

# THE THOUSAND YEARS DOWNFALL OF SATAN

## A SERMON

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“And bound him a thousand years.” Revelation 20:2

THERE are three reasons why I believe the thousand years of this chapter mean nothing less, nothing more than the New Testament dispensation, commencing with the day of Christ, and going on, as the latter part of the chapter shows, down to the final judgment. The first reason why I hold this doctrine is because the numbers in this book must be understood, not literally, but mystically. And hence you will find, in Daniel 9, the seventy weeks there spoken of must be understood mystically, that is, declarative of a limited time, within which the Lord would do certain things; but what that limited time was, no one knew until the end arrived. Men tell us that the seventy weeks mean seventy weeks of years, that is, 490 years, and at the latter part of that seventy weeks, Jerusalem was to be destroyed. Now Jerusalem was destroyed in the year 70; that takes seventy years off from the 490, bringing the 490 down to 420. Now, from the going forth of the commandment to build Jerusalem, unto the coming of the Messiah, ought, therefore, according to their view, to have been 420 years, but it turns out that the space between these two events, the decree of Cyrus and the coming of Christ, was between 500 and 600 years; so that there is no way in which they can make that seventy weeks chronologically answer. But take the words in accordance with what the Savior says in the 1st of Acts, that it is not for us to know the times and the seasons, which the Father has put in his own power. That there are times and seasons is an advantage for us to know, but the termination of those seasons lies entirely with the Lord himself. Hence the Savior, when pointing to the end of that seventy mystic weeks, himself, as man, did not know, before he died, when they should terminate; for he said in the 13th of Mark, “Of that day and of that hour” speaking, as he is, all through that chapter, not of the final judgment, but of Jerusalem’s judgment, of the subversion and overthrow of the national sun, and moon, and stars of that nation and dispensation, “of that day and of that hour knows no man; not the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only.” So that it was not necessary that Christ, as man, at that time should know it. Also, in this same book (Revelation) you read of forty and two months, of 1,260 days, of three days and a half. The learned have twisted those spaces about into all shapes and forms, and there are as many opinions as to the time when they commenced, and the time when they will terminate, as there are days in the year; and none of them can understand either themselves or one another; because the fact is, that those spaces must be understood mystically. Nobody knows when they will terminate. They must not be understood literally; and we have no right to turn a day into a year and make it chronological. Those spaces must be understood

mystically. There are times and seasons, and within those times and seasons the Lord will establish his counsels; but when those seasons terminate no one can tell. So, with the thousand years here, it must be understood mystically. I am aware the learned tell us we must take a day for a year, and then the thousand years will be 365,000 years. That is a long time, certainly, 365,000 years; but where is their authority for turning a thousand years into 365,000 years? and where is their authority for the time when these thousand years shall terminate? Take the thousand years mystically, as a space by which the Lord has been pleased to nominate a time the exact length of which lies as yet in the cabinet of heaven; lies as yet in the secrets of his council; lies as yet as one of the secret things that belong to God, and that do not belong to us. That is one reason, then, why I believe that this thousand years means nothing more and nothing less than the gospel dispensation; because the spaces of time named in the 9th of Daniel, and in this book, must be understood, not literally, but mystically; and we are authorized so to speak by the words I have just now quoted, that it is not for us to know the times and the seasons. We know there are times and seasons. The Lord could reveal to you and to me the day when we shall die; but he has not done so. There is the fact that we shall die, but the day we know not. There never were, that I know of, but two men that knew beforehand when they should die, not long beforehand. The one was Hezekiah, and he would not have known if the Lord had not told him, "I have added fifteen years to your life and the dear Savior knew when he should die.

My second reason for believing these thousand years to mean the New Testament dispensation is, because the contents of this 20th chapter of Revelation agree altogether with the New Testament dispensation. At the beginning, we have Satan conquered and bound. And when was Satan conquered? Why, when Christ died, and when Christ rose from the dead. And when did the Savior become universal in his power, so that Satan should no longer have, as he had before, the whole range of the world, and deceive all nations, as he had deceived them before? When was Satan thus conquered and bound? Why, when the Savior died, when the Savior rose, and when the gospel went forth, by the power of the Holy Ghost, unto the ends of the earth. And then, at the end of this chapter, we have the final judgment; and at the end of the gospel dispensation, we have the final judgment.

The third reason why I believe this thousand years to mean nothing more, nothing less than the gospel dispensation, is because the contents, the main contents of the whole of the Book of Revelation, are taken from the Old Testament; and there is no doubt but that this 20th chapter, as to its substance, is taken also from the Old Testament. I think, if we go to the 4th of Micah, and to the last chapter of Zechariah, we shall find something analogous, beyond all dispute, in both those chapters, the kingdom of Christ both as a kingdom of grace here, and a kingdom of glory hereafter. His kingdom is the theme of these chapters, and it is also the theme of this 20th chapter of Revelation. These are the three reasons why I believe the thousand years to mean the gospel dispensation.

Our subject, then, this morning, is the conquest of Satan, the limitation of Satan. He was bound for a thousand years. And, in noticing our subject, say not that we are going this morning to have something merely theoretical; say not that we are going to have something as a mere matter of opinion. No, my hearer, I will not so trifle with your time. The subject we have this morning is a vital subject; it comes home to the experience and circumstances of every Christian man under the heavens; and if I do not find a vein of Christian experience and real practical godliness in my text,

then I certainly very much misunderstand the same. I will notice, then, first, *the respects or characters in which Satan is bound*; I will, secondly, notice *the abyss to which he is confined*; I will, thirdly and lastly, notice *his ultimate judgment*, as indicated in our text, "And bound him a thousand years."

First, then, as a dragon. He dealt as a dragon with Job. Job was a man that was perfect in Christ, that was just in Christ. Job was a man that feared God in Christ, knowing that his Redeemer lived. Job was a man that eschewed or got rid of evil by the interposition on his behalf of that Redeemer whom he knew. Now, Satan came to Job as a dragon; he came there as a tyrant; he destroyed all Job's property, and destroyed his health, and set his wife and friends against him. But you will perceive that here is a twofold limitation. Satan was bound. There were two things Satan could not do. First, he could not touch Job's life; secondly, he could not touch Job as he stood in Christ Jesus the Lord. Dragon, and tyrannical as he was, Ah! Job would say, I have a perfection in Christ, and there I am perfect; and while Satan has had all this power over me, and this terrible destruction of circumstances, still I am perfect in Christ. I overcome this dragon by that perfection I have in Christ; and notwithstanding all my friends are against me, and the desolate condition I am in, I am still righteous in Christ. I will still plead that. I will let that be my comfort. And it was during the operation of the enemy that these truths were such a consolation to Job, that he could so readily give up everything, and so entirely acquiesce in God's thus suffering the enemy to come in upon him, that in all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly. Here must be our victory; here must be our standing. Take away Christ, and Satan is unloosed directly. What shall we come against him with? It is by means of sin that Satan gets dominion over us, and holds dominion; but Jesus Christ, having finished transgression, made an end of sin, Satan loses his power, and we stand upon the vantage-ground of eternal victory.

Then he appears as the serpent. Now, this means his religion; evidently so, this means his fraud, his counsel, his contrivances. What a contrivance is Popery! A hundred and thirty millions of our fellow-creatures are, by that policy of hell, held in bondage at this present time. What a contrivance is Mahometanism, holding hundreds of millions in the delusion of its satanic policy to this day. What a contrivance is Church of Englandism, holding its thousands in delusion. What contrivances are free-willism and duty-faithism. All these are the smoke of hell, to becloud the pure truths of the gospel. They are the policy of the old serpent; they are the depths of hell; and they are got up with such feasibility, and so polished off, and preached off, and printed off, and pleaded off, that persons give their thousands to help on the cause of the devil, while they grudge a sixpence to the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, as far as the Lord's people are concerned, Satan's counsel shall be turned into foolishness. Let us see how this is done. He is a serpent. Here is a vineyard, which the Lord keeps night and day. Ah, says the poor sinner, that's where I should like to be. And the Lord waters it every moment. Ah, let that God be my God. And he will take care that this vineyard never shall be hurt, that the people shall sing and rejoice. Ah, says the devil, don't go there; that's hyper-Calvinism, that's Antinomianism, that's dangerous doctrine, these men are enemies to good works. But the sinner, the man who is taught of God to feel his need of such a state of things, he looks, and he sees the blessedness of it. "In that day the Lord, with his sore and great and strong sword, shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent; even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea in that day when Christ appears at Calvary, and appears in his resurrection; when Christ appears triumphant; in that new covenant day, in that gospel day, in that everlasting day, "Sing you unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep

it. I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.” Are we brought there? If so, the wiles of hell can no longer blind our minds to what the truth is; we shall overcome all the sinuosity’s of Satan; we shall take our stand upon the great truth that the warfare is accomplished, that the iniquity is pardoned, that the church has received the substitutional double, grace here and glory hereafter; in whatever sense you take the words; they may mean that, and a thousand things besides. And thus, then, Satan is limited. If it were possible, he should deceive the very elect; but the elect are chosen to salvation, and to that salvation they shall come; the elect are chosen to eternal glory, and to that eternal glory they shall come; the elect are chosen in Christ to an eternal inheritance, and to that inheritance they shall with certainty come. Here, then, again Satan is limited. He kept you under his policy for years: by-and-bye, he who commanded the light to shine out of darkness shined in your heart; down went your policy, for your policy and counsel, and Satan’s policy and counsel, at that time, were one and the same; and away went Satan, and now that the truth has made you free, it is for you to stand against the serpent in defense of that gospel by which your soul is, in time and for all eternity, made triumphantly free.

Then, third, he is a devil, he is bound as a devil. What does a devil mean? Well, do you know what the apostle Paul, in Timothy, though our version covers it very nicely, our translators are very kind to some of you gossips, people running about gossiping and slandering people, where the apostle says of the women, “not slanderers;” the original word is, “not devils.” And so, the word “devil” means “a slanderer,” “an accuser,” people who are very fond of accusing others of their faults, as though they themselves had no faults. And so, the devil is very fond of accusing the people of God of their faults, as though the devil himself had no faults. He is both a true accuser and a false accuser. He is a true accuser. He will come into your conscience, and say, You think about going to heaven! why, look at yourself. And he will accuse you of your sins, and he will come before God and accuse you, and he will mention all your sins before God. He will accuse you both truly and falsely; he does not care whichever way it is, if he can but gain his point. But then, he is limited there as the devil; he is bound as an accuser. And how is he bound as an accuser? By that blood that blots out all the sins of which Satan would accuse us; and he is damned as a slanderer, and all slanderers with him. Now, the Church rejoiced that the accuser of the brethren was cast down. They overcame him. How? By proving themselves innocent? by proving that they were not the subjects of the faults of which Satan accused them? by proving that they were dear, innocent creatures, and the devil was very wrong to accuse them? Oh, a better way than that. “The accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God Day and night.” And “they overcame him not by proving their innocence, but “by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” Blessed Jesus Christ! there he stands, against Satan, against my sins, against the curse of the law, against death, and against hell; and thus, what a triumphant victory is ours over this mighty foe, Satan.

Then, fourth, Satan. What does Satan mean? It means an opposer. You see, he takes all sorts of shapes. Now, he says, if I cannot be a dragon to tyrannize, if I cannot be a serpent to deceive, and if I cannot be a devil to accuse, if I am beaten there, I will at least be Satan. I have often thought that seems a softer term than the others; a more pious term; because his satanic majesty is very pious in his way, he is transformed as an angel of light. He comes very piously, and says, Now, Joshua, don’t you stop here; you ought not; now you go away, and work up some righteousness of your own. Look at your filthy garments; you ought not to come in that state; and really, you look as though you had been in the fire, too; you are as black as sin. Why, the sword of justice will cut

you down. Now, you come with me, and I will take you to the free-will manufactory, and we will work up some righteousness for you, and you will come out quite respectable; and if that won't do, we will take you to the duty-faith manufactory and get a little goodness there; but pray don't stop here as you are. But it was no use. I suppose Joshua, like some of the rest of us, had tried all those. It is no use to take me to these factories, to these work mongers, anymore; no, it is all vanity and vexation of spirit; if I perish, I will perish here; and so, he abode. Presently in comes the Lord; "The Lord rebuke you. O Satan." Rebuke me, Lord! Why, I was only advising him to make himself better; I don't wish him to be irreligious; I was advising him to be pious. I was only going to send him to distribute tracts; he could distribute them at the racecourse, and see the races, and enjoy them; he could distribute them at the theatre, and see the performance, and enjoy it; he could distribute them at the fair, and see all the movements, and enjoy them. Ah, notwithstanding all your feasible stories, "the Lord rebuke you, O Satan, even the Lord that has chosen." Ah, says Satan, that's worse than all, that election, God; and I suppose this is one of the election people, then? It is a remarkable scripture that, "The Lord rebuke you, O Satan; even the Lord, that has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" He was once in the fire of wrath, like the rest; he was once in the fire of enmity, burning with enmity against me; he was once in the fire of sin; but I have plucked him out; and now I will clothe him with change of raiment, set a fair mitre upon his head, and bring him into the enjoyment of pardoning mercy.

So then, Satan is bound; the consequence is, we are free; and our freedom arises, in a sense, from his bondage; for if Christ had not conquered him, we never should have been where we are; we never should have stood, as we now do stand by faith, on the shores of the mystic sea, mingled with the judgments of God, and already sing the song of Moses and the Lamb; already rejoice in the victory that Christ has wrought.

Secondly, *The abyss in which Satan is bound*. Now, it is said here that an angel came from heaven, which, of course, is Christ, who had the key of the bottomless pit, and that Satan was cast into the bottomless pit. In the 9th chapter of the same book it says, "I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth; and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit;" so that this fallen star had the key of the bottomless pit; and the Angel of the covenant, Christ Jesus, had the key of the bottomless pit. That's a very strange sort of doctrine; can't reconcile these two at all. What is to be done, then? say you. Well, I don't happen to believe in a bottomless pit. I think the sentence is a sentence that will neither bear the test of common sense nor of linguistical propriety. If it be bottomless, how can it be a *pit*! It can't be a pit if it is bottomless; it may be unfathomable space, but it can't be a pit; it is a misnomer. There is nothing in the original about a bottomless pit; and there is not one place in all the Scriptures, where you have the sentence "bottomless pit," that hell itself is meant by that term. It never means the place of the damned at all; it never means the place of the lost in one instance. I disturb our translation as little as possible, but when I am put off with a word that will not bear the test of common sense and the common usage of language, I have as much right to go to the fountain head, to the original, and see how it reads there, as the translators themselves had. Another man has no more right to dictate to me by what English word I shall nominate an original word than another man has a right to dictate to me what my religion shall be. Well, all our best scholars now translate the word as it ought to be translated, namely, "abyss;" that's the word. Now, even the word pit is not the original word in this chapter; and, therefore, "He had the key of the abyss, and cast him into the abyss;" and we shall presently see what this abyss is. Now, in the 9th chapter there are two clauses where the word *pit* is mentioned in connection with the word

*abyss* in the original. A star fell from heaven, which means a man who falls, a king who falls from his proper business into war and goes to war to destroy his fellow-creatures. Such has been the conduct of kings from age to age. "And to him was given the key of the bottomless pit." No; "To him was given the key of the pit of the abyss." And what is the abyss? This world is the abyss; this world is called the abyss; it means a deep, because of the deep mystery of iniquity that is in it. Mahometanism, Catholicism, and other *isms*, these are mighty deeps, and into these deeps, this abyss, this world, Satan is cast. Perhaps I had better name, before I go farther, the fact that, in the 12th chapter, Satan, in the very same chapter in which he is here said to be conquered, is there said to be cast out into the earth; there was no more place to be found in heaven for him. Now, there was a place for him in the first heaven; in the first heaven, there he could dwell; he could spoil the land of the Jewish heaven, the city of the Jewish heaven, the priesthood and the temple of the Jewish heaven. But when the new-covenant heaven came in, when the blood of the Lamb comes in, then comes an inheritance that Satan cannot reach; then comes a priesthood that he cannot pervert nor corrupt; then comes a city whose foundations he can never move; then comes a temple into which he can never enter. He is, therefore, cast into the abyss of this world, cast into the earth; but he cannot enter into the vitalities and realities we have in Christ. He was cast out of the Jewish heaven, but he cannot come into the Christian heaven, because in the Christian heaven the inheritance is incorruptible; but it would not be incorruptible if it were liable to be corrupted by the devil; the city of God is "impregnable," but it would not be impregnable if it were liable to be defiled by the presence of Satan; the priesthood of Christ is untouchable, but it would not be if it was liable to be touched by Satan; the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, is unreachable, but it would not be if Satan had access to it. If you understand these things in accordance with your own standing as Christians, the matter is clear enough. Well, but, say you, what is the meaning of this fallen star having the key of the pit of the abyss? Well, here is a king; I will mention no names; it would not be right, because so many of them have been very devils, that if you mentioned one it would look as though that one was a sinner above all men. Here is a king; he has armies; he has bloodshed in view; but his armies, as it were, at present are restrained; they are shut up in the pit; he has the key of this pit; he has authority over this pit in which these armies are; they are restrained at present. Presently the opportunity comes, and this king sees that he can gain his point; there are plenty of instances in history of this; he opens the pit, that is, he takes off the restraint, or the restraint is taken off; he lets his armies loose; bloodshed, all the misery follows that is described there in the 9th chapter of the Book of Revelation. And thus, he has the key of the pit of the abyss of this world; and he has the key, or authority over certain persons that are under the restraining providences of God, for Satan is bound there also; hitherto shall he come, and no further. "And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit," ought to be, "which is the angel of the pit of the abyss." What is Rome but an infernal pit? What is Mahometanism but a demoniacal pit? And what are the deep policies in which men meet to use their powers to perpetrate wars and bloodshed, what are all these but pits? And there are certain fallen rulers that are fallen down from their proper sphere, and by the line of conduct they pursue have become kings of the pit of the abyss.

Well, now, Satan in the 12th chapter is cast out into the earth, excluded from the new covenant heavens; he cannot enter into them. No lion shall be there, no ravenous beast shall be there, much less the devil. Then in this chapter, what in the 12th chapter is called the earth is here called the abyss. It is a deep sea, is this world, and thousands daily drowned in its destructive depths; that you are fully aware of. A little further on in this chapter this world is called a prison. Satan shall

be loosed out of his prison. This world may well be called a prison. All that are in it are criminals; from the new-born babe to the hoary head, all are criminals; and all are awaiting the great assize, all are awaiting the great decisive day. It is one huge prison, and all are criminals. But a wondrous person has appeared in this prison, Christ Jesus, the God-man mediator; he has come into this prison to set the prisoner free, to open, the prison-house, and a number that no man can number of these prisoners shall hear the tidings of mercy; and as to shrink from the great assize, as to shrink from the great judgment day, as to shrink from the great assemblage of all worlds at the last, they will be favored with such an acquaintance with the mercy and salvation of God, that they shall haste unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. But, tremendous as is the scene, the language of the real Christian shall be, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Let the universe break down, the city to which I belong will not break down, the God who is my God will be the same. Let the flame melt down the skies, let all these things pass away,

“My God shall live an endless day,  
When the whole creation dies.”

Thus, then, I have tried to show how Satan is conquered in the various names in which he appears; second, that Jesus Christ having the key of the abyss means precisely the same thing that he himself expresses; key means authority, power. “You have;” there it is, you see, “given him power over all flesh”, there is his power over the abyss. He can still the waves, the tumult of the people; the Lord’s voice is in the waters; he has dominion over the earth, over the abyss, and over the prison, and all that are in it: he shuts, and none can open; and he opens, and none can shut.

I have been two or three times this week much charmed with one phrase in this chapter, “He laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent;” he laid hold on him. And I thought within myself, Devil, you did try to lay hold of Christ, but you could not, no. Ah, says Satan, if I could but get him to worship me; if I could but get him to throw himself down from this pinnacle; if I could but get him to command these stones to be made bread. Ah, Satan tried to get hold of Christ, but he could not; but Christ got hold of him, bruised his head, cast him down, hands us the victory, and we realize the happy consequence as we pass through this vale of tears: “The righteous shall hold on his way.” I almost fancy I can see the devil with Judas, saying, Judas, Judas, whatever you do, when they do take him, tell them to take care to hold him fast. I am terribly afraid they cannot hold him. I cannot hold him. And so, Judas, you recollect, uses the words, which no doubt the devil put into his mouth, that is, “Hold him fast.” His Satanic majesty was very suspicious that his servant could not do the work as he wanted. “Hold him fast.” No, you shall not hold Christ fast, but Christ shall hold you fast; he shall cast you down; he shall bind you hand and foot; he shall shut you up; he shall let you go the length of your chain, and there you shall stop. The chain is the almighty providence of God, and nothing but omnipotence can break the chain; Satan can never break his chain; he shall go the length of his chain, and there he shall stop. “Now is the hour and power of darkness.” Ah, says the devil, I have got him now. No, you make a mistake; he has got you; he will turn you into a prisoner henceforth; you shall not deceive the nations of the earth any more as you have done, for this Messiah shall send his name to earth’s remotest bounds, and millions of Gentile sinners shall hear the voice of the Son of God, shall rise into eternal life, crown him Lord of all, triumph in the victory that he has wrought. Thus, then, there is the victory and the abyss into which Satan is cast.

Now, however much some of you may differ from me in this matter, I have spoken soberly and honestly, as in the sight of God, from the honest convictions of my mind.

There are two or three more points which I will just name, and then close. Satan towards the end of this dispensation, shall be loosed out of his prison for a little season; that is, his liberty shall be greater, he shall not be so restrained. Ah, what volumes does this present to my mind. I am not exaggerating, but I would engage to preach a dozen sermons upon that which is suggested in those words. Ah, my hearer, as time goes on, empty profession, human invention, fleshly conversion, the mixing up of all sorts of things, will pervade the world; and when the Son of man comes, shall he find faith on the earth? East, west, north, and south, all are pious; but all the time they are Gog and Magog in the four quarters of the earth. And Satan, towards the end of this dispensation, for a fourfold purpose shall be let loose, not, however, to undo the victory that is wrought. First, to set in operation the vast numbers of professors against the few people of God. They shall compass the camp, military term, you see, of the saints about. I could point to ministers now who have said, If we could but banish these hyper-Calvinists out of the villages and towns, we should soon evangelize the world. You would soon demonize it worse than it is, that is what you would do; the last state of *their* converted would be worse than the first. And so, Satan, that he might hereby show the emptiness of the profession generally then abounding, shall have liberty to marshal hosts from the four quarters of the globe against the saints of God. That will be a time, I was going to say, of persecution, no, a time of attempted persecution, for the very judgments of God shall stop him, and he shall not be able to succeed. The next is that Satan might fill up the measure of his iniquity; the next purpose is that he might receive his final defeat; and the last is that he might undergo his final judgment. Hell is never denoted by the original word abyss, wrongly translated *bottomless pit*. Hell is spoken of at the end of this chapter as a lake of fire, into which Satan is finally cast.

Thus, then, I have set forth, perhaps in rather a confused way, but as clearly as I could set forth, the victory of Christ over Satan: I have set forth the abyss into which he is cast, together with that liberty he shall have for a little season, to fill up the measure of his iniquity, to have his final defeat, and to undergo his ultimate judgment. But if I should be so led, as I hope to be I do not mean I am going to have a course of sermons upon this chapter, but I hope we shall have another sermon or so upon the chapter, to make matters still more clear, as I do feel anxious that we should all understand the Scriptures so as increasingly to enjoy them.