

Satan loosed for a season

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[0 : 00] Chapter 20 and at verse 7. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the forequarter of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea, and they went up on the breadth of the earth and compassed the camp of the saints about and the beloved city.

And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Now some 40 years ago there were meetings that were very popular and when I was a very young Christian I used to like going to these meetings.

They were called Advent Testimony meetings. And some of these rising preachers of that time used to go round and the theme of their preaching was inevitably the second coming of Christ.

And as they preached these sermons on the second coming of Christ they were so stirring and yet there was this about them that you were sometimes pretty well confused as you left the meeting and you wondered what was this all about.

[1 : 48] And I remember too at that time some of those whom I looked up to and admired they had what was called the Scofield Reckens Bible and I always thought that if I was able to procure a Scofield Bible it would make me a very knowledgeable Christian.

and just after the last war my sister knew this and they bought for me a Scofield Reckens Bible which I still have.

But I'm not advocating the Scofield Reckens Bible. I discovered long ago that the Scofield Reckens Bible is not a good guide.

The notes are not to be trusted. They were done sincerely and they were good men who wrote these notes but they tended towards dispensationalism and that is something that when one looks at one realizes one cannot accept.

You see those who believe that Christ Jesus will return first and then I should in the millennium they see Jesus as reigning on this earth.

[3 : 14] There he is actually in Jerusalem. There he is sitting upon his throne giving instructions and giving orders.

And people are doing his bidding. Now that's all very well to think in terms like that but then when you come to a section of Revelation which speaks about the devil mustering his forces Gog and Magog encompassing the holy city does it mean that suddenly Christ is on the retreat?

Does it mean that suddenly Christ is on the defences? if that were so then it would be to place Christ in a state of humiliation which Christ will never be placed in so that to interpret the scriptures in that way must be false because when Christ comes back again he is not going to suffer any indignity.

He is not going to suffer any oppression from the devil or his cohort. and if it be said well what will happen is this that Christ will suddenly disappear from the earth and go back to heaven that still means the same doesn't it?

It still means that Christ is on the retreat and as I say when Christ comes back to this world he will not be on the retreat. It is the world that will be on the retreat.

[4 : 47] It is godless men and women who will be on the retreat. and so we can't accept that sort of teaching popularized by men like Schofield and his fellow scholars.

When Christ Jesus returns it will be once only and it will be for the purpose of final judgment and when he returns it will be for the purpose too of establishing the new heaven and the new earth

wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Now the question that we obviously ask ourselves as we study chapter 20 of Revelation is this why only must the devil be loosed for a little season?

That's a perplexing question. It's a question I ask myself. why must the devil be loosed for a little season? And I cannot answer that question.

And no one can. It is one of those things that are the mysteries that belong to God. But it is going to happen when the thousand years are expired Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.

[6 : 12] Well what we're going to look at this evening if we turn by the grace of God is to look at this that these verses before us tonight speak about Satan's release from restriction Satan's final onslaught of evil and Satan's ultimate defeat and doom.

Let's look at Satan's release from restriction. When the thousand years are expired Satan shall be loosed out of his prison and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth dog and dog to gather them together to battle.

Now as we have said already until our Lord Jesus Christ came to this world two thousand years ago and until he began his public ministry you know the devil had a field day in deceiving the nations.

Here was this tiny land of Israel you know that the length of Israel is a hundred and fifty miles that is like from here to Edinburgh that's not far and the breadth of the land of Israel is fifty miles and that distance is approximately from Edinburgh to Glasgow when you say it when I say it like that you say to me well what a small country isn't it but what influence that small country has had upon the world and is still having upon the world and that was the only land you see that was open to God because God had favour towards that land you see to them was given the promises in Israel they were given the covenant they were given the giving of the law all the rest of the world lay in pagan darkness and that is why I say the devil had a field day but then

Christ gave his ministry began after the temptation in the wilderness ■■■ you remember that memorable day when Jesus went into the synagogue in Nazareth and he was given the scroll of the book of the prophet Isaiah and he turned up that passage and this is what he read to the people as he began his public ministry the spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor he has sent me to heal the broken hearted to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind to set at liberty them that are bruised to preach the acceptable year of the Lord you see the acceptable year of the Lord has come with Christ's public ministry beginning the prince of this world said Jesus is now cast out and I if I be lifted up said Jesus will draw all men to me and from that time you see all men throughout the whole entire gentle world have been looking to the cross of Calvary and they are being converted thousands upon thousands millions have already been converted thousands are still being converted and we have reason to believe that many millions more will be converted to Christ and that he will see of the travel of his soul and he will be satisfied and his seed will be as the stars of heaven for multitude and as the sand by the seashore innumerable

[10 : 45] I know that you are looking around this vast church and you say what a tiny remnant of people have gathered here on a night like this in February 1988 it doesn't augur well for the Christian church my friend you are only seeing things from your tiny point of view when Christ Jesus will deliver up the kingdom to his father it will be a magnificent kingdom a kingdom on a grand and vast scale and it all began you see oh yes I know we can argue that it began before in the Old Testament era but it began in full measure in the days when Christ came and when as it were he placed the gospel chain upon the devil and the devil was no longer able to receive to deceive the nations he was restricted he was curbed you see with our Lord's coming and with his death on Calvary's cross the age of the gospel had begun the golden age of the gospel it had begun the devil could no longer hold nations in his grip of hellish darkness once the power of the gospel penetrated these nations the devil had to yield and loosen his grip on these nations and you know there are wonderful days still to come you say will there be another revival

I certainly think so and indeed I have reason to believe that the revivals of the past will fade fade into insignificance in comparison with the revivals that are to come particularly you see when the Jewish people are converted in their hundreds and in their thousands think of that happening my word if the Jewish people in the city of Glasgow were converted I tell you that the city of Glasgow would start to come in the Jewish community in London and the Jewish community in New York and the Jewish community in Sydney and the Jewish community in Russia these people are wonderful people these Jewish people and when they begin to understand the word of God in the

light of Christ and when they begin to proclaim it they will proclaim it you know you only have to listen to a Jew who's been converted and who understands the language of the word and who understands the word perhaps better than we with our gentle minds can appreciate I tell you this they will be grand interpreters of the word of God however at the end of it all this present world age the gospel restraint will be loosened it tells us here to the extent that the devil will once more deceive and dominate the nations of the world and that won't be for some time as far as I can see and what will happen in those days is this the glorious expansion of gospel ministry will cease missionary activity will hardly be allowed the church will hardly survive so that as Jesus says when the Son of Man shall he find faith on the earth someone might say but don't you think that that's taking place now well as I said we cannot say that we are in the last days because at least as far as my mind goes

I expect this mighty movement among God's ancient people to take place I expect revival on an international scale to begin with the conversion of the Jews there will be unprecedented blessing extending throughout the entire world but it is worth considering what Hendrickson says in his book More Than Conquerors where he points out are there certain regions of the earth already he says entering Satan's little season we leave it there at any rate what we are saying and that is this that the devil at the end is to be loosed for a little season oh but thank God look at what it says it's just for a little season season a little season so let us consider this final onslaught of evil by Satan it says that he shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth Gog and Magog to gather them together to battle the number of whom is as the sand of the sea and they went up on the breadth of the earth and compassed the camp of the saints about and the beloved city now these names Gog and Magog are found in the book of Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39 we read part of chapter 38 this evening in the illustrated Bible dictionary which has been recently published by the InterVarsity Fellowship and it's one of the most up-to-date dictionaries that you can acquire that dictionary identifies Gog with Gyges king of Lydia and it identifies Magog with the land of Gog you know it's like when we speak about

[17:33] Hitler and Nazism we mean that here is Hitler who is at the head of Nazism and Nazism stands for those who followed Hitler so when we speak of Gog here is the leader and here is Magog those who follow him and there is mystery surrounding these names but what these names represent is this they represent alien forces who threatened Israel's survival in the days of Ezekiel and John takes these names and he identifies them with all those who will oppose God and his truth at the end of time and let's be positive about this we have no grounds whatever for identifying

Gog and Magog with nations of the present time you know there are some people in Bible prophecy and they say oh well it means Russia or it means China or something like that it doesn't mean that at all because when the last great apostasy takes place it won't be just Russia and China they will come from America and from Britain and join in the apostasy you see what Satan will do during this period of his release is this he will gather from all parts of the world those who are in opposition to Christ and he will incite them against Christians and against the church and these will be terrible days for the Lord's people the Lord's people are referred to here as God's army they went up on the breadth of the earth encompassed the camp of the saints that is the army of God and they also encompassed the beloved city and that is the church of God and so during this time these forces of evil will lay siege to the people of God and to the church of God it will be a period of great tribulation I was reading one of the great Anglican preachers on this in his lectures on revelation Dean Vaughan and he posted like this a general rising of all that have not the love of God in them to disprove and to ridicule and to undermine and to trample under foot the faith once delivered to the saints and this will be the sign of the advent and of the completion of the age and these forces of wickedness arise to trample under foot these things of Christ and so what we have here in these verses of chapter 20 verses 7 to 10 what we have here is really the battle of Armageddon if you read chapter 16 of

Revelation verse 13 John you recall and we went into this some months ago John says that he saw three unclean frog like spirits issuing from the mouths of the dragon the beast and the false prophet frogs dirty creatures where you find them in the swamps repulsive and what do these frogs do they spawn and what John was seeing coming out of the mouths of these three the dragon the beast and the false prophet John saw them spawning evil leading the nations and bringing them up to the great battle of Armageddon and what is Armageddon some people try to indicate that it's a place but it's not a place

Armageddon really means the crossroads of the world Armageddon really means the decisive place of conflict and so here is the dragon and his allies the dragon the beast that is the nation under his domination and the false prophet that is false religion and all these combine combine for this last great conflict with our Lord and so during this period of the loosing of Satan a terrible time of atheism a terrible time of apostasy emerges when as we were reading in Revelation chapter 11 the two witnesses will be put to death and as we said who are these two witnesses on the one hand the word of

[23 : 31] God on the other hand the church of Christ and when they shall have finished their testimony the beast that ascended out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them shall overcome them kill them and their dead body shall lie in the street of the great city and they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them you know there are some people in the town of Inverness who literally hate the church and hate the ministers of the church I remember in Gulf Bay when I was there there was a man the poor man is dead today he died comparatively young but I'm not saying this had anything to do with his death but do you know this he had such a virulent hatred for the church of his fathers and his fathers had belonged to the free church and he made it known and he was a communist and he made it known that he hoped the day would come when communism would take over Britain and that from every lampstand the ministers of the gospel would hang and he wasn't in front and I might say at a place lined up for myself but we are in

God's hands there are people in this town they would love to see this building closed they would love to see you people forgetting all about religion and all about Christ they would love to see you wasting your time and enjoying yourself at the bingo hall across the river they would love to see you bring into all the pubs and all these places in the town tonight where they have their concerts they don't want you to listen to the gospel and it's going to be like that during this terrible period of the devil's release when there will be atheism when the Bible and the church as we have said will become museum pieces because these things no longer torment the conscience of men and women and there will be joy among these people but then you see it's all going to change we shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth

Gog and Magog to gather them together to battle the number of whom is at the sand of the sea and they went up on the breadth of the earth you see the devil on the offensive he seems to be winning they went up on the breadth of the earth compass the camp of the saints and the beloved city what happens next and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them and the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever and so here we see the ultimate defeat and doom of Satan and you'll notice that although Satan gathered together from throughout the world the forces of

Gog and Magog for the decisive battle of Armageddon you will notice this no battle began did you notice that?

at Armageddon you don't hear any clash of swords at Armageddon you don't hear any thunder of guns at Armageddon you don't see the use of terrifying missiles you see what happens at Armageddon is swift it's catastrophic and it all comes from God and not from man fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them and the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire again to go back to Dean Bowen that great Anglican preacher of the last century he says upon this gathering this confederation of infidelity of ungodliness and of atheism will burst the light of Christ's coming and the devouring fire of God you see this vision of John in chapter 20 is similar to the vision that John gives us of the pouring out of the seventh vial of wrath where he says the devil mustered his forces at Armageddon and suddenly says John there were voices and thunder and lightning and there was a great earthquake such as was not since men were upon the earth so mighty and so great an earthquake you see my dear friends when the cup of the wine of the fierceness of the wrath of God is outpoured who can stand against it in chapter 19 we read of [29 : 34] Christ riding forth from heaven with his army conquering and to conquer and in that chapter we read how he conquered the beast and the false prophet and how their followers were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone you see what these indications given to us by John indicate is this the terrible end of the devil and his cohorts the end of the devil is terrible you see at Armageddon or as we have called it the crossroads of history our Lord intervenes and he decisively intervenes and at that point you see what you will notice about our Lord is this he shows no mercy oh there are these modern theologians and they wouldn't sit here for one minute as you

dear friends are doing just now if they were here tonight listening to me preaching like this

I'd tell you that they would go out these doors and close them behind them and say we're not going to listen to that stuff because these modern churchmen you see they're so caught up with the gentle Jesus meek and mild business they fail to understand that Christ as well as being gentle Jesus meek and mild is also a consuming fire and that there does come a time when he doesn't exercise mercy and just as our Lord intervened in Ezekiel's day when Gog and Magog besieged Israel what happened a sword was called for and God declared this upon Magog Gog and Magog I will reign upon him and his bands and upon many people that are with him and overflowing rain and great hailstones fire and brimstone you see it brings us back again to Sodom and Gomorrah when the Lord sent fire and brimstone upon these cities and destroyed them and today you may go to the Dead Sea and see the place where the cities of the plain used to be and there is a north and silence and nothing is to be seen but the whole area is dead because of God's judgment which took place these many years ago and so what I say as we draw to a close this evening is this the devil's end is terrifying the devil's end is awesome the devil ends up in the lake of fire and brimstone and what does it say about his punishment he shall be tormented day and night forever and ever you know it's a wrong conception to think of the devil as being in control of hell lots of people have this idea they think oh there is hell and there is the devil in hell and he's at the head and he is being waited on by his followers nothing could be further from the truth you see in hell the devil is in pain and in hell his punishment is too dreadful to dwell upon now let me say this to you don't have any pity have no pity

God has no pity Christ has no pity but what we do say is this see to it that you don't join him let us heed the warning you see that was given by the apostle Paul to the church at Thessalonica where he says this to them the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power I find it so indescribably sad to think of the people in this town of Inverness and they don't know what the future is about and they are going on merrily on their way as if all was well nothing's going to happen and that's because of their terrible ignorance just because they haven't sat down and read the word of God because as you and I have seen in our studies here of this book of Revelation once you start to read this and once you start to consider it it's then you begin to realize the truth of all this in my studies of this book of Revelation

I've also consulted a book by Wilcock called I Saw Heaven Opened it's not the best of books very scholarly man Wilcock but sometimes the way he puts things it can be a bit confusing but yet there are some excellent things that he does say and referring to this passage he says in the end there is only Christ or Satan Christ who lives forever and those with him and Satan who dies forever and those with him between whom men are choosing daily while they may and you and I can make our choice while we may is it to be with the devil whose end

I find so terrifying and so awesome even to dwell upon I don't want to dwell upon it but I don't want to be with him but with Christ the king the head of the church the conqueror who lives forever and who is going to establish a new heaven and a new earth where dwelleth righteousness and he is beckoning me and saying rise up my love my fair one and come away for lo the winter is past the rain is over and gone the time of the singing of birds has come and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land Christ is beckoning us to a new world to a new day to a new springtime will you go pity if you don't come thou with us and we will do thee good for the

[38 : 29] Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel let us pray we give thee thanks O Lord for thy word of truth and for all that it speaks to us of and O Lord as we consider some of these subjects which are so solemn in themselves may it be that they will have the effect upon us of driving us into the arms of a gracious saviour who is still waiting to be gracious and who says come unto me all ye that weary and are heavy laden and I will give you rest O Lord may thy blessing rest upon us to that end be with us now and bless the gathering that is to follow forgive our many sins in Jesus name we ask it Amen Jesus I that he has been that

I have him he I he that I that he he he that to let you I wh that way I have that