

# The Timing of Satan’s Binding

The Expositors Seminary  
Super Seminar – April 8-9, 2016

## I. Introduction

<sup>1</sup> Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. <sup>2</sup> And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; <sup>3</sup> and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time (Rev 20:1-3).

- **Initial Observations:**

- **Key Question:** Is the binding of Satan \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_?

- **Comparison of Views:**

	<b>Amillennial</b>	<b>Premillennial</b>
➤ Timing of Binding:	_____	_____
➤ Degree of Restriction:	_____	_____

## II. The Premillennial Argument

The binding of Satan in Revelation 20 is incompatible with the NT’s portrayal of his influence during the present age, and therefore the millennium must be future, taking place between the Second Coming (Rev 19) and the eternal state (Rev 21-22).

### A. The Absolute Degree of the Restriction

- Satan is *seized* (v. 2)
- Satan is *bound* (v. 2)
- Satan is *thrown* into abyss (v. 3)
- The abyss is *shut and sealed* over him (v. 3)

## B. The Present-Day Activity of Satan

- He is “the god of this age” (2 Cor 4:4).
- He is “the ruler of this world” (John 12:31).
- He “prowls about like a roaring lion” (1 Pet 5:8).
- He tells lies (John 8:44).
- He tempts believers to sin (1 Cor 7:5; Eph 4:27).
- He disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Cor 11:14).
- He seeks to deceive the children of God (2 Cor 11:3).
- He snatches the gospel from unbelieving hearts (Matt 13:19; Mark 4:15; Luke 8:12; cf. 1 Thess 3:5; 1 Tim 1:20; 4:1-2).
- He takes advantage of believers (2 Cor 2:11).
- He influences people to lie (Acts 5:3).
- He holds unbelievers under his power (1 Jn 3:8-10; 5:19; Eph 2:2; Acts 26:18).
- He torments the servants of God (2 Cor 12:7).
- He thwarts the progress of ministry (1 Thess 2:18; Rev 2:10).
- He seeks to destroy the faith of believers (Luke 22:31).
- He wages war against the church (Eph 6:11-17).
- He traps and deceives unbelievers (2 Tim 2:26).
- He holds unbelievers captive to do his will (2 Tim 2:26).

**CONCLUSION:** The binding and incarceration of Satan in the abyss *cannot* be a present-day reality!

## III. The Amillennial View

### A. The Present-Day Timing of Satan’s Binding

- Binding took place at the \_\_\_\_\_ coming of Christ
- Incarceration extends \_\_\_\_\_ the present age
- Therefore, the 1000 years \_\_\_\_\_ the present age

### B. The Partial Restriction of Satan’s Binding

- Binding does not \_\_\_\_\_ Satan’s activities
- It merely \_\_\_\_\_ them to some extent
- Therefore, Satan is both active on earth and imprisoned in the abyss

#### IV. The Amillennial Argument

To argue for their view, amillennialists typically point to three related aspects of the binding of Satan: (a) the significance of the abyss, (b) the purpose of the binding, and (c) the parallels to Revelation 20:1-3 elsewhere in the New Testament

##### A. The Significance of the Abyss

###### AMILLENNIAL ARGUMENT

- The abyss is not an actual \_\_\_\_\_.
- The abyss = “one of the various metaphors representing the spiritual sphere in which the devil and his accomplices operate” (G.K. Beale).
- Therefore, Satan can be active on earth while simultaneously in the abyss.

###### PREMILLENNIAL RESPONSE:

- **The Abyss in Luke 8:26-33**
  - The abyss is \_\_\_\_\_ an actual location.
  - The abyss is a well-known \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Confinement in this spirit prison involves the complete removal of demonic activity and influence upon the earth.

###### Questions for the Amillennial View:

- **The Abyss in Revelation 9:1-6**
  - Demons must \_\_\_\_\_ be released from the abyss before they are able to cause harm on the earth.
- **The Abyss in Revelation 20:1-3**
  - Satan is thrown “into the abyss” which is “shut” and “sealed” over him.
  - Satan must first be “released from his prison” (v. 7) before he can “come out to deceive the nations...in the four corners of the earth” (v. 8).
  - But as long as he is confined in the abyss, Satan is not able to depart from his prison and therefore his activity on earth is completely non-existent.

###### Questions for the Amillennial View:

## B. The Purpose of the Binding

### AMILLENNIAL ARGUMENT

- The purpose clause in Rev 20:3 indicates that Satan is bound in one respect and one respect only: “so that he would not deceive the nations any longer.”
- Therefore, Satan is free to partake in every other activity attributed to him in the NT.

### PREMILLENNIAL RESPONSE:

- The degree of Satan’s restriction in Revelation 20 is determined not by the purpose clause *alone*, but also by the location of his imprisonment, the abyss, which removes him from earth and cuts him off from any influence there.
- Furthermore, the NT teaches that Satan is actively deceiving the nations throughout the present age:
  - 2 Corinthians 4:3-4:
  - 2 Timothy 2:26:
  - 1 John 5:19:
- The NT also teaches that Satan will continue to deceive the nations right up until the Second Coming when he is cast into the abyss:
  - Revelation 12:9:
  - Revelation 13:14:
  - Revelation 18:23:
  - Revelation 19:20:

## C. The New Testament Parallels

### AMILLENNIAL ARGUMENT

- Several NT passages describe the victory of Jesus over Satan at the first coming of Christ (Matt 12:29; Luke 10:17-18; John 12:31-32; Col 2:15; Heb 2:14-15; 1 John 3:8; Rev 12:7-11).
- These passages are said to be parallel to the binding of Satan in Rev 20 and therefore indicate that this binding took place at the start of the present age.

## PREMILLENNIAL RESPONSE:

None of these passages actually refers to what is described in Rev 20:1-3, and therefore they tell us nothing about the meaning of John's vision.

- **Matthew 12:29:**

“Or how can anyone enter the strong man's house and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.”

- **The Timing of the Bindings**

- **The Purpose of the Bindings**

- **Luke 10:17-18**

“The seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.’ And He said to them, ‘I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.’”

- **The Ambiguity of the Passage**

- **The Absence of Any Clear Parallels**

- **John 12:31-32 / Colossians 2:15 / Hebrews 2:14-15 / 1 John 3:8**

- These passages describe the victory accomplished by Jesus through His death and resurrection as He triumphed over Satan and redeemed from his control those who believe in Christ.

- The amillennial argument cannot account for the release of Satan in Revelation 20, for whatever is accomplished in the imprisonment of verses 1-3 is undone in the release of verse 7.

- If the binding of Satan in Revelation 20 refers to Christ's work of redemption on the cross, the finished work of Christ turns out to be His *unfinished* work when Satan is released!

- Therefore, these passages must not describe the same act of divine judgment against Satan as what John describes in Revelation 20:1-3.

▪ **Revelation 12:7-11**

- According to amillennialists, the following parallels show that Revelation 12:7-11 describes the same casting down of Satan as Revelation 20:1-3, which indicates that both passages describe the present age:

Revelation 12:7-11	Revelation 20:1-6
(1) heavenly scene (v. 7)	(1) heavenly scene (v. 1)
(2) angelic battle against Satan and his host (vv. 7-8)	(2) presupposed angelic battle with Satan (v. 2)
(3) Satan cast to earth (v. 9)	(3) Satan cast into the abyss (v. 3)
(4) the angels' evil opponent called "the great dragon, . . . that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan, who leads the whole world astray" (v. 9)	(4) the angels' evil opponent called "the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan," restrained from "deceiving the nations anymore" (vv. 2-3), to be released later "to deceive the nations in the four corners of the the earth" (vv. 3, 7-8)
(5) Satan "is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short" (v. 12)	(5) Satan to be "set free for a short time" after his imprisonment (v. 3)
(6) Satan's fall, resulting in the kingdom of Christ and his saints (v. 10)	(6) Satan's fall, resulting in the kingdom of Christ and his saints (v. 4)
(7) the saints' kingship, based not only on the fall of Satan and Christ's victory but also on the saints' faithfulness even to death in holding to "the word of their testimony" (v. 11)	(7) the saints' kingship, based not only on the fall of Satan but also on their faithfulness even to death because of their "testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God" (v. 4)

Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, 229.

- This argument focuses on superficial points of similarity while ignoring key differences between the two passages, differences which make it impossible for them to be describing the same events or time period.

**KEY DIFFERENCES:**

	<b>Revelation 12</b>	<b>Revelation 20</b>
<b>Origin:</b>	_____	_____
<b>Destination:</b>	_____	_____
<b>Outcome:</b>	_____	_____

**V. Conclusion**

Session #3

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# The Timing of Satan's Binding

TES Super Seminar

April 8-9, 2016

Matt Waymeyer

# The Millennial Debate in Revelation 20

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## **FOUR KEY ISSUES:**

- The Duration of the Thousand Years
- The Timing of Satan's Binding
- The Nature of the First Resurrection
- The Chronology of John's Visions

## Revelation 20:1-3:

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Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.

## The Key Question:

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Is the binding of Satan  
present or future?

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Is the millennium itself  
present or future?

# Comparison of the Views

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**AMIL**

**PREMIL**

**Timing of Binding:**

**Degree of Restriction:**

# Comparison of the Views

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**AMIL**

**PREMIL**

**Timing of Binding:**

Present

**Degree of Restriction:**

# Comparison of the Views

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**AMIL**

**PREMIL**

**Timing of Binding:**

Present

Future

**Degree of Restriction:**

# Comparison of the Views

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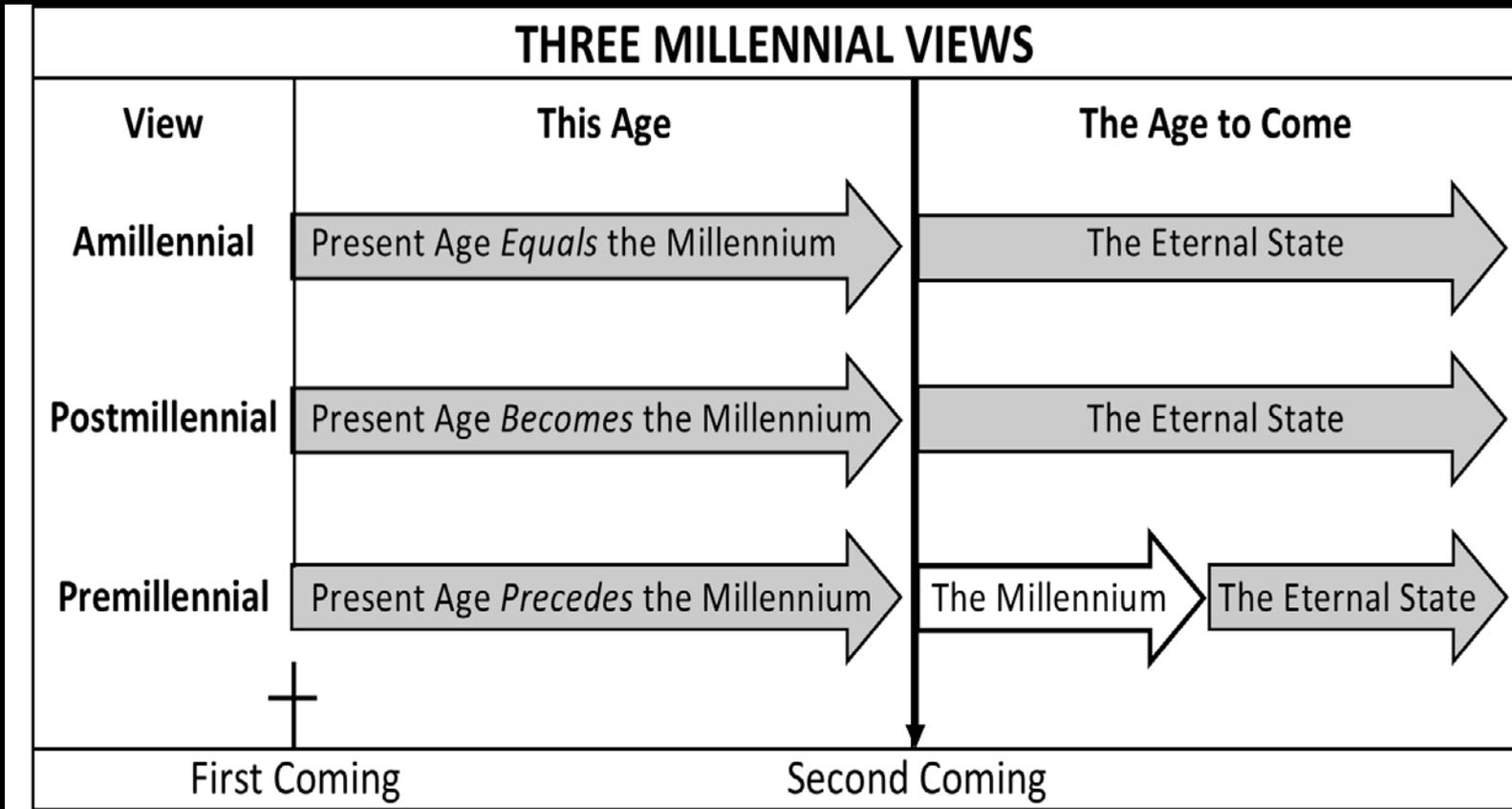
	<b>AMIL</b>	<b>PREMIL</b>
<b>Timing of Binding:</b>	Present	Future
<b>Degree of Restriction:</b>	Partial	

# Comparison of the Views

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	<b>AMIL</b>	<b>PREMIL</b>
<b>Timing of Binding:</b>	Present	Future
<b>Degree of Restriction:</b>	Partial	Complete

# Three Millennial Views



# The Binding of Satan in Revelation 20

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## **THE PREMILLENNIAL ARGUMENT:**

The binding of Satan in Revelation 20 is incompatible with the NT's portrayal of his influence during the church age, and therefore the millennium must be future, taking place between the Second Coming (Rev 19) and the eternal state (Rev 21).

## Wayne Grudem (PR):

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“The imagery of throwing Satan into a pit and shutting it and sealing it over him gives a picture of total removal from influence on earth.”

## John Walvoord (PR):

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“If a symbolic presentation of the binding of Satan were intended to teach that Satan was rendered completely inactive, what more dramatic picture could be provided than is here portrayed.”

# Present-Day Activity of Satan

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- He is “the god of this age” (2 Cor 4:4).
- He is “the ruler of this world” (John 12:31).
- He “prowls about like a roaring lion” (1 Pet 5:8).
- He tells lies (John 8:44).
- He tempts believers to sin (1 Cor 7:5; Eph 4:27).
- He disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Cor 11).
- He seeks to deceive the children of God (2 Cor 11:3).
- He snatches the gospel from unbelieving hearts (Matt 13:19; Mark 4:15; Luke 8:12; cf. 1 Thess 3:5; 1 Tim 1:20; 4:1–2).

# Present-Day Activity of Satan

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- He takes advantage of believers (2 Cor 2:11).
- He influences people to lie (Acts 5:3).
- He holds unbelievers under his power (1 John 5:19; Eph 2:2; Acts 26:18; 1 John 3:8–10).
- He torments the servants of God (2 Cor 12:7).
- He thwarts the progress of ministry (1 Thess 2:18).
- He seeks to destroy the faith of believers (Lk 22:31).
- He wages war against the church (Eph 6:11–17).
- He traps and deceives unbelievers (2 Tim 2:26).
- He holds them captive to do his will (2 Tim 2:26).

## The Point:

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Satan can either be locked away in the abyss, or he can be engaging in the various activities ascribed to him in the present age, but he cannot be both.

## Kim Riddlebarger (AM):

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“At first, this seems like a formidable objection to the amillennial view. But once we look closely at what John actually taught about the binding of Satan, the notion of Satan being bound in the present age becomes an argument in favor of the amillennial position.”

# The Amillennial View

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## **THE PRESENT-DAY TIMING:**

- Binding took place at the first coming of Christ
- Incarceration extends throughout the present age
- Therefore, the 1000 years equals the present age

## **THE PARTIAL RESTRICTION:**

- Binding does not eliminate Satan's activities
- It merely limits them to some extent
- Therefore, Satan is both active on earth and imprisoned in the abyss.

## William Cox (AM):

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“Satan, though bound, still goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. The chain with which he is bound is a long one, allowing him much freedom of movement.”

## William Hendriksen (AM):

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“A dog ... bound with a long and heavy chain can do great damage within the circle of his imprisonment.”

## Kim Riddlebarger (AM):

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“The point of John’s vision was that the angel restrains Satan’s evil activities. His binding does not eliminate them. Even though Satan is presently bound and cannot deceive the nations, he remains a dangerous foe, the same way in which a mortally wounded animal is far more dangerous than a healthy one.”

# The Binding of Satan in Revelation 20

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## **THREE AMILLENNIAL ARGUMENTS:**

- The Significance of the Abyss
- The Purpose of the Binding
- The New Testament Parallels

# The Significance of the Abyss

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## **THE AMILLENNIAL VIEW:**

- The abyss is not an actual location.
- The abyss = “one of the various metaphors representing the spiritual sphere in which the devil and his accomplices operate” (Beale).
- Therefore, Satan is able to be very active on earth while simultaneously in the abyss.

# The Significance of the Abyss

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## THE PREMILLENNIAL VIEW:

- The abyss is an actual location in the spiritual realm where evil spirits are confined and prevented from any earthly activity/influence.
  - Luke 8:26–33
  - Revelation 9:1–6
  - Revelation 20:1–3

## The Abyss in Luke 8:30-33

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<sup>30</sup> And Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion”; for many demons had entered him.

<sup>31</sup> They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss. <sup>32</sup> Now there was a herd of many swine feeding there on the mountain; and the demons implored Him to permit them to enter the swine. And He gave them permission. <sup>33</sup> And the demons came out of the man and entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

# The Abyss in Luke 8:26-33

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## **THREE SIGNIFICANT TRUTHS:**

- The abyss is indeed an actual location.
- The abyss is a well-known spirit prison.
- Confinement in this spirit prison involves the complete removal of demonic activity and influence upon the earth.

# The Abyss in Luke 8:26-33

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## **KEY POINT:**

These evil spirits could either be imprisoned in the abyss or they could be prowling about the earth – engaged in demonic activities – but they could not be both.

# The Abyss in Luke 8:26-33

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## QUESTIONS FOR THE AMILLENNIAL VIEW:

- What sense does it make for demons to plead with Jesus not to cast them into the spiritual sphere where they normally function?
- Weren't they already there prior to their encounter with Jesus?
- If the abyss is the spiritual realm in which demons operate, how is being confined in the abyss any different from indwelling the demon-possessed man or the herd of swine?

# The Abyss in Revelation 9:1-6

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## CONCLUSION:

Demons must first be released from the abyss before they are able to cause harm on the earth.

# The Abyss in Revelation 20:1-3

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- Satan is thrown “into the abyss” which is “shut” and “sealed” over him.
- Satan must first be “released from his prison” (v. 7) before he can “come out to deceive the nations...in the four corners of the earth” (v. 8).
- But as long as he is confined in the abyss, Satan is not able to depart from his prison and therefore his activity on earth is completely non-existent.

# The Abyss in Revelation 20:1-3

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## QUESTIONS FOR THE AMILLENNIAL VIEW:

- How can Satan be seized and thrown into the spiritual realm in which he normally functions?
- Wasn't he already there prior to being seized?
- This would be similar to seizing a dangerous shark in the Pacific Ocean and locking it in a "prison," only to then define that prison as the entirety of the Pacific Ocean.

## Charles Powell (PR):

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“In every reference to the abyss the being or beings in it must emerge from it in order to interact with humans. This suggests that the sphere of the abyss, like the realm of the dead, is separate from the realm of living humanity, and that those who dwell in the abyss have no contact with those outside that sphere.”

## The Bottom Line:

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Rather than allowing for the kind of freedom that the amillennialist claims, imprisonment in the abyss eliminates the activity of the devil on earth and therefore the binding of Satan in Revelation 20 cannot be a present reality.

# The Purpose of the Binding

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## **THE AMILLENNIAL ARGUMENT:**

- The purpose clause in Rev 20:3 indicates that Satan is bound in one respect and one respect only: “so that he should not deceive the nations any longer.”
- Therefore, Satan is free to partake in every other activity attributed to him in the NT.

# The Purpose of the Binding

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## THE PREMILLENNIAL RESPONSE:

- The degree of Satan's restriction is determined not by the purpose clause *alone*, but also by the location of his imprisonment, the abyss, which removes him from earth and cuts him off from any influence there.
- The NT teaches that Satan *is* in fact deceiving the nations during the present age (2 Cor 4:3-4; 2 Tim 2:26; 1 John 5:19).
- The NT teaches that Satan will continue to deceive the nations right up until the Second Coming when Satan is cast into the abyss (Rev 12:9; 13:14; 18:23; 19:20).

# The New Testament Parallels

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## **THE AMILLENNIAL ARGUMENT:**

- Several NT passages describe the victory of Jesus over Satan at the first coming of Christ (Matt 12:29; Luke 10:17-18; John 12:31-32; Col 2:15; Heb 2:14-15; 1 John 3:8; Rev 12:7-11).
- These passages are said to be parallel to the binding of Satan in Rev 20 and therefore indicate that this binding took place at the start of the present age.

# The Binding in Matthew 12:29

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## **MATTHEW 12:29:**

“Or how can anyone enter the strong man’s house and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.”

# The Binding in Matthew 12:29

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## **THE TIMING OF THE BINDINGS:**

- If Satan was not yet bound through the death and resurrection of Christ (Matt 27–28), how was Jesus able to cast out the demon in Matt 12?

# The Binding in Matthew 12:29

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## **THE PURPOSE OF THE BINDINGS:**

- Amillennialists emphasize the purpose in Rev 20:3 as stating the sole purpose of Satan's binding, but the purpose of Satan's binding in Matt 12:29 was to enable Jesus to heal the demon-possessed man.
- The binding in Matt 12:29 broke the power of Satan to possess specific individuals, but the binding in Rev 20 seals him in the abyss and prevents him from deceiving the nations.

## Harry Boer (AM):

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“The binding of the strong man in the Synoptic Gospels ... bears no recognizable relationship to the thrust of the amillennial view. That thrust is that the binding of Satan applies only to his ability to deceive the nations. But where are the nations in the pericopes that refer to the binding of the strong man? They are not to be seen. What is very much in view is the local sufferers from demon possession and Satan’s inability to prevent Jesus from healing them; what is not at all in view is the now blessedly undeceived nations.”

# The Binding in Matthew 12:29

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## **KEY DISTINCTION:**

The inability of Satan to prevent Jesus from delivering demoniacs (Matt 12:29) is simply not the same as his inability to deceive the nations of the world (Rev 20:1-3).

# The Binding in Luke 10:17-18

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## LUKE 10:17-18:

“The seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.’ And He said to them, ‘I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.’”

- The Ambiguity of the Passage
- The Absence of Any Clear Parallels

# The Victory of Christ Over Satan

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- **John 12:31–32:** “Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out.”
- **Colossians 2:15:** “When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.”
- **Hebrews 2:14–15:** “...that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.”
- **1 John 3:8b:** “The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”

# Premillennial Response

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- The amillennial argument cannot account for the release of Satan in Rev 20, for whatever is accomplished in the imprisonment of verses 1-3 is undone in the release of verse 7.
- If the binding of Satan in Revelation 20 refers to Christ's work of redemption on the cross, the finished work of Christ turns out to be His *unfinished* work when Satan is released!

## George Eldon Ladd (PR):

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“These words are difficult to understand if they are applied to our Lord’s binding of Satan in his earthly ministry. The victory he won over Satan [on the cross] was won once for all. Satan will never be loosed from the bondage that Christ won by his death and resurrection.”

# The Casting Down in Rev 12:7-11

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## **THE AMILLENNIAL ARGUMENT:**

- Rev 12:7–11 describes the casting down of Satan in terms very similar to those of Rev 20:1–6.
- The obvious parallelism between Rev 12 and 20 indicates that both passages describe the present age.

# The Casting Down in Rev 12:7-11

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## **THE PREMILLENNIAL RESPONSE:**

This argument focuses on superficial points of similarity between Rev 12:7-11 and 20:1-6 while ignoring differences between the two passages which make it impossible for them to be describing the same events or time period.

# Differences between Rev 12 and 20

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**Rev 12**

**Rev 20**

**Origin**

**Destination**

**Outcome**

# Differences between Rev 12 and 20

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	<b>Rev 12</b>	<b>Rev 20</b>
<b>Origin</b>	Heaven	
<b>Destination</b>		
<b>Outcome</b>		

# Differences between Rev 12 and 20

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	<b>Rev 12</b>	<b>Rev 20</b>
<b>Origin</b>	Heaven	
<b>Destination</b>	Earth	
<b>Outcome</b>		

# Differences between Rev 12 and 20

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	<b>Rev 12</b>	<b>Rev 20</b>
<b>Origin</b>	Heaven	Earth
<b>Destination</b>	Earth	
<b>Outcome</b>		

# Differences between Rev 12 and 20

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	<b>Rev 12</b>	<b>Rev 20</b>
<b>Origin</b>	Heaven	Earth
<b>Destination</b>	Earth	Abyss
<b>Outcome</b>		

# Differences between Rev 12 and 20

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	<b>Rev 12</b>	<b>Rev 20</b>
<b>Origin</b>	Heaven	Earth
<b>Destination</b>	Earth	Abyss
<b>Outcome</b>	Deception	

# Differences between Rev 12 and 20

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	<b>Rev 12</b>	<b>Rev 20</b>
<b>Origin</b>	Heaven	Earth
<b>Destination</b>	Earth	Abyss
<b>Outcome</b>	Deception	No Deception

## Are Rev 12:7-11 and 20:1-3 the Same?

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Suppose a news magazine were to publish two separate articles about the president of the United States. The first article described how the president flew on Air Force One from Washington D.C. to London where he spent the day giving a number of public speeches. A subsequent article described how he flew on Air Force One from London to Hawaii where he spent two weeks vacationing with his family out of the public eye.

## Are Rev 12:7-11 and 20:1-3 the Same?

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The discerning reader would not assume that the two articles were describing the same flight simply because they both referred to how (a) the president of the United States (b) flew across the ocean (c) on Air Force One. After all, the point of departure is different, the destination is different, and the substance of the trip is different. The two accounts could not possibly be describing the same flight across the ocean.

## The Bottom Line

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None of these supposed parallels actually refer to what is described in Rev 20:1–3, and therefore this approach fails to bring clarity to the divinely intended meaning of John's vision.

## For Further Study:

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Matt Waymeyer, "The Binding of Satan in Revelation 20." *The Master's Seminary Journal* 26, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 19-46.

# The Millennial Debate in Revelation 20

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## **FOUR KEY ISSUES:**

- The Duration of the Thousand Years
- The Timing of Satan's Binding
- The Nature of the First Resurrection