

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 227

THE LOOSING OF SATAN

“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...which is Satan, and bound him a thousand years...that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: *and after that he must be loosed a little season...and shall go out to deceive the nations that are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle...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*” (Rev. 20:1-9).

According to the general consensus of interpretation by the theologians, preachers, and teachers of the popular church systems, Satan is so powerful and such a formidable foe that he has only to be set free for a “little season” from his prison of restraint, for the entire glory of a thousand years of the personal reign of Christ on a restored and paradisiacal earth, to collapse into universal apostasy and rebellion, with nothing left to show for that Golden Age Reign but a small “camp of the saints” surrounded by multitudes of revived paganism and atheism, “Gog and Magog,” arisen from the four quarters of the earthly paradise. Our friends who hold this theory have a hard task before them. They have sought to prove that Christ and His kingdom are no match for the almighty Satan, and that Satan’s unloosing even for a brief season is enough to totally upset the kingdom of Christ and procure universal revolt.

The Holy Spirit, however, has given us this picture to *understand* — in the Spirit and by the Spirit. If we will look within the scriptures themselves and discern God’s method of dealing with Satan in all generations and circumstances, rather than expecting some new, mysterious, and bizarre act of God, we will find the true revelation of “the loosing of Satan” to be as clear as crystal. Let us, therefore, present ourselves prayerfully and reverently before the spirit of truth, and avail ourselves of what He would teach through the very words of the Lord Himself, that we may profit from them, and know how to look for the complete fulfillment of the vision John shows to us.

The first thing we need to remember in order to understand this mystery is that Satan is not a physical being. Therefore, neither his binding nor his loosing are brought about by any physical means. Satan is bound for a thousand years, signifying that he is bound by and in the DAY OF THE LORD — the spiritual kingdom of light, illumination, power and glory. Here the perimeter is set, the limit of our overcoming in Christ. So long as we abide in the consciousness of the Day of the Lord, and yieldedness thereto, the serpent is sealed in the abyss of our flesh man. Yet the moment we step outside the consciousness of the Day of the Lord, and yieldedness thereto, the serpent is released. John says that he is released for only a short season. What does this mean to you, my brother, my sister? Can you not see that once we relax our guard, and the serpent raises his ugly head after we have known the overcoming glory of God in our life, it takes only a *short season* for us to get the message that we're living in the wrong realm! Once having tasted of the heavenly life and the power of His resurrection we have no desire or inclination to return as a dog to his vomit. The heavenly life is our origin, our home, where we came from! After we have renounced the unfruitful works of darkness, after we have experienced HIS DAY — His rest, His peace, joy, righteousness, wisdom, power, and glory — when we find ourselves descending, and suddenly the tormentors return, it takes only a short season for us to realize we must flee back into the arms of our Saviour.

“And after that he must be loosed a little season.” So many, thinking only with the natural mind, have let this phraseology confuse the interpretation. The thing of significance to which I would point you is the little word *“after.”* This word in the Greek is *meta*, which is a very interesting word. It does not mean clearly or exclusively “later on in time,” “subsequently,” or “successively,” as does our English word “after.” The clearest and primary meaning of the word (see Strong’s Concordance or Lexicon) is *“accompaniment”* or *“amid.”* All John is saying is that *accompanying, amid, or in conjunction with* the thousand years, or the Day of the Lord, Satan is allowed a little season of testing. A similar scenario was shown us in chapter twelve of the Revelation wherein we read, *“Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a **SHORT TIME**”* (Rev. 12:12). Twice in that chapter we have the “short time” or “little season” associated with the working of Satan just as we have also in our present text.

Let us prayerfully consider what is meant by the statement, *“...he knoweth that he hath but a **short time**,”* because it addresses the same “little season” we meet in chapter twenty. Unfortunately, tradition says he knows that he has but a short time because Jesus is coming back and the millennium is about to begin. Hogwash! That’s not at all what the Holy Spirit is indicating. The adversary knows that you have identified with the truth as it is in Christ, you now *know* who you are, what your true identity is, and the word and spirit of Christ have been raised up within you as the power of your life. He knows that you have been given an entrance into the Day of the Lord in your life and you have laid hold upon the power of the ascended Lord who reigns over all things and now *nothing shall be impossible to you!* He knows that you have no desire any longer to dwell in the dust realm of the unconverted soul, for your soul has been purified and raised up to reign with Him in heavenly places. Neither do you have any desire to walk any more in the passions and lusts of the flesh where he dwells. He knows that his time is short because you will no longer tolerate his lies and deceptions in any department of your being, in any vestibule of your house, or in any street of your city — the city of God which you are! That’s what he knows — and he fears that his ability to operate in any way or do anything in either your soul or your body — the dust realm he was consigned to from the beginning — is now drawing to a close!

Considering all the glorious, divine, and august things written in chapter twelve of the Revelation about the victory of the sons of God over the dragon — nothing can be more certain than the fact that Satan’s perception that his time is short has nothing whatever to do with a “second coming” or “the end of the world,” or a “thousand year reign of Christ,” for none of those things are even alluded to in chapter twelve. It’s all about the *birth of the manchild*, the *manifest sons of God*, and Satan being cast out of the “heavens” where they dwell, that is, their *spiritual life*. It means that when Satan is cast out of our “heavens,” the high realm of our spiritual life, he then seeks to stir things up in our “earth,” or our soulical realm, and in our “sea,” our body or fleshly realm. Can we not see by this that in chapter twenty God is now dealing with Satan in these lower realms of our life, and by the Day of the Lord he is “bound” or “restrained” in the abyss of our fleshly life. Isn’t it wonderful! And now, only for a *little season* — just as it was with the firstborn Son of God in His *brief wilderness testing* — can Satan ascend from the abyss to briefly but powerfully *test us* also to the uttermost!

Do I believe in a real devil? Sure I do. Not the one the preachers describe with the red suit, forked tail, horns, and pitchfork — but the devil is very real. Let me say that his playground is in our thinking, in our mind, emotions, desires, and will. That’s where he wreaks havoc, that’s where he has his heyday, that’s where he has his sadistic fun. When God moves to bring us into the image of Christ, Satan is first cast out of our religious realm, our spiritual life. The heavens of our spiritual life are cleansed, his power broken. Only then can the Lord begin to move upon our “earth” and “sea,” our soulical life and our fleshly man. Satan is bound there by the presence and glory of Christ in the Day of the Lord. This “day,” like all days, begins with a dawning, growing brighter and brighter as the sun of righteousness arises upon our land. We have all experienced the fact that in those times and seasons when the presence and glory of Christ shine bright and overflow and overwhelm us we are caught up into the exalted mind of Christ and no dragon can operate there. Sin in all its constituents and manifestations is neutralized, rendered inoperative, made of no effect by the power of His presence and life! There is only one thing that matters during that high time — God! When the Spirit is moving mightily in our lives no anger, no lust, no evil thoughts, no fleshly desires, no earthly concerns bedevil us at all! We are free! Nothing of the world has a hold on us. Our whole consciousness is permeated and controlled by the righteousness, peace, and joy of the Holy Ghost! That is when Satan is bound in the abyss!

Thus the “angel” — the message out of the heavens of God’s Spirit takes hold of your mind, your emotions, your passions, and your will and locks them away, restraining and sealing up their ability to function on any level, subjected to the mind of Christ. Yet — there is also a season when Satan is released to come out of his prison and test us again. Thank God, he is not released *forever*, he is not *permanently* paroled, he is only released for a “little season.” You see, my beloved, as we learn to walk in the spirit and live in the heavens of the presence of the Lord and the mind of Christ, our “lapses” back into the old mindset, into natural ways of thinking, into fleshly actions, reactions, and desires, and even our soulical religious inclinations become less and less — oh, yes, just a *little season!* We have no desire to live on that level, so we focus on Christ and ascend back onto the higher plane of life and victory.

It matters not what I say — many who read these lines have been there, have experienced precisely what I am talking about, have walked in the light of that most holy place in God, have heard the voice of the messenger that bound within them the hiss of the serpent, where they knew only peace, purity, power, and glory. In the blessedness of that moment your Father provoked you with an everlasting provocation — you will never again

be comfortable or content to dwell in the lowlands of the flesh! As long as we walk in the Day of the Lord Satan is bound. When he is fully bound we arrive at the experience of verse four to *live and reign* with Christ upon His throne! As I meet and know by the spirit those precious elect ones of God who have passed through the dealings, purgings, refinements, and triumph of the Christ-life within I can testify that *I see thrones, and I see them that sit upon them!* Just as John saw them, I see them! These have passed from death unto life, from carnality to spirituality, from the earthlies to the heavenlies, and *in Christ they live and have their being* and even now they are *reigning with Him* in the light of the Day of the Lord! Oh, the mystery of it! Oh, the wonder of it!

Yet — there is a truth beyond this. The beautiful truth being revealed here by the Holy Spirit is of extraordinary importance to everyone who has received the call to sonship. You see, my beloved, it is ***not enough to have the serpent restrained within us.*** The Day of the Lord will do that! Even though he is bound, this is not sufficient. A beautiful picture of this is given us in the experience of king Solomon. Solomon said, “*Now the Lord my God has given me rest on every side, and there is no adversary or disaster*” (I Kings 5:4). In the Hebrew text this reads as, “*there is no satan.*” Later, after Solomon turned away from the Lord to worship other gods, we read, “*...the Lord raised up against Solomon an adversary*” (I Kings 11:14). Again, the Hebrew text reads that the Lord raised up against Solomon “*a satan.*” For Solomon Satan was bound and then set free — depending upon *how he was walking!* So long as Satan is only “bound” or “restrained” by the Lord he can also be freed. Notice — he does not *escape*; he is *released!* (Rev. 20:3,7). The same word of the Christ that imprisoned him also releases him. As long as he has not been dealt with, as long as there is a carnal mind and a flesh nature for him to be bound and imprisoned in, he poses a danger. HE MUST HIMSELF BE DEALT WITH! When he is bound that is God’s work *in us* with respect to Satan and his activity. Indisputable as is that blessed fact, the truth of the ***destruction of the serpent*** is greater by far! We must eventually and ultimately deal with that relentless enemy of life that has *deceived all that dwell upon the earth.* He will for a little time be loosed to fester up any remaining ungodliness within us so that God’s Fire can devour any remaining unrighteousness yet in our land. This is the true “entire sanctification” some speak of! Finally Satan himself will be destroyed by the ***Great and Wonderful Fire of God — the Lake of Fire!***

Volumes could be written if we were to explore every aspect of this significant truth, but the important thing here is that Satan is bound in the Day of the Lord in the depths of our being, so far down he can neither speak nor manifest. But when the thousand years are finished — when the Day of the Lord in our lives has accomplished its full work in our soul and flesh life — he is loosed for our testing, as Jesus was tested in the wilderness — to prove our sonship. There is also a loosing in another class of people, but we will consider that further on. Have you not noticed how strangely Matthew and Mark speak of Christ’s temptation? “*And immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil*” (Mat. 4:1; Mk. 1:2). What a strange statement! Jesus had presented Himself before the Father at Jordan, and the Father witnessed of Him before all: “*This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*” Just as God declared Job to be a perfect man, so He declared His Son to be well pleasing to Him in every way. Then immediately the Holy Spirit of God drives the blameless Son of God into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan, the arch enemy of all righteousness, a murderer from the beginning, and a liar and the father of lies! Ah, but it was necessary that the Son of God be **proven**, be made **strong**, to **overcome** in these realms before proceeding on into His glorious sonship ministry and His death and resurrection.

When Jesus was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness, it was not to see whether or not He would sin. That wasn't it at all! The Father witnessed that He was *pleased* with *everything* in Jesus. With what was the Father pleased? What had Jesus done that pleased the Father? The fact is, He had not yet performed even one miracle. He had never healed any sick, raised any dead, cast out any devils, nor done any signs. He had never preached a sermon, and He certainly had not prayed and sweat blood in dark Gethsemane or gone to the cross. Before one gracious word of teaching had ever fallen from His holy lips, before He had saved a soul or performed even one act of ministry the Father testified, "This is my beloved Son IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED." The Father was pleased — for thirty long years this Son had walked with Him, learned His ways, revered His name, grown in His nature, and walked in His mind. The purpose of the wilderness was not to determine whether or not He was perfect, but to demonstrate to the flesh realm, to principalities and powers, and to all realms from the lowest to the highest that indeed HE WAS THE PERFECT MAN! As such, He was able to say, "*The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.*" There was nothing in the Son that pertained to Satan, nothing that belonged to Satan, nothing that corresponded to Satan, nothing that responded to Satan. NOTHING! Satan was completely obliterated from the life of Jesus!

But you see, beloved, *all* the powers of His flesh, *all* the powers of His natural mind, *all* the powers of His soul and body, and *all* the powers of the human religious inclinations rose up, marshalling every weapon, every force, the soldiers of all the energies of the natural man (Gog and Magog), and came up against the holy city, that is, the government of God by the spirit within the firstborn Son of God — and they, making their last stand, compassed His city about; but the *Fire of God's Word* came down out of the heavens of the Spirit of God within Him and *devoured* all the adversaries. Can you not see the mystery? After passing the test His real ministry began! So with us, His younger brethren — when our Gog and Magog, all the powers of our earth man, have assailed us and have been consumed by the Fire of God's Living Word within us, our sonship will be proven and complete. The glory of the New Jerusalem will then be revealed, and the throne of God's sons within the city, and all the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord and the nations will walk in the light of the city. It is indeed wonderful!

GOG AND MAGOG

"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 four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle.* 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*" (Rev. 20:7-9).

The only other reference in the Bible to Gog and Magog is found in the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters of Ezekiel. This use of the term by John is rooted in the Old Testament passage. One will have to admit that this is a rather strange battle which Ezekiel described in his vision. Israel is pictured at peace and dwelling in security in her land, with no attempt made to defend herself against the enemy which suddenly and powerfully sweeps down upon her. Without a struggle, as soon as the enemy marches into the land, he is smitten with a catastrophic judgment directly from God. The rest of the vision tells of a glorious celebration of victory on the part of the people of Israel. We must keep in mind that in both passages the language is highly figurative and symbolic, and it can only be interpreted in that light. The fact is, history records no battle in the history of Israel that answers to the one described in Ezekiel's vision. Nor can we conceive of it as taking place

in a literal way in our day or at some future time, for, you see, all the invading army comes riding upon horses, a great company having bucklers and shields, bows and arrows, and all of them handling swords. In addition to this all their weapons are made of *wood*, and there are so many of them that no man of Israel needs to cut any fire wood for seven years while they use these weapons for fire wood! It certainly doesn't sound like *modern warfare*, does it?

If John's vision is symbolic, then so also is Ezekiel's. The only difference is that John's version is a little more complete and is given to us in the fuller light of New Testament revelation. In both instances most of our struggles of the Lord's people are already over, and they are dwelling in a sense of peace and security. There is no struggle at all. In John's vision this is due to the fact that they have already overcome the beast, the false prophet, Mystery Babylon, and now Satan himself has been bound in the abyss. Ah, *there* is peace and security! But suddenly the old devil is brought out of his pit where he has been placed. He is turned loose in their midst and there is unleashed upon them an awful attack of the adversary! He gathers all his forces and rants and raves against the redeemed of God. But before he is able to harm a hair on the head of one saint, at once the fiery judgment of God falls upon all the enemies and the devil who leads them. This, my beloved, is no literal warfare fought with conventional weapons — this is *the final battle of our spiritual warfare*; this is the climax of the most magnificent celebration of victory!

Some years ago a brother by the name of Charles Robinson wrote the following: "This month marks the 95th anniversary of my birth. One thing that impresses me as I look back over the years is the way world events have recycled themselves, giving me a sense of having 'been there, and done that.' Whoever said, You only go around once in life, probably had not lived his life out at the time. Although it is true as a certain poet has put it, 'There's only one life, 'twill soon be past,' it is often true that we senior citizens feel a sense of *déjà vu*, a strange feeling of having been here before.

"It is this very feeling that comes over me when I read current dispensational literature or listen to prophetic (pathetic?) preachers on radio and TV. As a member of what journalist Tom Brokaw called 'The Greatest Generation,' I sometimes feel that I am back again in the 'good old days' of the great depression and the ensuing era of World War II. Before the days of television and in radio's heyday, the airways were burdened with the same premillennialist predictions that are still being heard today. Apparently the ancient preacher had it right: *The thing that has been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done: and there is nothing new under the sun* (Eccl. 1:9). Many big-name prophecy preachers then, but virtually unsung today, were touting the same *literal predictions* that make some folk slack-jawed today. One fellow I remember, with the unusual name of Smith, had a daily radio broadcast called 'God's News Behind the News.' Well, I have news for him! He often said that the Bible reads like tomorrow's headlines. Prophecy preachers today are still repeating the same pat phrases and they are no more true now than they were then. Literalists of that day sought to apply the Bible prophecies to current world events as if to try to confirm the accuracy and infallibility of the Word of God. If that were so, I am afraid we are all in trouble, because the predictions they made then never developed, so they would disprove rather than prove the Bible.

"In pre-war Europe the stage was being set, as it were, for the inevitable second world war. Adolph Hitler, as the dictator of Nazi Germany, invaded virtually all of western continental Europe except Italy, where his ally Benito Mussolini, ruled with despotic power. Together they controlled all of Europe, as Japan and China did much of Asia. Oddly, Soviet

Russia, the dreaded 'Gog' of premillennial frenzy, remained uncommitted, but often sided with the allies, not with the side they were supposed to be on! Prophecy preachers then loaded the airways with dire warnings of a revived Roman Empire controlling the world and determined to annihilate Israel. They based all of this on literalistic interpretations of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation. All of this was purported to introduce the 'anti-Christ' and the dreaded 'great tribulation.' Some preachers then fingered Hitler as the most probable anti-Christ, but at least one that I remember captivated audiences, saying, 'Don't watch Hitler, watch Mussolini!' I wonder if some are still watching! As dictator of Italy, Mussolini seemed most qualitative to head up a revived Roman Empire, since he was already in power in Rome. Again these assertions and allegations were backed up with 'proof texts' right out of the Bible!

"Well, now everyone knows the outcome of those spurious interpretations of scripture. Hitler, defeated and ruined, most likely died by his own hand in an underground bunker. No one knows for sure. Mussolini was assassinated and strung up by his heels from a street-light pole in Milan. The world situation did not turn out at all the way the dispensationalist preachers said the Bible said it would. They thought they were so right, but they were so wrong. I do not know what became of the pre-war prophets, but they seem to have 'folded their tents like the Arabs, and as silently stolen away.' For years things were pretty quiet on the literalistic prophecy front; but today we are hearing it all once more: Gog and Magog (Russia and China), the king of the north, the anti-Christ, the rapture, the great tribulation, etc., etc., and I am saying to myself, This is where I came in! It did not happen before, and it is not going to happen (like that) in our present time. I still sit here day after day, and hear preachers rant and rave about the Bible being tomorrow's newspaper, and how the entire dispensationalist and literalist agenda must come about because that is what the Bible teaches! These dear brethren — and I do love them — need to read news of world events in the light of the Bible, not give forced interpretation to the Bible in the light of world events" — end quote.

For many years my prayer has been that God would put *His* thoughts, *His* understanding, and *His* wisdom into *my* mind, and into the minds of all His precious people. Bear with me for a moment while I reiterate once more that the book of Revelation is a *spiritual book* addressed and sent to a *spiritual people*. In these desperately trying and difficult days through which we are now passing at the conjunction of the ages, it pleases the Father in heaven to open the eyes of His called and separated elect to many wonderful and glorious *spiritual truths* not seen or understood by men who read the scriptures with carnal minds and human understanding. A light brighter than the noonday sun, even the *light of life*, is shining into the hearts of those who are separated unto Him, giving them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. If you ask God for His understanding, you will now be able to discern between the carnal understanding of the natural mind and the spiritual understanding of the thoughts of God.

I believe that I have the mind of the Lord when I say and assure you that you don't need to be concerned about the events unfolding in the outer world of natural men. You need not worry about the things you hear on the news, the changing world conditions, economic troubles, wars and rumors of wars, terrorism, tyranny, and the rise and fall of nations. You don't have to worry about Europe, Russia, China, or the Moslem nations. All of these things certainly affect our lives, but very little of it, if any, fulfills any specific prophetic scripture of God's word. Russia is not Gog and Russia or China are neither one the Magog of the Revelation. Russia is not going to go down and attack the state of Israel. That's all hogwash, just carnal-minded speculations and delusions of men void of the spirit

of wisdom and revelation from God. It's not going to happen! That's not what either Ezekiel or the Revelation is telling us about at all. Hear it! When we read about Gog and Magog we must understand by the Spirit what the symbol stands for. In our text you will see that Gog and Magog compass the *camp of the saints on the breadth of the whole earth*. Now, let me ask you, is Russia compassing the whole earth, has even communism swallowed up the whole world, is the kingdom of Russia even united within itself? NO! Its former empire has fallen apart and it is now weakened among the nations. It never did, nor does it now, have a worldwide domain.

But Gog and Magog compass the "camp of the saints." What is meant by "the camp of the saints"? The expression, rightly understood, is full of interest. When Israel was moving out of Egypt under God's guidance, into the land of promise, it became the Lord's *host* (Ex. 12:17,41,51). When its tents were pitched it became the Lord's *camp* (Ex. 15:19; 16:13). God was in its midst, and therefore the camp was holy. The unclean were to be put outside (Num. 5:3-4; Josh. 6:18). Now, under the guidance of the greater Joshua, Jesus, the called and chosen elect of the Lord are following Him to their promised land — the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ! They are the *camp* of heaven on earth now, or the true people of God, and the camp of the saints is the *body of Christ*, and the glorious body of Christ is indeed OVER THE WHOLE WORLD! Gog and Magog assault also "the beloved city," the heavenly Jerusalem. The saints are at first the tent-pitchers in this heavenly walk. Thus, the camp of the saints is distinct from the city; but it bespeaks all those separated ones of the Lord's people who have come out of the Egypt of this world and have made the journey from the camp in the wilderness to the glorious city of God — a strong people, a mature people, a perfected people, a compacted people, a peaceful people. So therefore it is impossible for Russia to be Gog and Magog, or for any other world power of the past or future to fulfill the prophecy, for our great and eternal Father is not warning us about the petty kingdoms of men, but speaks to us of *spiritual realities*, both positive and negative, that touch our lives as we *go on to perfection in Christ!* God is not concerning himself with either Russia or the nation called Israel — He's concerning Himself with *you!*

The literalistic teachers of prophecy fail to seriously think through many of their speculations and assertions. The common teaching among fundamentalists and evangelicals is that the thousand years in chapter twenty of the Revelation is a literal period of one thousand years, preceded by a seven-year 'great tribulation' with the reign of 'anti-Christ.' Somewhere in connection with the great tribulation and the second coming of Christ Gog and Magog, most often identified as Russia, will invade the land of Israel and there be defeated by the Lord raining great hailstones, fire, and brimstone upon them out of heaven (Eze. 38:21-22; Rev. 20:7-9). There is a very serious problem, however, with this hypothesis if indeed it is all *literal*. The preachers are all expecting this prophecy to be fulfilled, perhaps in our generation, when the fact is that according to Revelation 20 the war of Gog and Magog takes place *at the end of the millennium!* These prophecy preachers are sneaking Gog and Magog all the way back to a point *before* the millennium even begins! Therefore, if it is literal, it certainly has nothing to do with the Russia of our day because it is *at least* another thousand years in the future! The truth is, of course, that the expression "Gog and Magog" does not, and never did, refer to Russia. That has been entirely made up from whole cloth, and simply repeated so many times that many have assumed it to be the unadulterated word of God!

To understand the imagery of Gog and Magog it will be helpful to note that in Jewish writings 'Gog and Magog' was a frequent expression used for the rebellious nations of Psalm 2, which gather together against the Lord and against His anointed. As time went on,

in Jewish thought Gog and Magog came to stand for *everything* that is against God. The idea was that in the end God would be the victor, gathering to battle and destroying completely all of Israel's enemies! In its spiritual meaning, it signifies the ***whole flesh realm***, within and without — the world, the flesh, and the devil — all the amassed powers of the Adamic life. It is Satan loosed out of his prison, together with all his agents and instruments, to assail our spiritual life in an effort to deceive and ruin us just before our finest hour. It is as Jesus in the wilderness, tempted by the devil in his most cunning and insidious assault, immediately prior to His manifestation as the Son of God with power!

Gog and Magog comes from "...*the four quarters of the earth*" (Rev. 20:8). The four "quarters" of the earth signify the four parts, regions, or directions. In scripture the number four takes whatever is happening, positive or negative, and expands it in every direction — north, south, east, and west. If you're traveling north, south, east, and west you're going in every direction! It denotes that which is world-wide or universal. It encompasses everything in whatever realm it is applied to. In relation to Gog and Magog and the four quarters of the *earth* it bespeaks all the powers of the earth-realm *within us*. When you look at your *soul*, the earthiness of your life, you will find four quarters! You will find the *intellect*, the *will*, the *emotions*, and the *desires*. There are four aspects, sides, corners, or quarters of the soulical life! It includes within it the *soulical religious realm* in all its carnal characteristics. This is where our real enemies lie!

The "nations" that are deceived so completely are "in the four quarters of the earth." These "nations" are called Gog and Magog. The RSV translates correctly, "the nations which are at the four corners of the earth, that is, Gog and Magog." So the "nations" are not something different from Gog and Magog, Gog and Magog do not *gather* the "nations," (Satan does that!) but the "nations" ***are*** Gog and Magog, and they fill the whole *earth-realm*! As we have pointed out earlier, attempts to associate these names with one specific nation or group of nations have given rise to the theories according to which Gog and Magog are Russia, or England, or China, or some other power. In view of the particularly vicious anti-Christian character of the Turks in his day, Martin Luther called them Gog and Magog. But the fact that Gog and Magog are the "nations," and the "nations" are "in the four quarters of the earth," eliminates entirely the thought of any one nation alone, or any two nations together, being "Gog and Magog."

Their number is "as the sand of the sea." Notice! They are identified with both the "sea" and the "earth," that is, with the *body* realm and the *soul* realm. It bespeaks *mankind* — the flesh. They gather for battle. Oh, yes, the natural man, with the passions and lusts of the body, and the carnal mind of the soul, *always* gathers to battle against the spirit! "*The flesh wareth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.*" What an imposing array they present! "They went up on the breadth of the earth." They "marched up" and covered the whole expanse of the earth to the horizon in all directions from "the camp of the saints." The spiritual life is portrayed as completely surrounded and outnumbered! "The beloved city," the elect of the Lord, is left without a single apparent avenue of retreat or escape.

It also speaks to the soulical realm, the inherent religious nature of man. This points to deceptive teachings of apostasy everywhere "surrounding the saints" which is "the beloved city." It does not mean soldiers, armies, tanks, and missiles arrayed to inflict physical harm or destruction on the Lord's people. Though that has happened, and is still happening to believers today in various part of the world, the vision would not be given in *signs* and *symbols* if it were fulfilled in such a literal way. It is the Father's *fiery word of truth* (Jer. 23:29) that devours and burns up all the adversaries of deception and false

doctrines in the heart of every saint. Oh, how the whole church world is full of false doctrines and deceptions which surround all the elect of the Lord! We can hardly buy a book from a Christian bookstore because they are all so laced with the errors and falsities of Babylon!

What a picture! And what does it tell us? It speaks to us that man's flesh, when not restrained, will always stand up in opposition to the Christ life. And it tells us that this is true for *every man*. All men in coming to Christ and entering into His kingdom must come the same way. God does not have one way for His elect and another way for the rest of mankind. We are the "firstfruits" of His redemption and as the firstfruits are harvested unto Him so shall the whole field — the entire crop be harvested unto Him. Surely the apostle Peter spoke of this great truth when he wrote: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith: knowing that the same afflictions are *accomplished in your brethren that are in the world*" (I Pet. 5:8-9). You see, my beloved, if the great religious city of Babylon must be destroyed in the lives of God's elect, it must also be destroyed in the life of every man who experiences the redemption of Christ. If the bestial nature must be purged from the lives of God's sons, then the bestial nature must likewise be purged from the life of every man for whom Christ died. If the voice of the false prophet is silenced in the lives of God's firstfruits, his voice must be silenced too in every living soul of man everywhere. And if the serpent is to be eradicated once and for all from God's apprehended ones, it follows that he must be eradicated finally from the life of all mankind. God is now swallowing up the death in *us*, in spirit, soul, *and* body — and the blessed day will surely come when in all the earth and throughout all God's vast universe there shall be no more death in any creature anywhere. Because the people of God are scattered throughout the whole earth, and because all the people of the entire earth must also, in due time, experience these very same dealings of God, reveals the meaning of the scene: "*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, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.*" Oh, yes, it happens to *all* — *everywhere!*

Let me give you an illustration. History records many great and bloody battles that have been fought between tribes, ethnic groups, religious entities, nations, and empires. Most wars were fought due to the ambition of some power-hungry leaders in order to bring others, along with their lands and wealth, under their control, causing the untimely death of millions of young men in their prime of life as well as the destruction of entire societies, religions, cultures, and civilizations. During the past one hundred or so years, mankind has experienced two World Wars, and countless others in Korea, Vietnam, China, Ireland, many African nations, Central and South America, Iraq, Afghanistan, and the list goes on and on even to our present day.

Ah, in order to understand and grasp this great mystery of the *final battle* in the *spiritual realm*, we must first discern and clearly comprehend the true *causes* of all *carnal warfare*, for the one typifies the other. I do not hesitate to tell you that the underlying cause — the energizing principle and power — of all carnal warfare is the *flesh* and the *devil!* James put it so succinctly when by inspiration he wrote, "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of *your lust that war in your members?* Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not..." (James 4:1-2). That is carnal warfare! But the apostle Paul speaks also of spiritual warfare, and declares, "This I say then, Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh wareth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: for

these are contrary the one to the other...” (Gal. 5:16-17). James and Paul both point their fingers at the *flesh*, whereas John tells us, “**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, Gog and Magog, to *gather them together to battle...*and they went up on the breadth of the earth, and *compassed the camp of the saints about...*” (Rev. 20:7-9). The question follows — How do you suppose warfare could be abolished? Why, bless your heart, by dealing with both the flesh and the devil — *getting rid of them!* Remove the *instigators* and you eliminate the problem! Get rid of the scheming agitators and peace will ensue! My beloved, it’s just as simple as that. And *that* is exactly what this twentieth chapter of the Revelation is all about!

So what do we see in Gog and Magog, the nations that are in the four quarters of the earth, the number of whom is as the sands of the sea? I find words and phrases totally inadequate to portray the height and depth and length and breadth of the sublime scene John beholds in transfixed wonder. Yet I know within my spirit that it pictures the *final battle* within each of us — where all the powers of the flesh, energized by the spirit of the dragon, stand up in opposition to God’s truth, God’s redemption, God’s will, God’s purpose, and God’s kingdom. It is not time now for Satan to just be *restrained* within us any longer, it is time for the serpent to be dealt with, once and forever to be *done away* with! “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**” (Rev. 20:9-10). Man’s flesh and the serpent that crawls therein is here visited by the all-consuming Holy Ghost Fire of God!

Punishment by fire is a beneficent one. “Our GOD is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:29). The basic purpose of this divine fire of God is to cleanse, purify, purge, temper, and change. It is to rid of impurities, of filth, of undesirable elements and states of being. There is no better way to deal with filth than to deal with it by fire! The dealing of God by penal fire leads back to the beginning of things. The final work of God in this world will be the destruction of the world order and system by penal fire. That will change all things! That will melt all the elements, so that no man can tell you where his original grab was. It will burn up the governments, institutions, systems, and fruitage of the carnal mind. It will melt all the customs, cultures, traditions, and practices of society and make of this earth a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Every man’s work will eventually be tested by this fire. The fire will try every man’s work of what sort it is. If you and I build into the walls of our lives wood, hay, and stubble, that fire will find it out, and the wall will come tumbling down. When God turns on the HEAT, the BLAZING LIGHT OF HIS SPIRIT AND HIS WORD — some things begin to change! The fire is never sent to destroy the **person**, but to purify the nature, to purge out all that hinders and separates him from his God, to consume the pride, arrogance, hostility, defiance, and rebellion of the flesh and the carnal mind, that he might then be wooed and drawn by the Holy Spirit unto the Father of spirits and live.

The simple truth of the matter is this. The *lake of fire and brimstone* signifies a fire burning with brimstone. The word “brimstone” is simply another word for “sulphur” and defines the character of the fire. The Greek word *theion* translated “brimstone” is exactly the same word *theion* which means “divine.” The reason this is true in the original Greek language of the New Testament is that sulphur was sacred to the deity among the ancient Greeks; and was used to fumigate, to purify, and to cleanse and consecrate to the deity; for this purpose they burned it in their incense. In Homer’s *Iliad* (16:228), one is spoken of as purifying a goblet with fire and brimstone. The verb derived from *theion* is *theioo*, which means to hallow, to make divine, or to consecrate to a god. Thus, a “lake of fire and

brimstone” would mean a “lake of divine purification.” Divine purification and divine consecration are the plain meaning in ancient Greek.

More than three centuries ago when the Black Plague swept through London, England, more than 68,000 men, women, and children were sickened with the putrid fever, suffered nameless agonies, passed into delirium, sometimes with convulsions, and then died. Before the end of the terrible nightmare of anguish and death, what was thought to be an even greater tragedy occurred. The city caught fire, the whole heavens were ablaze as the Great Fire destroyed more than 13,200 homes and 89 churches. Most of the city, which was built largely of wood, lay in ashes. Wonder of wonders! As soon as the last dying embers cooled and the smoke cleared, the inhabitants of the city discovered that the Plague had been stayed! Not another person died of the epidemic. The Plague never returned. The fire had killed the bacteria-carrying fleas and rats that caused the Plague. It took a fire to do it! Fire is a great cleanser, purifier, and changer. Thank God for His Fire! All that is within us that bears the nature of the serpent nature will be devoured. When the work is complete in us, the one who has been thrusting us through, our adversary, will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone and thus be transformed and caused to become a vessel of honor rather than dishonor (Rom. 11:36; Col. 1:16-20). By His brimstone God will test the transformation of the devil, as well as our beast nature, and the false prophet which speaks within us, using the touchstone until it tests out as pure gold. Aren't you glad!

To be continued...

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