which John saw this? Our answer is — No! For John was not being shown a one-time event to transpire in the spirit-realm, either past or future, but he was shown a great spiritual reality to be experienced in all of the Lord’s people as they walk in the spirit and grow up into Christ. It was just a symbolic picture of that. And the thing that matters concerning the picture, in so far as it is a revelation of God’s working within us, is not just the binding itself, but the binding for a thousand years! The deep mystery is that this reveals to us not only the fact of Satan being totally bound in the abyss of our earth, within our heart, but also the HOW of that binding!

Many commentators place as much importance upon the binding of Satan as they do upon the thousand years, since they place both out in the future, believing that so far it cannot be perceived that Satan

has ever been bound, therefore the blessed time must still be in the future. They paint themselves a picture of their future thousand-year kingdom in a truly carnal manner, a kingdom of magnificent rest and blessed peace here upon earth, free from every influence of the devil. Thus, as John sees the dragon lying motionless before his eyes, bound with a chain, even so Satan would be bound in reality, in somewhat of a physical and localized way, so that he could move neither hand nor foot, and as a consequence, his devilish influence would have to cease. The question follows — Would just binding the devil *make men holy*? And, if God was going to bind the devil so there could be righteousness and peace on the earth, why then did He allow the devil in the garden in the first place! Would it not have been better to just bind Satan back there in that long ago beginning and save the world all the heartache, pain, and treachery men have endured for six long millenniums! Has God now learned something from His mistake in permitting the serpent into Eden? Is He now correcting the mistake so men can be holy and the earth can have peace, not by transforming men, but just by binding the devil? Oh, no! That's not what the picture is telling us at all! And, if everything were to happen in reality as John sees it here, then it would be no Revelation presented in signs and symbols, as in verse one of the book we are told it would be; it would be no prophecy in prophetic pictures!

The thing we need to see in order to understand the deep mystery the Holy Spirit is teaching those who have eyes to see and hearts to understand is the great truth that God has had a *divine purpose* in Satan's activity on earth, in the lives of men; and when that purpose is fulfilled *then Satan is bound*. The same principle is true in our natural lives. If I am building a house I will buy certain tools to use in my work. But when the house is finished, I will either lay aside, discard, give away, or sell those tools. The job is done, they have fulfilled their purpose, therefore there is a change in their status.

Did GOD create the devil? Well, we know he did not create himself! Nor did he “just happen.” The reason some have held the view that Satan was once a beautiful and powerful archangel in heaven who was lifted up in pride and somehow *turned himself into the devil* is because it seems to relieve God of the responsibility for evil, sin, sorrow, and death in the world. That “*all things are of God*” and that God Himself “*created all things*” is declared again and again throughout the scriptures. Did not the Lord say to Pharaoh, that wicked man of rebellion against all that was of God, “Even for this same purpose have I RAISED THEE UP, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared *throughout all the earth*” (Rom. 9:17). And is that not exactly what happened as a result of what took place in Egypt in those days! The infinite wisdom of God's mind cannot be ascertained by these carnal little heads of ours. There is nothing fearful about this view unless the *truth* be fearful! I would not be surprised if some of the compatriots of the prophet Amos may have thought he was speaking blasphemy when by the Holy Spirit he said, “Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be *evil* in a city, and THE LORD HATH NOT DONE IT?” (Amos 3:6).

Why, oh why can men not believe the simple, unvarnished word of God? Ah, we have God's own word for it — His positive statement that He creates all things, including all the so-called *evil* things as well as the good things. “That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, *that there is none beside me*. I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create the darkness: I make peace, and *create evil*. I THE LORD DO ALL THESE THINGS” (Isa. 45:7). God creates evil...it cannot be! But here it is in the Word. What will you do with it, beloved? “We must explain it somehow,” the fundamentalist says. “Surely it cannot mean that God *actually* creates evil, sin, sinners, and even devils — it must mean that He creates *physical evils* — famines, pestilences, hurricanes, tornadoes, forest fires, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, calamities, judgments, etc., which God sends upon mankind as punishment for their wickedness.” Not so! The word here for “evil” is the Hebrew word *ra* which is used throughout the Old Testament to denote wickedness, sin, and wrongdoing. In some five hundred passages it is so used!

As soon as this truth dawns within your enlightened heart, the knowledge of *whence came the serpent* will speedily follow. The word of God is certain and unmistakable! The inspired record infallibly declares, “Now *the serpent* was more subtle than any *beast* of the field which THE LORD GOD HAD MADE” (Gen. 3:1). Two things are here revealed: the nature of the serpent is a *beastly* (sensual and

ferocious) nature — and GOD MADE HIM! Suppose that instead of trying to explain this passage in harmony with some man-made creed, we let all creeds go and wait upon the spirit of wisdom and revelation from the Lord to give understanding of what God is teaching us! These words shining down from the very dawn of history deserve pages of comment, but can you not see that they are filled with the spirit of revelation? In only a few words they teach us that **God made** the serpent, God made him with a **bestly nature**, God made him **subtle and cunning**, God made him **the Devil and Satan**, God made him a **liar and a murderer from the beginning**, and God **placed him in the garden of Eden with Adam!**

We flounder a bit in our understanding of these things, but as time passes and the Holy Spirit takes the things of God and reveals them unto us, we begin to understand that in all the universe a thing is a thing, and we understand what it is, ONLY BECAUSE IT HAS ITS OPPOSITE. Good without the knowledge of evil can scarcely be called good at all, for it has no opposite to be contrasted with, and thereby understood. Who could possibly speak of the *day* if *night* had never been known? How could we comprehend *light* if we had never experienced *darkness*? What could we know of *life* if there were no *death*? What could we know of *health* if there were no *sickness*? What would we know of *wealth* if *poverty* had not spread its specter upon the earth? No man can be trusted until he has been EXPOSED TO THE OPPOSITES, until he has been *tempted* or *tested* in relation to the opposites! No man can be declared strong until he has been tested for weakness, nor can he be called an overcomer until he has encountered and wrestled with the adversary! Those who are worthy to slay their Goliaths must first have met and slain their lion and their bear. No man can be an overcoming son of God until he has encountered THE SERPENT IN THE WILDERNESS and come forth victorious in the power of the spirit!

Ah, beloved, there is *purpose* in affliction. There is *purpose* in trial. There is *purpose* in temptation. There is *purpose* in suffering. There is *purpose* in pain. There is *purpose* in darkness. There is *purpose* in evil. Yes, my brother, my sister, there is *purpose* in the existence and work of Satan! Without this understanding all the work of God throughout all the ages becomes a hit and miss, a trial and error affair unworthy of our omniscient and omnipotent God! If we can realize that behind the acts of Satan is the mighty hand of God to bring forth the gold of His divine nature from our earthen vessels, we can rejoice with Job who said, “He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath *tried me*, I shall *come forth as gold*,” (Job 23:10), and exclaim with David, “It is good for me that I have been *afflicted*, that I might *learn Thy statutes*” (Ps. 119:7). When we begin to see the *good* that comes from the assaults of Satan in our lives, and the result of our warfare with him, we are able to appreciate all the more the greatness of our God and the wisdom of His great mind!

A boxer has his punching bags and sparring partners, with whom he spends hours every day. These OPPOSING FORCES are indispensable to develop strength. A plant that grows in a greenhouse sheltered from the winds and rains, pampered day after day, may grow large and beautiful, but it is inherently weak, and if suddenly exposed to the elements will wither and die. But a plant that is constantly exposed to the fierce winds and pounding rains, burning heat and chilling cold, will grow strong and is not easily destroyed. So it is with us as human beings. One who grows up in a sheltered environment, who is pampered all his life, grows up a weak, spineless individual. *Adversity* builds strength of character. If we were never exposed to trials and tribulation, never subjected to the onslaughts of the adversary, we would grow up in our spiritual life weak and vulnerable indeed! The more we are exposed to adverse circumstances, the more we have to wrestle with spiritual and fleshly opposition, the more we are challenged by the world around us, the stronger we become. If we would be SONS OF THE MOST HIGH we must be STRONG IN THE LORD AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT! Our Father wants us to be strong, so He has wisely given us sparring partners to wrestle with, so we will become strong! And when we have become strong enough WE WILL LAY HOLD ON THE STRONG MAN, BIND HIM, CAST HIM INTO THE PIT, AND SET A SEAL UPON HIM! That is the mystery!

Satan is not a physical being. Therefore, he cannot be bound by any ordinary or physical means. Rocks and dirt cannot confine him inside the earth, nor can he be drowned in the depths of the sea. The fact that he has continued since Eden should be proof enough of this. Only the powerful, energetic, and living

word of God can bind the devil! There is no greater authority on these things than the word of God itself. The truth concerning the binding of Satan is part of the gospel, the *good news* in Christ! One need not go to other sources for an interpretation, thus sacrificing revealed truth on the altar of personal opinion or human speculation. When Jesus walked this earth He said, “*Now* is the judgment of this world: *now* shall the prince of this world be cast out” (Jn. 12:31). He didn’t mean that there would be no more devil in the earth after that day, as we are all witnesses, but He was describing that which, because of His mature sonship, ***had become experiential within Himself.***

In the Revelation we see the same overcoming power operative within the saints, within those who grow up unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. “And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, *Now* is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren *is cast down*, which accused them before our God day and night” (Rev. 12:10). This is spoken in connection with the casting down of Satan in the lives of God’s *manchild company*, the *manifest sons of God*. Just as Jesus said of His own experience, “*Now* is the prince of this world cast out,” so His many brethren come to that place of *salvation, strength, and kingdom power* where they too can confess, “*Now* is the accuser of *our brethren* cast down!” Aren’t you glad! “Behold, I give you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you” (Lk. 10:19). “Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet” (Ps. 91:13). “Greater is HE that is *in you* than HE that is *in the world!*” (I Jn. 4:4). The binding of Satan is a primary New Testament teaching, revealed and explained by the firstborn Son of God Himself. It is too precious and powerful to be laid in storage as a static creed to be fulfilled in some limited time and on behalf of a “lucky” few people in some future day. It’s NOT about some future date on the calendar! It’s about the LIFE AND POWER OF SONSHIP! The firstborn Son declared, “If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom (authority) of God is come to you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man’s house and spoil his goods *except he first bind the strong man?* and then he will spoil his house” (Mat. 12:28-29).

Bear with me for a moment while I point out that the carnal mind is adept at “reading into” the scriptures many things that are not there. We must ask the question in relation to our text whether this “binding” of Satan, this imprisonment and secure confinement of the adversary, should be regarded as absolute and complete, so that he is restrained in all of his activity everywhere and at all times, or whether it pertains only to a specific *aspect* of his activity. The question is answered in the text. “And he laid hold on the dragon...and bound him a thousand years...that he should *deceive the nations no more*, till the thousand years should be fulfilled.” It is not said that he was bound so he could no longer incite people to murder, commit adultery, lie, cheat, hate, fight, or commit a thousand other sins and atrocities. The angel brought a *word* out of the heavenly realm, and by and with that word he laid hold on the dragon, cast him into the abyss, shut him up, and set a seal upon him specifically so he could no longer DECEIVE THE NATIONS. It was all about *deception!* Now, I do not doubt that one result of the inability to deceive would be the curtailment or cessation of these many other sins — for the *root* of man’s first sin, and therefore the *root* of all the sins to follow, was deception! People who sin are deceived within themselves about many issues! So the angel came with *a word* — that is, ***TRUTH!*** Satan is a liar and a deceiver, and Truth exposes the lie. The “chain” in his hand is truth. The links of the chain are aspects of truth. The lie is bound within us in our experience link by link — *line upon line, precept upon precept*. The great truth is just this: Satan is bound in relation to a people that ***cannot be deceived!*** Deception is a matter of the ***mind*** and the ***heart***. When Satan is so bound by the light and truth of God within our earth that He can no longer deceive in any manner, methinks that all sin will cease! This *has* to originate as a work in the mind and in the heart!

E. Schuler relates the following history. The year was 1941. Japan bombed Pearl Harbor and they began to conquer in Southeast Asia. The British were told, “Be careful, the Japanese are going to conquer Singapore, too.” But the British said, “No need to worry. There is absolutely no danger of that happening. Look at all the cannons we have!” Singapore, you know, is a nation at the end of the Malaysian peninsula. If you look at your hand and think of your thumb as the Malaysian peninsula, at the top of the digit, where the fingernail is, that would be Singapore. And from the hand to that first little digit, that’s jungle. At the

top of the thumb, Singapore is cleared of jungle. It was civilized. It was well-defended with guns pointed out to sea so that no ship could possibly invade. Nobody could ever attack them without running right into the British guns. That's why the British weren't worried on December 7, 1941, as the smoke rose from Pearl Harbor, when they heard that the Japanese would be hitting Singapore next. The British only laughed. They felt secure. Then came February. Out of the jungle, from the hand up through the thumb came the Japanese. And when, suddenly, on February 24, 1942, the British heard the crack of rifles, they turned around and saw the Japanese coming from their rear. In only ten days, Singapore fell into the hands of the Japanese. Why? BECAUSE THE GUNS WERE POINTING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION! All of their guns were pointed to the sea. The enemy slipped up through the dense jungle behind them, and they were defenseless.

I think of many people, maybe you, your guns are pointed in the wrong direction! Millions of Christians have their guns pointed at a devil outside of them, a devil who rides the air and roams the nations, attacking from without. We have our guns pointed at this devil without and right out of the jungle of the carnal mind he slips up on us from behind and conquers us! If he doesn't come with the temptation to commit some gross sin of the flesh, or some weird cultish religious delusion, we don't recognize that it's him. Ah, he preached quite a sermon to Mother Eve, he argued all his theological points and it sounded like a high spiritual revelation that would make them *like God!* And she was *deceived!* Oh, yes, the devil slipped up on her blind side and deceived her. The good news is this. This is what God is dealing with in the binding of Satan. "That he should *deceive...no more!*" God is so filling a people with His word, so illuminating their understanding, so quickening their minds, so purifying their hearts, so girding them about with truth until they can no longer be deceived! Believe it or not, there are more scripture passages about *deceiving ourselves* and *our hearts deceiving us* than there are about being deceived by the devil! Of course, the two are intricately connected. But the Spirit of the Lord is so wrapping the chain of divine truth and revelation and experience upon the hand of His called and chosen elect in this hour until they are now being empowered to "bind that devil" in the abyss of their own hearts so that even their own hearts can no longer deceive them!

Someone says, "But, brother Eby, this is not talking about God's elect, it's talking about the devil deceiving *the nations.*" If you consider with reverent honesty the *symbolisms* of this book of Revelation you will soon discern that the truth runs deeper than the surface meaning. Actually, we find that Satan's deception works in three realms described as "the nations," "the world," and "the earth." "That he should deceive the *nations* no more" (Rev. 20:3). "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the *whole world*" (Rev. 12:9). "And he shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of *the earth*" (Rev. 20:8). Those who read these lines must certainly see that the book of Revelation is sent to the *church* symbolized by the seven churches of Asia. Is not the church found in every nation under heaven? Is not the church found everywhere throughout the whole world? And is not the "earth realm" used symbolically of the carnal church systems of man? All who dwell *not* in the heavens of God's Spirit *are deceived.*

Throughout the book of Revelation we have encountered various realms where people live in their spiritual experience — the abyss, the sea, earth, and heaven. And now we meet another term: "The great dragon...deceiveth the *whole world*" (Rev. 12:9). It is the Greek word *kosmos* meaning "orderly arrangement" or "system of things." It refers to the present order or system of things upon earth — the world systems of man. It includes such things as culture, religion, politics, economics, business, education, law enforcement, military, science, government, entertainment, and various other institutions and orders that govern the lives of men and nations. The Holy Spirit testifies that "we know that we are of God, and *the whole world lieth in the wicked one,*" and "the great dragon was cast out...which *deceiveth the whole world.*" Can we not see by this that everyone who lives by the standards of this present world system and order is *deceived!* Does that mean they are all bad people? Not at all! There are millions of decent, honest, hard working, law abiding, good, loving, even God-fearing people who live by the norms of their culture, education, religion, ethics, and society. They live and think on an earthly, carnal, worldly plane and have never once stepped foot into that higher realm of the heavens of the Spirit of the Lord! It means they simply

do not *understand* nor do they know the *truth* — the true nature of all things. Many of their opinions and conclusions about life, reality, truth, and the ways and purposes of God are flawed, mistaken, and erroneous,. We have all been there! Even after being anointed by the Holy Spirit we have been there!

The religious systems are *deceived*. The educational systems are *deceived*. The political and governmental realms are *deceived*. Even the world of science and technology is *deceived*! I can prove these points and many more, but that is not our purpose at this time. Suffice it to say, the carnal mind, which is the seed of the serpent, with all it produces, is *deceived*! But what does this mean for the church, for the body of Christ, for the bride of the Lamb and the sons of God? It means that all of the Lord's people who are *worldly minded* are *deceived*. All who are *earthly* in their living are *deceived*. And all who identify with the *nations* rather than with the *heavens* are *deceived*. And it is right here within our ***thinking***, in our ***living***, and in our sense of ***identity*** that Satan must be bound! There is no doubt about it — when God's great plan and purpose for mankind is fully consummated Satan shall be bound in the heart of every man everywhere. What a glorious expectation! But at this present time God is first working out His purpose in His FIRSTFRUIT COMPANY. All that shall ultimately be wrought out in all men must first be accomplished in the firstfruits of His redemption. The "world," the "nations," and the "earth" in which Satan is being bound today is within God's sons in every nation under heaven throughout the whole world and in all the earth! Oh, the wonder of it!

It is interesting to stand in the still darkness of the early morning and watch the breaking of the dawn: first the gray streaks in the east, and then the brighter light, until the full-orbed sun ascends above the horizon. There is a sunrise with its dawn like that in the Bible! The foregleam begins with the promise in the curse upon the serpent, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. It grows brighter as God calls Abraham and covenants to make of him a great and holy nation and a company of nations, who should bless all the nations and peoples of the earth. We see it in the miracles and authority exhibited by Moses as he challenges the tyranny of Pharaoh and by a mighty hand leads the children of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt. We see it in the conquest of the promised land, in the victories of God's people over the pagan nations and kingdoms entrenched in that theater. We see it in the prophetic reign of David and the peace, glory, and dominion of Solomon's expanded kingdom. We see it in the ministry of Jesus, whom God anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, healing all that were sick, casting out devils with a word, raising the dead and proclaiming the kingdom of God in the midst of men.

The disciples were greatly perplexed when Jesus died. But then He arose the conquering Christ! The fact of the Christ's resurrection is historic. The man who disputes it disputes the best established fact in history. He was seen by those who had despaired of His existence. He ate with them. He drank with them. He walked with them in a bloodless body. He talked to the despondent and broken-hearted apostles, the eleven, for nearly forty days. It was impossible to be deceived. He spoke, and was seen and heard on one occasion by five hundred, the most of whom were living at the time that Paul made the declaration that they knew Christ and had seen Him after His resurrection. He proved His resurrection by telling them that if they would go to Jerusalem and enter into an upper room, and wait for the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit's power would come. The promised outpouring took place. Christ went up and the Holy Ghost came down! They saw Him go and they saw Him come! It shook the place where they were sitting. The divine earthquake shook Jerusalem. It shook Israel. It shook the Roman Empire until it fell, to rise no more. It shook the world. The Spirit's power came. The Christ returned in mighty spirit-power. He who IS the truth came again as the Spirit of Truth. He came as an indwelling Life. Men who were weak became strong. Men who were wicked murderers and devils were transformed into men of virtue and power with God. Men who were illogical became great and mighty reasoners. Men who were feeble stood up, and in their spiritual majesty tower today over all the men of their time. All history substantiates the claim. Every philosopher and potentate of their time had to recognize them so that Peter, Paul, James, John, and many of their successors, became the mightiest Powers even in a heathen Empire.

The Day dawned, the shadows were fleeing away, darkness dispelled. We would but deceive ourselves were we to conclude that the conflict of the ages between the seed of the woman and the seed of

the serpent, between Christ and Satan, between truth and error, between light and darkness, between life and death has ended. The second thousand years is drawing to a close since Jesus came, died, conquered death, and poured out His life-giving Spirit and, blessed be His name! He pursues His mission still and reigns in majesty over His kingdom by entering into these temples of clay, and filling our spirits and souls and bodies with His own eternal presence and power, making us one with Him, members of His very own body, of His flesh, and of His bone, and of His blood. He is redeeming a vast company of sons in whom He is raising up His mighty Spirit, inworking His glorious mind and nature, inscribing upon the heart His Law of Life. And the hour is wonderfully nigh at hand when there shall be a further transformation, the bodies of His elect sons shall be changed in likeness unto His body of glory as this mortal puts on immortality and this corruptible puts on incorruption, so that we, who were destined from the beginning to be the revelation of HIMSELF to creation may complete His mighty work for the redemption of humanity.

A new Day has dawned! Thank God, a few of His chosen ones have arisen to behold the dawn and to drink in the intoxicating freshness of the morn. A new age has arrived. When the age of Law ended, a new Day was born and the church appeared from the womb of the morning. Now the age of the Church is drawing to a close, and that which it was destined to produce and bring forth is ready to be born from the womb of this new morning — God’s manchild, the manifest sons of God, a mature company in the full stature, life, glory, and power of HIS SONSHIP. Our Elder Brother, the firstborn Son of God, the Pattern Son, the Forerunner and Proto-type of what sonship is, bound the strong man, bound the devil within Himself, and came forth in the power of the Spirit as the Son of the Living God. Every son of God is apprehended and ordained to do what the firstborn Christ did — and now **HE SHALL BE MULTIPLIED BY MYRIADS OF HIMSELF IN THE EARTH!**

*This* is the angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand! *This* is the angel with the chain who lays hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and binds him a thousand years! *This* is the angel which casts him into the bottomless pit, and shuts him up, and sets a seal upon him, that he should *deceive the nations no more*, till the thousand years should be fulfilled! Blessed promises of a mighty deliverance, which we even now begin to see fulfilled. The time has come for the *nations* to hear the voice of the Son of God and live. Just as in Jesus’ day, this glorious and eternal reality must **FIRST BEGIN IN US WHO ARE THE FIRSTFRUITS OF HIS REDEMPTION**. We have mentioned earlier that Jesus said that a thief cannot come into a house unless he first **binds** the strong man, that is, the **lord** of that house. Then, Jesus says, the thief is able to plunder all his goods! Jesus used the illustration to point out that He was able to go about plundering the devil’s kingdom, healing the sick, casting out devils, raising the dead, and transforming men’s lives because first He had **bound** the strong man within Himself, the devil himself, and now He was able to spoil his kingdom anywhere and everywhere that God wanted to work.

The message is just this — the serpent, the dragon, the strong man, must be truly **bound in our earth** before the sons can go forth and “spoil his kingdom,” in this new Day, bringing blessed deliverance to creation. Can you not see the mystery? God’s called and separated elect are the first to be *un-deceived!* That’s what it means for Satan to be bound so he can no longer *deceive*. The Spirit of Truth is standing up in the body of Christ in this hour and all the holy sons of God who hear His voice are being thoroughly **UN-DECEIVED!** There shall be a glorious victory as Satan is bound more and more in the hearts of men everywhere. The un-deceiving of the nations means a new mentality, new understanding, new thought-processes, a new paradigm — the unveiling of the *truth* about all things in the minds of the vast multitudes of earth. What anticipation this evokes in our hearts!

As the Father unfolds these truth to the inner man, we are able to see that our Elder Brother, the Lord Jesus Christ, first bound the devil within Himself before having power to destroy his works in others. “*For the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me*” (Jn. 14:30). The devil had no place, no base of operation, no foothold, no claim; he had nothing *in Christ* because He had bound the strong man of flesh and carnality within Himself. He is the pattern and example for all those manifest sons of God who shall reveal and manifest what it means to bind Satan on this earth! In our text John simply says that as the Spirit

showed him these things he *saw an angel*. The angel held in his hand the *key to the bottomless pit*. The next statement following this is most meaningful and divinely significant: "...and he (the angel) **laid hold on** the dragon." What a word that is! Oh! that men would awaken to the truth that the action of simply **laying hold on** the dragon is the beginning and initiation of the whole process of **dealing with the devil!** Christ in us must **lay hold** upon the dragon in us or there can never be a victory over him!

I hope that we all have become aware that the symbolism of Satan being bound and thrown into the abyss does not predict a single future event, nor a single past event. It is not a picture of Jesus single-handedly and eternally defeating the devil on the cross, because for the past two thousand years the devil has been alive and well within man's experience. Nor does the binding of Satan point to a future single and instantaneous event by which Christ will bind Satan on behalf of all creation. The binding of Satan is intensely **personal** and **on-going**. It is a parabolic description of the very thing Jesus promised to His disciples, and which clearly reveals the process. "And I will give unto *thee* the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and *whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven...*" (Mat. 16:19). "And He said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I *give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy...*" (Lk. 10:18-19).

Before closing this message let us further consider what it really means for the dragon to be "bound." The entire twentieth chapter of Revelation reveals God's dealings with Satan and shows clearly and precisely what his end is determined to be. The passages now under consideration are not the whole story! Therefore, the "binding" of Satan is not the end of Satan, but merely one of the measures the Holy Spirit uses as He works a full and complete deliverance in each of our lives. Do keep that in mind as we proceed. When I think of Satan being "bound" I am reminded of expressions we often hear in the daily transactions of life, such expressions as these: "My way was completely hedged up." "My hands were completely tied." When people use such expressions, do we imagine some strong physical barrier about them or a strong hemp-cord tied around their wrists? Certainly not! We understand that a combination of circumstances rendered it impossible for them to act. Some invisible word, authority, or circumstance prevented them from doing what they ordinarily would do. Even so here! The condition is created within us which renders the adversary powerless and inoperative. It is the nature, power, and authority of the Christ!

The next thing we need to see in order to understand the mystery the Spirit would now unfold in our consciousness is the truth that Satan is not **destroyed** by the "thousand years" of being shut up in the abyss while the sons of God reign upon their thrones. He is only **bound**. There is a vital difference! To be bound and shut up in the pit signifies a **restraint** and this restraint is the work of the Holy Spirit. It renders helpless all the works of the devil making him inactive, limited, and ineffective in our earth, in the abyss of our heart. The full and final work of the Holy Ghost fire of God will in due time deal with the devil until there is no devil anywhere in God's vast universe, but that is a story which must be told later. Having bound the devil, the angel "cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up." The "bottomless pit" in no way suggests to us that there is any fire or suffering or torment there, but signifies only the **restrictions** and **restraints** that are imposed upon the satanic activity. Satan is still Satan in the pit, but he is hedged in by the limits and bounds which the "bottomless pit" represents. He is no longer able to **deceive** us! And that is no small accomplishment! He was seen cast out of our heavens in chapter twelve, but now he is effectively bound in our earth — no longer able to deceive us out of our carnal minds or fleshly hearts. He is like a vicious dog on a strong leash securely anchored, or like the angry sea, to which God says, "Hitherto shalt thou come but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed" (Job 38:11). He has lost his deceiving power over us. My, what a wonderful accomplishment of God that is in our lives! If you, precious friend of mine, are still **fearful** of being deceived, then Satan has not yet been bound in your life!

Vast multitudes of Christians have misunderstood this whole picture of the binding of Satan for a thousand years. They have assumed that the thousand years is a literal time period out in the future somewhere, and just prior to its beginning Jesus would come back to earth and all by Himself grab hold on Satan and bind him in the pit. We were going to have nothing to do with it, and then He was going to give

us some marvelous power to rule over the nations. Jesus is the one who does it, true. But He does it working *in* and *through* His body of which we all are members in particular. The wonderful fact is, Jesus does not today do anything that He does not do in and through His body! Just as your head formulates your plans, your body carries them out. Your head does not do anything that it doesn't do working through your body. Just so, Jesus our Head has the plan and the purpose, but He is carrying it out in and through His body, yea, it is working in and through His body that He binds Satan and casts him into the pit! Binding Satan and shutting him up in the bottomless pit for a thousand years means nothing other than the sons of God, the body of Christ, being so filled with revelation, knowledge, understanding, truth, and the anointing, power, and authority of the Christ, that by the power of the Christ within we uncover and bring to light every hidden thing in our earth, every satanic thing that is lurking and hiding in our heart, and by the wisdom of God crown the Spirit Lord over them all!

Again — what is the bottomless pit? It is the unregenerate part of your being, the old Adamic, carnal, natural, earthly way of thinking, desiring, and acting! When Christ is raised up in glory and power in our lives His life cuts off, shuts up, and seals off all the old nature of Adam. Does it still exist there somewhere in the depths of being? Absolutely! But as we grow up in the spirit a total restraint is laid upon our carnal ideas, objectives, inclinations, desires, emotions, understanding, interpretations, ways, and every evil impulse. The revelation of Christ brings the *key* — and with this key the whole realm of the bottomless pit and all that originates out of it is locked up. The “key” is the *law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus!* How can we know this? Because it is the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus that *makes us free* from the law of sin and death!

You see, my beloved, to the natural man the power of fear and sin and death is very real and strong. But I pray that the truth and force of what I now proclaim will grip your believing heart! Before the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus the power of sin and death is as nothing. With what ease the angel binds the dragon, casts him into the pit, shuts him up, and locks him away with the key in his hand! There is no struggle, no wrestling, and no battle. Did you not notice it? How speedily and effectively it is all performed! O, child of God, have you not considered that darkness has no power except that which we *give* to it? *“Give no place to the devil.”* When I was a child in south Alabama we had a pitcher pump from which we got all our water. The pump was down the hill a little way from the house. At night my mother would often send me to get a bucket of water from the pump. I was always afraid of the dark. To my childish mind the darkness was full of unseen dangers, wicked men, monsters, ghosts, and dreadful creatures of all kinds. They were right there ready to snatch me. They were behind the trees and hanging from the branches. They were in front of me and behind me. I would turn around and around and around all the way to the pump and back to the house., trying to face all the spooks at the same time. None of them ever touched or harmed me and, of course, as soon as the sun rose in the morning they were all gone. The fact is — they were never there! Darkness was there, and the *power of darkness*. By the power of darkness they existed in my mind and possessed all the power that my imagination gave them. But there was a greater power! *Light* is the only power on earth that could chase them away!

My beloved brethren, know ye not that *ye are the light of the world?* Brother Bennie Skinner once gave the following illustration. What if I came into your house at night and it was totally dark, and I found you standing in the corner saying, “I curse this darkness, I rebuke this darkness, I command this darkness to go!” I come in and you say, “Brother Bennie, please join me in prayer. We’re going to curse this darkness together. We’re going to break the power of this darkness.” I reply, “We’re going to *do what?*” “We’re going to curse this darkness that is in this room. This darkness has caused me to bump into things. I tripped and fell, I bruised and cut my face and nearly broke my arm. This darkness is so dreadful, depressing, and threatening!” Without a word I reach over, feel along the wall, find the light switch, and flip it on. Instantly the room is flooded with light. Every thing in it becomes visible. The danger, the depression, and fear are all gone. The *power of darkness* is broken. What happened to the darkness and its power? WE JUST TURNED ON THE LIGHT! That’s all that is necessary to defeat the darkness. *You are the light of the world!* **Turn on the light!** Ah, as soon as we *know* this, when we truly *understand* that we are sons of The Light, then **the darkness is past, and the true light NOW SHINES** (I Jn. 2:8). All creation is waiting

for the manifestation of the SONS OF LIGHT! Know the reality and power of the Light within your own experience, my beloved brother, sister, and you will be ready to enlighten this darkened world.

Now, we have not deviated from our subject. “And he laid hold on the dragon...and bound him *a thousand years*.” The “thousand years,” as we have previously explained, is a code-word signifying THE DAY OF THE LORD. “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that *one day* is with the Lord as a *thousand years*, and a *thousand years* as *one day*” (II Pet. 3:8). The day of the Lord is the illumination of the presence, glory, and knowledge of the Lord! Isaiah the prophet spoke of the day of the Lord, saying, “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising” (Isa. 60:1-3). Just as cockroaches scurry away to hide in darkness when the light is turned on, so the emotions of the soul and the works of the flesh disappear from before the presence of the glory of the Lord as He arises in the dawn of His new Day within us. So long as we are walking in the light of the Lord, which is the day of the Lord; so long as we are walking in the new creation and *as* the new creation; so long as we are walking in the life of Christ within ourselves, we then have no trouble at all from the serpent, no problem whatsoever with the devil! All who have experienced wonderful seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, when the glory of God literally floods our lives with billows of love, joy, power, blessing, and revelation know experientially that the allure of the world, the demands of the flesh, and the power of the devil are neutralized, controlled, subdued, overpowered, confined, fettered, restrained — **bound** — by the influence of the light and the life of the day of the Lord within! It is indeed wonderful!

*God is love.* Love always plans for the *best* for those who are loved. God *so* loved us, and God *so* loved the world that He gave His Son! Through the marvelous work of Christ provision has been graciously and fully made whereby *every man* may be delivered from the world, the flesh, and the devil — the dragon within. The first step in this great deliverance is the experience of regeneration whereby we are quickened to our true life and identity in the spirit within. Glorious as is the work of regeneration, it does not destroy the “old man.” Carnality, or inbred sin, or the dragon, *is not destroyed when one is quickened to God and Christ is raised up within* — he is only **suppressed**. By God’s grace the quickened spirit *can* and *does* begin to **restrain** this old man to whatever degree Christ is raised up and formed in us. Suppression is good as far as it goes. Were there nothing better provided for redeemed man than suppression, he ought to leap and rejoice with great joy over this victory over this great enemy. If a man has a family of children playing in a yard and a rattlesnake lives near by, it would be far better to *suppress* the rattler than to let him roam freely. But the better thing would be to *kill* the old rattler, or, if it were possible in this world, an even better solution would be to *change his nature!* In either event the rattler as we know him, and his danger to the children, would be *destroyed*, and he would never poison any of the children.

It is good for a believer to suppress the dragon within, but far better to have him destroyed! A family had a favorite dog. This dog was getting old and cross. He had been faithful and was dearly loved by all the family. He was extremely vicious toward visiting children. To keep him from biting children who were playing in the yard, they put a large wooden crate over him to suppress and control him, but he would growl on the inside. One day he became so agitated that he escaped from the box and bit one of the children. That night the family had a long consultation about what to do with old Rover. At last it was decided — as much as it grieved them — that old Rover must be put to death. He was taken out into the woods and shot. *He never growled again.*

It is a sad fact according to experience that many regenerated saints do not always suppress the dragon. They, at times, succumb to his stirrings and fall into carnality, or sin, or build some edifice of religious Babylon. Thus many live an up and down life, obtaining victories at one time and then falling back into defeat at other times. This is not God’s plan for His children! His provision is that they, by the raising up of Christ within themselves, begin to **bind** that dragon, **suppressing** that old man of sin more and more. It is possible to live so close to God, to so walk in the spirit of the Lord, that the dragon *does not dare manifest himself!* I’m sure you will agree that this is not the *ultimate* solution, but my, what a wonderful

place of victory it is! The old man of sin will do anything rather than die. That is why he first has to **“be bound”** and **“be cast”** into the pit, and **“be shut up”** and **“have a seal set upon him.”** It takes action out of the indwelling spirit! He had rather play possum and continue to live in the abyss of the heart than to reveal himself and die. Therefore the dragon is satisfied to play dead with many who walk close to God, yet he is very much alive far down in the darkness of the abyss. And the time usually comes when he comes to life in full vigor! When we understand the Revelation *spiritually*, we are able to grasp the spiritual significance of the following statement: *“And after that he must be loosed a little season...and shall go out to deceive the nations”* (Rev. 20:3,8). Can you not see the mystery? He may be bound, but he can also be loosed! You may bind the devil more and more within the abyss of your heart, but this is not enough! Eventually the mighty work of God in your life will enable you to fulfill this inspired word: *“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone...”* (Rev. 20:10). We will speak more of that later on.

If you want to see this angel that John saw you’re not going to see him with your natural eyes, you must see him as John saw him, in the spirit and by the spirit. An angel is a spiritual messenger and the vision stands for a message, a word, a living expression and manifestation of God’s Christ. This angel comes down from heaven, signifying that this word is not the word of man, for it comes down from above, out of the spirit of the Lord. There is a spiritual message and ministration from above coming down to affect our earth. This is the spiritual ministry of God’s Christ, Head and body, and this angel or ministry has a great chain in his hand. There is a ministry coming down from the heavens of the Spirit with so much **truth**, so much **authority**, so much **power**, that it literally binds the dragon! John saw this happening, and I know the reality of it, because it has happened in my own experience! Satan doesn’t hinder my life anymore. There is a manifestation and fullness of Christ that restrains and binds all the power of the wicked one! It means that the activities of lies, deception, accusation, religion, torment, sin, strife, sorrow, and death are bound in the earth realm of my life. And yet, I do not deceive myself, I cannot become complacent, presuming that the old dragon could not ever be let out of his prison. So I follow on that I may see the *end* of this dealing of God in my life to raise us up into the full resurrection power and glory of the Christ!

Thank God, this wonderful victory is even now being established in the experience of a people apprehended of God. How we long for such a day as this for all people and all nations! And it will come in our Father’s appointed time. Through past decades we have heard much of “deliverance ministries” as many have gone about “casting out devils” in lengthy sessions of exorcism attended by manifestations such as coughing, vomiting, etc. Some are told they have legions of devils and they are given names like “lazy devil,” “false doctrine devil,” “lust devil,” “gossip devil,” etc., etc. We praise God for all who are delivered in any measure from bondages of any kind, but often it is like a man at the mouth of the mighty Mississippi trying to bail out the river with a bucket — there seems to be no end to the masses of spirits, bondages, problems, and works of the flesh with which people contend. We find, however, that the redemptive and reconstructive and restorative work of Jesus Christ is not merely that which deals with the branches of the tree, but is that which essentially must “lay the ax to the root of the tree.” That is, it is that which must take action against the *Adamic mind*, against the *Adamic nature*, against the dragon which sits enthroned deep within the *Adamic heart*, at the very root of men’s lives. That is why Paul said, “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” (Eph. 6:12). It is significant to note that the word “principalities” is from the Greek *arche* meaning *commencement, beginning, origin*. This bespeaks not of the branches of the tree, but the root — the commencement, beginning, origin, or SOURCE of the problem! The source of the problem is not flesh and blood, not just the human life, but the *spirit* which now energizes in the sons of disobedience — that is the ancient serpent, the old dragon, which sits enthroned in the human nature!

The ultimate warfare lies in that *deep inner realm* where the source of all things is found. As long as we content ourselves to deal with individual “demons,” or to treat “social ills,” or to wage war “against sin,” or to struggle with the “lusts of the flesh,” all of which exist in the external realm of the *tentacles*, we shall find ourselves ever defeated in even these things. Do not try to reform the outer world of appearances!

When you meet with thievery, drunkenness, adultery, pride, deceit, cursing, false religion, worldliness, or any form of degradation, do not look *at* it, but *through* it. Do not look with the physical eyes, with the natural understanding or carnal perception — look with the eyes of the spirit, the spirit of wisdom and revelation. Look clear through the individual, discerning by the spirit the root and source of the issue — and there will flow grace to help.

We do not deal with people in their outer form or with manifest problems — we deal with *spirit*. We are not called to reform a person, we are not called to change the outward activity of a human body. We are called to minister the living Presence, to impart mercy, love, understanding, grace, faith, and power. Then the hearts of men will respond! “*The grace of God that bringeth salvation has appeared to all men.*” That is what we are called to do! Redemption lays the ax to the root of the tree, binds the strong man who sits enthroned in the nature, crushes the head of the serpent, and casts the dragon into the lake of fire and brimstone! Those are the wonderful *spiritual scenes* we see here in the twentieth chapter of the Revelation! Men must rise to this place of understanding, consciousness, and authority in the spirit wherein the ax is laid to the root — not to some individual manifestation, some outward expression, some external action, or some pesky little “demon” — but to the root itself — the Adamic heart where Satan’s seat is! In dealing with the root, the tentacles will take care of themselves. Do not think that the “binding” of Satan is some great future event outside of yourself. Do not think that casting the dragon into the lake of fire and brimstone is some cataclysmic event in a coming age in the outer world somewhere. Oh, no! These are spiritual realities being wrought out in the *living experience* of all who are experiencing the “so great a salvation.” It involves such a complete TRANSFORMATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND BEING UNTIL THE WORLD, THE FLESH, AND THE DEVIL HAVE NO MORE POWER, PLACE, OR DWELLING IN YOUR LIFE. Then will you know God’s FULL SALVATION!

To be continued...

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