

## Addressing Amillennialism's Bound and Free Devil

It has been stated that the binding of Satan in Revelation 20 is merely a way of saying that since Christ's first advent Satan,

"... cannot deceive the nations in such a way as to keep them from learning about the truth of God."<sup>1</sup>

Since Revelation 20:1-3 informs us that Satan will be bound during the millennium and amillennialism maintains that from the time of Christ's first advent we have been and are presently living in the millennium, amillennialism must account for the multitude of New Testament verses which explicitly attest to Satan's activities from the time of Christ's first advent to the present. Recognizing this very apparent dilemma, amillennialism offers the explanation that Satan is presently both bound and free. That is, as amillennialism states, the binding of Satan in Revelation 20 is merely a way of saying Satan is bound so that he can no longer prevent God's truth from going to the nations but he is still free to roam. Hence, amillennialism rejects the plain meaning of the terms of Revelation 20:2-3 which explicitly communicate Satan will be **bound** and **sealed in the abyss** which, as stated in verse 7, is his **prison**. Consequently, by maintaining that Satan is both bound and free amillennialism not only ties its own Gordian Knot but as we shall see, in attempt to cut the knot it actually ends up tightening it even more.

According to amillennialism, prior to the first advent of Christ, Satan kept the nations from learning about the truth of God and at the first advent of Christ Satan was bound so that the truth about God could be taken to the nations. However, this clearly conflicts with the fact that God, as He has always done since the beginning, has continued to have compassion on whom He will, enabling many to hear and believe His Word. This He has done even with a devil on the loose. God certainly let the nations go their own way (Acts 14:16). However, He gave some revelation (Enoch, Noah, Job, Abraham, Joseph and others), and He gave Israel a special written revelation (the written Word) and as the Scripture clearly shows, these proclaimed the Word of God to others and to nations long before the first advent of Christ. This, as the various texts below indicate, was more than an occasional event.

- **Enoch**

Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam preached, "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." (Jude 14-15 NASB)

- **Noah**

Noah, as he built the ark preached to a lost world and was called a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5). He preached for approximately 120 years.

---

<sup>1</sup> Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, (Grand Rapids, MI. Wm. B. Eerdmans) p. 228.

- **Job**

Job proclaimed the reality of the redeemer and that in the end the redeemer would take His stand on the earth (Job 19:25).

- **Abraham**

Abraham was a witness to Canaan (Genesis 14:17-24). Jesus said Abraham saw His day (Christ's day) and was glad (John 8:56). Join the fact that Abraham saw Christ's day with the fact that the apostle Paul stated Abraham had the gospel preached to him in the phrase, "**All the nations shall be blessed in you**" (Gal. 3:8) and it seems that even Abraham was made aware of the fact that salvation was available to the nations.

- **Joseph**

Joseph was a witness to Egypt (Genesis 39-50).

- **Joshua and Israel**

Joshua and Israel were witnesses of God to Jericho and the nations of the land. When Rahab hid the spies she told them, "**I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you.**" (Joshua 2:9). She believed (Heb. 11:31). She, as well as her father and mother, brothers, and all her relatives, were spared God's judgment on Jericho (Joshua 6:22-23). Rahab eventually was named in the lineage of Christ (Mt. 1:5).

While Israel was to destroy all of certain tribes upon entering the Promised Land (Deut. 7:1-2; 20:16-18), they were to offer terms of peace to those that were far away. If the terms were accepted, the people of the city would become the servants of Israel (Deut. 20:10-11). Otherwise, the men were to be killed, and the rest taken as spoil (Deut. 20:12-15). Thus, they were to be God's witnesses as He stated in Isaiah (Is. 43:8-13). It was not Satan that held the other nations in bondage that prevented Israel from being a faithful witness, but Israel's own sin (Ezk. 16).

- **Jonah**

Jonah witnessed to the Ninevites. Nineveh was the capital city of Assyria. As such, it was the capital of one of the great empires of the world. According to Jonah 1:2, 3:2 and 4:11, Nineveh was "**the great city.**" In 3:3, it is called an "**exceeding great city.**" In Jonah 4:11, we read there were 120,000 young children (*persons who do not know the difference between their right hand and their left hand*) living in Nineveh. When adults are included in this figure, some estimate the population to be as high as one million people (Fausset's Dictionary). Their wickedness was so great that Jonah 1:2 says it had come up before God. He sent Jonah to cry against it (1:2) and proclaim the city's ruin if the people did not repent and believe God (3:4). They believed in God (3:5) as their king issued a decree calling on the people to fast and to "**call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way...**" (3:8). Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah (Lk. 11:32).

- **Jeremiah**

Jeremiah preached to nations (Jer. 1:10)

- **Daniel**

Daniel took God's word to Babylon and Persia. Like Jonah, Daniel was God's witness inside the walls of world empires. His impact, and the impact of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego), resulted in the kings of these empires issuing decrees for their nations and others to acknowledge God (Dan. 3:28-30; 6:25-27). Even the great king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, appears to have been converted under the ministry of Daniel (Dan. 4:19-37).

In the light of these multiple Scriptural accounts where God time and again took His truth to the ungodly nations prior to the time of Christ, it seems strange that some today would dare claim that it was not until the first coming of Christ that God bound Satan so that God's truth could be taken to other nations.

Amillennialism's peculiar interpretations attempting to prove we are presently in the millennium create other dilemmas and consequently end up tightening their own Gordian Knot. Consider the biblical fact that in 2 Corinthians 11:3 and 14 Paul warned believers at Corinth against the devil deceiving them. Amillennialism's claim that the millennium began at the first advent of Christ where Satan was so as not to be able to *"deceive the nations in such a way as to keep them from learning about the truth of God"* creates a scenario where Satan cannot deceive unbelieving nations but Christians can be deceived by Satan as indicated in 2 Corinthians 11:3, 14. Consequently, in an attempt to cut one Gordian knot (Satan being bound but free, as mentioned above) amillennialism ties another (Satan unable to deceive unbelieving nations but able to deceive Christians). In the light of this scenario a valid question would be, "Who do amillennialists think will take the truth to the nations, deceived Christians?"

Revelation 20:1-3 and 7 are extraordinarily clear. Satan will be imprisoned during the millennium so as to be unable to practice in the inhabited world his most noted character trait—deception. During that time he will not be able to deceive anyone in the world because he will not be present roaming the world. In the meantime, that is at this present time, Satan is roaming freely about the world (1 Peter 5:8) and has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is the image of God (2 Corin. 4:3-4). Nevertheless, as revealed by the Scriptures cited above, since the beginning, God's truth has been going out to the world and it continues to go out to the nations to this very day (Matthew 28:18-20).