

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 217

THE BINDING OF SATAN
(continued)

“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*, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and *bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him*, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled” (Rev. 20:1-3).

In the three chapters preceding chapter twenty of the Revelation we saw Mystery Babylon destroyed by fire, and the beast and the false prophet captured and cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. But what about the dragon? Not a word there about “that old serpent”! Bear in mind that Babylon, the beast, and the false prophet are all *manifestations* of error, religiosity, carnality, and evil. But the dragon is the *cause behind* the manifestations! When the nineteenth chapter closes, though the outward expressions of carnality have been brought to judgment, the instigator of these, the devil himself, is still at large, and just so long as he is at liberty to roam about, as long as deception, religiosity, carnality, lust, and sin continue to lurk in the depths of the *heart* of mankind, the dragon will build other Babylons and breathe falseness into other prophets. You have not destroyed the devil himself when you have only destroyed the *works* of the devil! To the undimmed vision of the Seer of Patmos it is as clear as day that the work of God within man would not only destroy the works of the devil but ultimately would put the very spirit and power of deception, carnality, corruption, and evil in secure, effective, unbreakable bonds where in his confinement he is unable in any way to carry out his purposes. It is just the same in the spiritual world as it is in the physical world — it is not enough to right the wrongs done by criminals — they must be securely *locked up* so that they are no longer able to prey on society!

Here we have Satan presented in all his various personalities — the ancient serpent, the devil, Satan, and the dragon. In the book of Genesis this one called Satan begins as a little serpent in a garden and by the time we come to the book of Revelation he has grown into a great red dragon that fills the whole earth! Therefore it is a great and powerful and bloodthirsty monster that John beholds in spirit! By his very appearance we may say that he signifies some tremendous and evil power in the earth. In that long ago paradise Adam and Eve met with a little serpent, and there the serpent was none other than the devil. And with that in mind we find little difficulty in discovering the identity of

this dragon for the simple reason that John tells us in plain words that it is the devil, for he says of this dragon when he was cast out of the heavens of God's Spirit, "*And the great dragon was cast out, that ancient serpent, called the devil and Satan, WHICH DECEIVETH THE WHOLE WORLD*" (Rev. 12:9). The serpent is the fittest symbol for the devil in the garden of man's beginning because of its subtlety and shrewdness. But the little deceiving serpent of Eden does not adequately picture the devil today! The devil of today's world must be symbolized as a *monster serpent*. The little serpent in Eden was of no particular color and had one head and no horns at all. But the great red dragon of the Revelation is of a bright fiery color and has seven heads and ten horns!

He is described simply as "the dragon." By this title we are to think of him as the old adversary, the devil, but now *in possession of great power*. In the garden he was the crafty little serpent, using *deceit* alone. Now he also uses *coercion, force, and violence!* As the subtle serpent came with stealth into the garden of Eden defiling with *selfhood* the hearts of the parents of the human race, making a murderer of Adam's first son, so has he developed in mankind from that small and unimposing beginning to become a monster of gigantic dimensions filling the whole world with religious delusion, religious fanaticism, fleshly corruption, sickness, sorrow, evil, violence, and death. In Genesis Satan entered Eden as a cunning little serpent, but in Revelation he has grown into a monstrous fire-belching dragon wreaking havoc throughout the whole earth! In Genesis Satan is an enchanting serpent indwelling a mere handful of people, whereas in Revelation he is a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, a composite of peoples, nations, philosophies, and organizations. Though Satan himself is not large, but merely like the little pesky snake to those who know his tactics, still he has gathered to himself quite a large body — over seven billions of people!

So now the network that he runs is huge and powerful and intimidating and dominates the world, all religions, including the carnal church systems of man, the educational institutions, governments, military establishments, drug cartels, world finance and economy, the press, the citadels of immorality, and we could go on and on. He is no longer the inconspicuous little reptile of Adam's early world. He is the horn of worldly strength that Jesus claims makes him "the prince of this world." How is it that Satan began as a little serpent in Eden and ends as a great dragon in the book of Revelation? Because he dwells in the *minds and hearts of men* and men have built him up in their minds and by their words and actions and institutions have given to him such power and authority that the little serpent has been transformed into the great red dragon! The body of that dragon is man himself, but he is expressed through all the institutions, organizations, and administrations that are built by man and are dominated and controlled by that *satanic spirit in man!* He is not a powerful, perverted archangel that was kicked out of heaven in some primeval age, nor is he some sinister creature from outer space, nor yet a powerful, omniscient and omnipotent spirit. Oh, no! He exists in the mind and heart of man — he's *in your mind and heart* if you allow him to be! That's why the scripture admonishes, "...neither give place to the devil" (Eph. 4:27). How do you *give place* to the devil? WITH YOUR THOUGHTS, DESIRES, AND ACTIONS!

This brings us to the curse laid upon the serpent in the beginning. "...upon your belly shall you go." This judgment speaks of infinitely more than a literal snake slithering along upon his physical belly, just as the word "heel" speaks of infinitely more than a location on the foot, and the word "head" speaks of something greater far than a mere physical head in the words of the next verse: "*And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; and it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel*" (Gen. 3:15). Large sections of scripture are couched in symbolic terms, hiding much of the "mysteries" of God in *figurative* language. This is done quite purposefully by the Lord that the unspiritual while "seeing" actually *see not* and "hearing" actually *hear not* (Mat. 13:10-17). The deep spiritual truth of the scriptures can be understood only *in*

the spirit and by the spirit! So, “*upon your belly shall you go*” paints for the eyes of our understanding the picture of the serpent crawling in humiliation, prostration, limitation, and subjection upon the ground. The Psalmist uses a similar expression in Psalm 44:25, “*For our soul is bowed down to the dust: our belly cleaveth unto the earth.*” Such denotes a prolonged prostration and a depth of subjection as could never be conveyed or expressed in normal terms.

The very fact that God states that the serpent was *now* to crawl upon his belly, which obviously he had not done before, reveals that there was a *descending* from one realm to another, from a greater to a lesser, from a higher and more mobile to a lower and more confined. Moving on his belly limits the sphere of the serpent’s activity, now he can only creep along the ground. Previously he had access to loftier realms, his sphere of activity extended to higher domains — exalted realms of pure spirit expression — but he is now lowered to the dust-realm, into the world of the natural man, confined to the earthly and sensual, and restricted to action upon and expression through THE MAN OF DUST, as the Lord pronounced to Adam in that same encounter, “*In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for DUST THOU ART, AND UNTO DUST SHALT THOU RETURN*” (Gen. 3:19). And to the serpent he said, “*And dust (the fleshly, carnal nature of man) shalt thou eat all the days of thy life*” (Gen. 3:14). Truly this accounts for the words of the apostle, “*And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, THE S-P-I-R-I-T THAT NOW WORKETH I-N THE CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE*” (Eph. 2:2).

Ah, yes, this evil *spirit* is IN MAN! When the ancient serpent was lowered into the dust realm, to crawl upon his belly and eat (find his satisfaction and fulfillment in) dust, man became the base of operation for his activity. I do not hesitate to tell you, my beloved, that you will find Satan operative in NO OTHER REALM in the whole universe! You do not meet the devil in rocks, trees, mountains, rivers, clouds, fish, birds, animals, nor on far-away planets, in distant galaxies, in flying saucers, nor in any other object or location outside of man. Can we not see that under the curse God *limited Satan to the dust of the earth*, to the realm of the first Adam, the natural man, the carnal mind — the man of dust! “*The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven*” (I Cor. 15:47).

Many have seen the connection between Satan and the carnal mind and, not understanding the *origins* of these things, have assumed that the carnal mind *is* Satan. The truth, however, runs deeper than that — it goes to the *spirit* of the mind. In words fraught with eternal significance the inspired apostle exhorts, “*Be renewed in the S-P-I-R-I-T OF YOUR MIND*” (Eph. 4:23). As one has so aptly written, commenting on this verse, “Note that it reads: In the *spirit* of your mind, for this is far more than just mental gymnastics of our own self-efforts. There are beneficial results in the power of positive thinking, even on natural realms. But true transformation comes when the change is in the SPIRIT of your mind.” It is more than merely the renewing of the mind, exchanging our carnal mind for His mind — it is the renewing of SPIRIT — the *spirit of the mind* or that which *energizes and gives life to the nature of the mind*. That is the mystery! When there is the exchange of *spirit* (energy force) — the spirit motivating our natural mind replaced by the spirit of Christ — then our mind is able to function on the divine plane. It becomes the norm of our life to just be thinking HIS thoughts, and desiring HIS ways and purposes, because of the establishment of His Spirit force within us. It is an absolute must to receive from a realm higher than Adam can give in order to have our minds renewed. Setting the will, making New Year’s Resolutions, turning over a new leaf, taking group therapy — just won’t cut it! The change comes in the realm of *spirit*, not by our self-efforts to change our way of thinking, believing, understanding, or acting.

Every decision that you have ever made or ever will make has its origin, intent, and power in the INVISIBLE REALM — the realm of *spirit*. Matters not whether it is a spiritual decision or a fleshly decision. You will never understand the mystery of life until you thoroughly know that there is a negative and a positive spirit force. The negative leads to death; the positive to life. The mind is the gateway, the channel through which these energy forces affect our lives. The thoughts, desires, and urges that come to us bear the characteristics of the spirit force operating in us. Let us notice what the apostle Paul has to say about the connection between *mind*, our *actions*, and *life and death*. “*And even as they did not like to retain **God** in their **knowledge**, God gave them over to a **reprobate mind**, to do those things which are not proper; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of **death**, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them*” (Rom. 1:28-32). What a list! It includes the very wickedest things men do along with many “innocent sins” committed by religious people every day. All these things *originate* from a **reprobate mind** — from the world of *thoughts* and *desires*! They carry with them the power of **death**! Conversely, the “works of the spirit” which lead to life come also from *mind* — from the *spirit* within the **renewed mind**! Can you not see the mystery?

Through the fall Satan became one with man, incarnate in the unconscious mind and unseen heart, the energy force behind human nature, the spirit of the carnal mind, slithering about in the lowest realms of man’s earthiness, in the crooked thoughts, selfish desires, exalted ego, distorted emotions, religious deception and perversion, unrighteous dispositions, in the illusions and delusions of the sense-realm of the world of appearances, and in all the corrupt motions of the flesh. May God graciously give us enlightenment to see that included with Satan is the kingdom of Satan; therefore, since Satan is in man, the kingdom of Satan is also in man. Satan is the prince of this world because the dominion was given to Adam, and Satan rules the world through the Adamic man. Furthermore, since Satan is intensely *religious* (was not his first conversation with Eve about religion — in fact quite a convincing sermon on theology!), religion also is included in the kingdom of Satan and is likewise in man and spawned out of man. That is why the natural man is, in his unregenerate state, *inherently religious*! And that also explains why all of mankind’s religions are both *false* and *demonic*! The first Adam is not a small man! On the contrary, he is a big, all-inclusive man! The whole vast realm of reality, positive and negative, is **CENTRALIZED AND PERSONIFIED IN MAN**! And it is right there that the angel finds the dragon when he lays hold upon him and binds him with his chain, and casts him into the bottomless pit, and shuts him up, and sets a seal upon him! Meditate on that and you will begin to *see the picture*!

There are many commonly held theories about your adversary. Notice I said, “*your* adversary.” Satan is not God’s adversary. There is not one scripture in the whole Bible that speaks of Satan as an adversary of God! The preachers don’t know that. The churches don’t know that. Even the professors in the theological seminaries have never studied deeply enough to discover that. God doesn’t have any enemies — they are all under His feet! That is not semantics, it is not just a cute or clever play on words — that’s the truth. “*Be sober, be vigilant; because **your adversary the devil**, as a roaring lion, walketh about (in man), seeking whom he may devour*” (I Pet. 5:8). *Your* adversary the devil is *your* adversary. That means two things. First, he is not God’s adversary. Second, we do have an adversary. In the realm of God’s Spirit and the Christ life *he is defeated*. He is on a short leash, but he still has a *mouth* — influence. The book of Revelation speaks of the mouth of the dragon which speaks great things and blasphemies. He wasn’t always a dragon; he started out

first as just a little serpent, one who *hisses*. That is the meaning of the word for serpent in the Old Testament Hebrew. He was a *hisser*. Now as a dragon he has a mouth speaking *great things*!

As we have seen, since the serpent was cursed he has no arms or legs. He has a mouth, but he has no arms or legs. So he goes about seeking a people who will give him arms and legs, a people he can influence, control, walk in, manifest and speak through. By the time you get the serpent of Genesis 3 to Revelation 12 he has grown from a little serpent to a monstrous dragon. How did the serpent become a dragon? Paul exhorted the saints, “Give no *place* to the devil” (Eph. 4:27). Somebody gave him place! Somebody gave him undue, unwarranted authority and expression. Somebody came to church and preached more about the devil than they did about Christ. Somebody stood up and testified like an idiot and all they talked about was the devil, the devil this, the devil that, the devil has been after me all week, God was trying to do such and such, but the devil hindered and derailed the plan. Somebody gave him arms and legs and a mouth speaking great things! The truth is, *billions* of people have done so! And that is how the serpent became the dragon. And the only thing that will defeat the mouth of the dragon is the MOUTH OF THE LORD! The chain in the angel’s hand with which he binds the devil is the chain of TRUTH — THE LIVING WORD OF GOD!

The Greek word for a “devil” is *daimon* and some authorities say that it means “the knowing one.” As you can see in his first conversation with Eve, he is certainly the one who *presumes* that he knows it all! So the way to outsmart that rascal is to be invested with a higher intelligence. And Paul says of the saints, “We *have the mind of Christ*” (I Cor. 2:16). Think of it! Most Christians, not to speak of preachers, don’t really know the scriptures. They have no idea what the Bible actually says about “our adversary.” The tales they spin about him are pure fiction — myths, legends, folklore, and fairy tales! But the testimony of God standeth sure: “*Greater is HE that is in you, than HE that is in the world!*” Oh, my earnest desire is to see the One who lives in you, who has ALL AUTHORITY AND POWER IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH, be released and come forth! By His divine life and living word and omnipotent power you hold right within your hand the very CHAIN that Christ has brought down from the heavens of the Spirit of the Lord for the binding of the dragon!\

Men make two mistakes about Satan. Either they make him all important, or not important at all. To some the adversary is such an imposing, powerful, and formidable foe that they talk more about his exploits than they do about Jesus. Others shoot off into the other direction and deny that there even is an adversary to be concerned about. Just as Jesus is both a lion and a lamb, the devil is both a lion and a serpent. We have said that there is no devil outside of man — and that is true! However, when the devil in man projects himself into an outward manifestation so that events in the outer world are influenced, directed, changed, and controlled by his power — there *is* a devil without! The devil without is the *emanation* of the devil within. Just as you are the temple of the Holy Spirit and God is in you, yet God can flow *through* you to the outer world, so does the devil flow *through* and *out from* man. All the evils and sorrows and wars and tyrannies and troubles in the world today are infallible testimony to that fact! Just as the presence and power of Christ can change the very atmosphere and condition in a place, or a community, or a nation by His expression and emanation from a people, so Satan also can change the atmosphere and condition of a place and move upon people and things, even from without, although the outward manifestation has its source within. One of the adversary’s tactics by which he rules is the spirit of fear. And one of his chief weapons is suggestion: “*Hath God said?*” Every thought you have has its source in either God, man, or the devil. It is conceived in the mind and expressed through words and actions. You create the

world you live in by the thoughts of your mind, the words of your mouth, and the deeds of your body. You not only create your own world, but the world of all you touch.

There is an intense and indescribable longing in my heart to make at least the called and chosen elect of God truly get the good news that Jesus has triumphed, He has come down out of the heavens of the Spirit having a great chain in His hand, and He has laid hold upon the dragon, and has bound him; He bound the strongman, He judged the prince, and He divided the spoils — He has shared with us His victory! Yes, He won it *within Himself*, and first of all *for Himself*, but now He dwells within us in mighty spirit power! And today the Christ is rising up within His body, His people, His called-out ones, by His spirit, by His word, and in His omnipotent authority and power!

An event in the life of David serves as a beautiful illustration of how Christ has shared with us the spoils of His own victory. It was in the days when David and his mighty men were fighting against the enemies of Israel and Saul was after David to kill him. At one point David, fearing that Saul would get him, went into the land of the Philistines and begged Achish, a prince of Gath, to be allowed to dwell in his country. The prince, confiding in David, assigned him to the country of Ziklag, some forty miles south of Gath. Betraying the confidence of his prince, David led his private army of six hundred men into the wilderness of Shur, south of Philistia, where he attacked three tribes, ancient inhabitants of the land. The record states, “And David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned and came to Achish” (I Sam. 27:9).

But while David spent time with Achish, a disaster befell his adopted country of Ziklag. As David and his men returned to Ziklag they found the town smoldering in the ruins of a fire. They fell to weeping when they failed to find their wives. Not a woman could be found anywhere, dead or alive. The Amalekites (a type of the flesh) had invaded the south of Judah and Philistia. They had sacked the towns and carried away the women. They did not slay any of them, great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way. David prayed and asked the Lord what he should do about it. The Lord answered him, saying, “Pursue — for surely you will overtake them and recover all.” So David and his Six Hundred pursued the enemy, overtook them, defeated them, and recovered all their wives and children, and captured all the herds and goods that the Amalekites had which they had plundered from the land. David then sent a portion of the spoil to the elders of Judah, saying, “Behold, a present for you of *the spoil of the enemies of the Lord!*”

The message is just this — the enemy had stolen away the most precious possessions of David and his men, just as our adversary has robbed from man his true inheritance in the kingdom of God. But David, the type of Christ, went and engaged the enemy and “*recovered all.*” Oh, yes, our mighty Christ came and faced down the adversary and within Himself He, too, RECOVERED ALL! The grandest of all truths is that CHRIST IS THE IMAGE OF GOD! If you want to know what God had in mind when He said, “Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness,” you have only to look at Jesus Christ. If you want to know what was man’s inheritance in that long ago beginning, you have only to look at Jesus Christ. **That is what God meant! That is what belonged to man!** “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are *lost* (who know not *who* nor *where* they are): in whom the god of this world hath *blinded the minds* of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of CHRIST, WHO IS THE IMAGE OF GOD, should shine unto them” (II Cor. 4:3-4). Truly, “He is the...expression of the glory of God — the Light Being, the out-raying of the divine — and He is the PERFECT IMPRINT AND VERY IMAGE OF GOD’S NATURE...taking a place and rank by which He Himself became...superior to angels” (Heb. 1:3-4, Amplified).

How totally inadequate do words become in the light of words of such wonder as these! Jesus is the *prototype* of what God intends man to be, of what man was in the beginning. He is God's finished product; what every man should be and ultimately will be. Man's full inheritance, all the wisdom, knowledge, peace, love, incorruptible life, power, and glory that pertains to man is shed forth in the life of Christ Jesus. The life of Jesus is the life of God transmuted into the form of our human life, so that we may see, touch, hear, know, understand, and experience the very being and nature of God in human terms. Jesus came, defeated the enemy that had plundered man's inheritance, took him captive, bound him in the great chain of His omnipotent command, and within Himself RECOVERED ALL! And now, blessed be His glorious name, HE IS DIVIDING THE SPOILS WITH HIS OWN!

Someone says, "We're going to take back what the devil stole." No way! Who are you? Whom do you think you are? The firstborn Son of God took it all back two thousand years ago and it is HE who is *dividing the spoils*. You may now *appropriate His victory*, but you are not taking anything back, because that implies the rascal still has something. If you bind him in some way it is with *Christ's* chain, it is by *His* word, *His* faith, *His* authority, and *His* power which He has given you as part of the spoils of HIS VICTORY. So far as Christ is concerned, the serpent has gone on his belly, he is chained with the great chain of the truth as it is in Jesus, he is in the pit with no bottom (no ground or rights to stand upon), the lid has been shut upon him, and the seal that was once upon the rock of Christ's tomb, which He stripped away when He arose from hell and the grave, is now securely attached to the cover of the pit. He has no arms and legs and he can't climb out. If you want to give him some, that's up to you. David recovered all and then went back to the elders of Judah and said, "Behold, here is a present for you of the spoils." HIS victory is yours today! If you are struggling and fighting with the devil today, either God and I are lying to you, or you have given the adversary unwarranted authority and an illegal place in your life.

THE KEY TO THE BOTTOMLESS PIT

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the *key* of the bottomless pit" (Rev. 20:1).

Keys are used to lock and unlock things. Metaphorically, a key is an *answer* or *means* or *agent* or *instrument* used to find the secret of, or the remedy for, a problem or situation. "I found the *key* to success." "I found the *key* to overcoming disease." "I have the *keys* (understanding) of the kingdom of God." In this case the key that the messenger brings locks away an old way of thinking and an old manner of living and releases the mind and nature and power of the Christ. It locks up the curse and releases the powers of redemption!

In chapter nine Christ used the same key to *unlock* the bottomless pit and many ungodly things came into manifestation out of the smoke from the pit. With the key to the bottomless pit the Lord opens the pit, the abyss of our own heart, and brings forth a revelation of what is in the pit. We have all had God open up the depths of our carnal life and reveal things out of the imaginations and wickedness of our heart that even we never dreamed were there! A dealing of God came and revealed ourselves to ourselves, making manifest the things that lurked in the darkness of our human heart. There is a time for the pit to be opened, and there is also a time for the pit to be *closed* and *sealed*. We need to clearly understand how the pit is closed and what is the "seal" that secures it!

I have found that there is a tendency in each of us to try and place the carnal mind and human heart under law and make them submit. Any man who tries to discipline and control the flesh by laws, commandments, rules, regulations, or resolutions, whether imposed from without or within, has not yet learned the important truth that "the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it *is not subject* to

the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Rom. 8:7). You cannot by any self-effort make the natural man submit. Therefore we must look elsewhere for the answer. The answer, of course, is the *key*! Let us UNDERSTAND! “And I saw an *angel* come down from *heaven*, having the *key* to the bottomless pit and a great *chain* in his hand. And HE *laid hold on the dragon*...and HE *cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him*...” Now let us consider some pertinent questions. In this symbolic scene, who is it that has the key to the abyss? An *angel*! Where is the angel from? From *heaven*! Therefore, where did the key to the abyss come from? From *heaven*! What did the angel do? He *bound the devil, shut him up in the pit, and locked it with the key*! How, then, as some assert, could Satan be the one who has the key? *Impossible*! Who is it that has bound, and does bind, the power of Satan? Our *Lord Jesus Christ*! Who is the symbolic “angel from heaven” all through the book of Revelation? *Christ is*! And who is it that throughout the book of Revelation is said to hold the keys of death, hell, and the pit? OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST HAS THE KEYS! Can we not see by this that all our self-efforts to overcome are futile, all the external laws, commandments, rules, and regulations of religion are worthless, only a *higher power* can prevail — it is Christ in you the hope of glory who has the key, the answer, the solution, the means, the agency, the instrument, the ability, the power, the secret to your ultimate and eternal victory over your adversary!

THE CHAIN

“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...and *bound him* a thousand years” (Rev. 20:1-2).

There is a slight difference between the wording of the King James Bible and the Greek text. The angel carries the chain *on* his hand rather than *in* his hand. The key is *in* the angel’s hand; the chain, however, is *on* the hand, that is, rolled up around it. The chain is a “great” chain, that is, it is long and heavy: for it is to hold the great and strong dragon. His jailor is duly furnished for his office. This signifies a ministry, a *spiritual* ministry! The angel of course stands for the revelation, manifestation, expression, word, and ministration of Christ by the Spirit in and through a people who have “put on Christ.” This gives me great hope and expectation! *A great chain* — a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. There is a ministry, there is a word, there is an authority which is strong, powerful, complete, unbroken, having no weak links, fully able to bind the devil in this great day of the Lord! This ministry flows in some measure at this present time, and shall yet flow in mighty fullness through those who grow up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ!

A chain signifies anything that prevents free action. Error is sometimes called a chain. Love is a chain that holds its captives enslaved. Pride and tradition are also chains that make us slaves to custom. The law of our parents is said by scripture to be as a chain about our neck. In this case the chain could be none of these things, for it is held by a “messenger,” signifying a strong and powerful WORD OF THE LORD. It can only be the *living word* of God’s Christ! This is the word that shall cause the earth to be “full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:9). The devil is strongly and securely bound by the chain of TRUTH. It should be obvious to any spiritual mind that Satan being a spirit, the only “chain” that can effectively bind him — restrain or defeat him — is a “spirit-chain,” the omnipotent word of God! The world’s greatest battle between man and Satan was fought in the life of the firstborn Son of God, who faced the adversary down, declaring, “It is written!” And He is the pattern, the forerunner, the prototype for all the manifest sons of God who shall rise up in His fullness!

Jesus *bound* the devil everywhere He went! When the Pharisees accused Jesus of casting out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils, He told them, “If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children (the Jewish exorcists) cast them out? But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom (authority) of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he first **bind** the strong man, and then he will spoil his house” (Mat. 12:26-29). Ah, yes, Jesus had already **bound** the strong man, the devil himself, otherwise He would not have been able to go about plundering his house — casting out devils, healing those whom Satan had bound, and destroying the works of the devil! This firstborn Son carried on His hand the **great chain** of the living, energetic, and powerful word of the Lord, for He was within Himself THE WORD MADE FLESH!

“When even was come, they brought unto Him many that were possessed with devils: and He cast out the spirits **with His word**, and healed all that were sick” (Mat. 8:16). “And the centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof; but **speak the word only**, and my servant shall be healed” (Mat. 8:8). “And they were astonished at His doctrine: for His **word** was with **power**...and they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, **What a word** is this! for with authority and power He commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out” (Lk. 4:32,36). “And I will give unto **thee** the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever **thou** shalt **bind** on earth, shall be bound in heaven” (Mat. 16:19).

THE BOTTOMLESS PIT

“And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and *cast him into the bottomless pit*, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled” (Rev. 20:2-3).

Nowhere has there been more ignorance manifested than on this subject of the “bottomless pit.” This message would be very simple and quickly told if we were to take everything in chapter twenty *literally*. Many people have the idea that the bottomless pit is “hell” somewhere in the center of the earth. Vast numbers of Christians will believe almost anything about such literalistic and carnal-minded notions. I’m certain some of my readers remember that story from back in the early 1990’s about the geologists in Russia who dug so deep they actually heard screams from the people in hell. What a source of excited chatter that became among multitudes of fundamentalist and evangelical Christians! The following report by a brother in Christ reveals the fallacy of such rumors. He writes:

“Well, a man named Rich Buhler finally investigated it. TBN ran the story (about the Russian geologists) after getting it from two sources. The first was a Norwegian man named Age Rendalen. They translated it from a Finnish newspaper, *Ammennusatia*, given to them by R. W. Schamback, supposedly a ‘respected scientific journal.’ It is not. It is a monthly publication by Finnish Christians. They got it by word of mouth from someone who remembered reading it in the Finnish newspaper, *Etela Soumen*. They said it was not a news article at all, but in a section of letters where people could write anything they wanted. The elderly man who wrote the article said he got it from a Christian newsletter called *Vaeltajat*, published by Finnish missionaries. The editor of *Vaeltajat* said it was printed in their July, 1989 issue. He had received it from a reader who got it from a newsletter called *Jewels of Jericho*, published by a group of Jewish Christians in California. Rich Buhler concludes his report with, ‘And that is where the Finnish trail came to an end.’ Except that he also contacted Age Rendalen, the Norwegian who had first confirmed the story to TBN. He

said, ‘I fabricated every word of it! I couldn’t believe that the hosts (of the TV show) really thought the story was true and that they would broadcast it without apparently having checked it out!’”

Many years ago there was a man in Stockton, Kansas who had a well which went dry all at once, and began to emit sulphurous fumes. A coal mine in the neighborhood had tapped it, causing this phenomenon. He went deranged about it. He thought the bottom of the well had dropped into hell, and the devil was coming out there. Each morning, by daylight, for weeks on end, he would station himself by the well-curb, ax in hand, and through the entire day would watch for Satan, intending to hit him on the head should he show himself. May I add to this — not more wise is any child of God who imagines the devil to be some localized entity outside himself, and the bottomless pit, or even hell, to be a hole in the ground! It is carnal-minded, man-made religion that tells us such fairy tales, that there is a literal pit somewhere in the heart of the earth, or in some other extremity of God’s vast universe, where Satan will one day be cast and he will never find the bottom of it. It is a source of wonder to me that it has never occurred to these people that Satan is a *spirit* — why would he need a bottom to a pit? With all emphasis I must declare that both the pit and its bottom — and the great chain as well! — are in any literal or physical sense totally irrelevant to a spirit entity!

Now, what do we mean by a *bottomless pit*? The Greek word for bottomless is *abussos* which is derived from a root word meaning “depthless.” In Greek it is called the “pit of the *abussos*” from which we derive our English word *abyss*! Perhaps it would be better translated as the “pit of the *abyss*” or the “pit of the *unfathomable depth*.” “Bottomless” is a good translation of this word, for the thought of the Greek is that it is that whose depths are unmeasurable. As soon as one attempts to suppose a physical or literal reality corresponding to this picture-image, he falls into endless difficulty. My impression is that we have here a *spiritual picture* of a character and nature. It is true that righteousness and truth are related not only with *light*, but also with *height*, and evil and error are associated not only with *darkness*, but also with *depth*. Tracing backward to the root word *abussos*, it is interesting to note that *abussos* is a variation of *buthos* which means “profundity.” It becomes, then, a *profundity* which in its spiritual meaning signifies a *thought* or a *nature* — *so deep* as to be beyond the comprehension of the natural mind!

Bear with me as I repeat again the great truth that the book of Revelation is a *spiritual book*. The next thing we need to remember in order to understand this great mystery is that like everything else in the book the scenes that John beheld in chapter twenty are all *symbols* standing for spiritual realities, both positive and negative. That the “bottomless pit” or the “abyss” in the symbolisms of scripture portrays the *human heart* is beautifully expressed by the prophet David. David, in describing the wickedness within man, says, “Hide me from the *secret counsel* of the wicked, from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity...they encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them? They *search out* iniquities; they accomplish a diligent *search* (plumbing the depths): both the *inward thought* of every one of them, and *the heart IS DEEP*” (Ps. 64:2-6). The *heart* is a *deep*! The Hebrew word used here means not only something deep, but “deeper than” other things. The heart of the natural man is his *deepest* and *innermost* sense of being. The heart is the *root* of all human expression and identity.

The heart is indeed the well-spring of what is called “human nature.” Of that nature Jesus said, “For from within, *out of the heart of men*, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come (arise) *from (deep) within, and defile the man*” (Mk. 7:18-23). We must conclude, then, that the heart of man is the very lowest realm of man’s being! We have spoken often in these messages of the fact that practically everything in the book of Revelation takes place in one of three realms: heaven, earth, and sea. But now, as we come to this place of the

binding of Satan we are faced with an *abyss* — something deeper, more hidden and secret, and profound than any of the three realms that preceded it! The abyss is lower than the mountains, deeper than the earth, deeper than the rivers, deeper than the fountains of waters, and deeper than the deepest sea! It is the *lowest realm*, unseen, unknown, and depthless.

Therefore, the great mystery and the great truth that the Holy Spirit is seeking to reveal to those who can receive it and understand it is that there is a dimension of man's being which is not a result or a manifestation of anything else, but lies so deep within us that it is indeed the secret and hidden *root* and *cause* of all the evil that pertains to the world of natural men. The bottomless pit or abyss is downward, lower, in those regions beneath anything that can be observed or understood in our human lives. It is from this subterranean region of darkness that the bestial nature of man and the lying spirits of the false prophet arise. While it is a dark, evil world within us, it is also a *religious world*. The beastly false prophet arises up out of the earth in chapter thirteen. And Jesus lists "deceit" among the evils that arise out of the depths of man's heart. Oh, yes! Deceit was the very art the serpent employed in the religious realm to seduce mother Eve to transgress! Sometimes the Lord's elect fail to see that *our* natural heart is just like everyone else's Adamic heart, and every son of God must clearly perceive, understand, and overcome the very basest things, including the carnal religious things and powers that lie hidden, concealed, and buried in the unseen depths of the old, natural human heart. And just as these evil things come from deep within and rise up out of the heart (where Satan dwells!) to manifest in the earth-realm of our flesh, so, if they are to be restrained, it is right there in that *depth* that they must be bound, cast down, shut up, and the seal set upon them! Can you not see the mystery?

Jesus said that the very first commandment is this: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all thy heart*, and with *all thy soul*..." (Mk. 12:30). Here we see two different parts of our being — the heart and the soul. Obviously each of these also has parts, for the command is to love the Lord with *all* (the parts of) our heart, and *all* (the parts of) our soul! These are both "inward parts" of our being and not outward physical parts of our body. The three main parts or divisions of man are *body*, *soul*, and *spirit*. Yet each of these has many parts! It is easy to realize that the body has many parts, but most people have not considered that the soul and the spirit must also have parts! And there are parts beyond these which are called the "hidden parts." "Behold, Thou desirest truth in the *inward parts*: and in the *hidden part* Thou shalt make me to know wisdom" (Ps. 51:6). According to the intent of this passage, and others, the word "heart" does not refer to the physical organ located in our chest that pumps blood through our body. A study of the use of this word in the scriptures will show this to be true. The heart in scripture is the most interior portion of a person's life. In the Old Testament, the word "heart" comes from the Hebrew word *leb*. That word is used very widely for those things which spring out of man's nature. The word is taken from a prime root meaning "to be enclosed." It has reference to the deepest and most profound interior of a person!

The prophet Jeremiah spoke of this when he penned these inspired words: "The HEART is *deceitful above all things*, and *desperately wicked*," and then he went on to ask the searching question, "*who can know it?*" (Jer. 17:9). Indeed, WHO CAN KNOW IT! That is to say, WHO CAN PLUMB ITS DEPTHS AND FIND ITS BOTTOM? To the enlightened mind of this prophet, the *power of deceitfulness* and the *depth of iniquity* of which the human heart is capable is so great that it is beyond the ability of any man to comprehend! This heart of deceit and iniquity is buried so far down in man's being that no one can search it out or ever find it! No spiritual "spelunker" has ever descended down far enough to discover its ultimate depths or its awesome power!

A motion picture some years ago portrayed the dual lives led by a judge who had two families some distance apart. He had "married" two different women, was actually living with each for a

certain number of days each week; would then disappear under the pretense of some important responsibilities in a distant town, when in actuality he was going to spend the remainder of that week with his second family. Obviously, each wife thought she *knew* this man, *thoroughly!* After all, just how well do you *know* your own spouse? Interesting, isn't it! We feel we truly *know* our husbands, wives, children; our closest and dearest friends. But according to the Word of God we don't even KNOW OURSELVES! We, perhaps above all people, are often deceived by our *own hearts!* There is a deeper part to all of us — a part that *only God knows!* We should not find this so utterly astounding were it not for one important thing. Jeremiah did not list an exception, saying, “The heart is *deceitful* above *all things* — **EXCEPT THE DEVIL!**” He stated in no uncertain terms that the heart of man is deceitful above *all things* — **PERIOD!** There can be no mistake, for Jeremiah wrote under the full inspiration of the Holy Spirit! If the heart is deceitful above all things, it naturally follows that there is nothing anywhere, not in heaven above, not in earth beneath, nor under the earth, nor in the depths of the sea, nor in the lowest regions of all depths, that is more deceitful. The heart of man, then, is the MOST DECEITFUL THING IN THE UNIVERSE! So — if you want to put the lid on the most deceitful thing of all, and the most wicked thing of all, and shut it up, and seal it up, so that it cannot escape or express or manifest itself in the visible world in any way or on any level — what realm would you seal? You would seal the human heart together with the “beast,” the “serpent,” yes, the “dragon” WHOSE THRONE IS THERE!

In future messages we will see just *how* Satan is bound, restrained, rendered powerless in the heart of man. But let me close this message by saying that those who have been quickened by the Lord no longer live in the sin and death consciousness of the old Adamic man. We have been awakened to a consciousness that is beyond the human heart, for we have received revelation-knowledge in our spirit! This new birth separates us in our consciousness from the old so that we can know God in our spirit and hear what the spirit is saying! As we walk after the spirit we grow in the realization and knowledge of our *true* inner man, as it were a parallel universe within ourself, Christ — we learn that we are partakers of the *divine nature*, we now become righteousness conscious and life conscious and live and move and have our being in the life of our Father, God. The Holy Spirit brings us the knowledge of our sonship and we understand that we are members of the *family of God*, or the divine family which *is God!* Until we are quickened to know that we are sons and daughters of God, we do not have the spiritual energy to chain the devil, bind him, cast him into the bottomless pit, shut him up, and set the seal upon him. But the truth *does* make us free! The ransomed spirit is full of omnipotent, divine energy and its power is being raised up within all of God's called and separated elect, enabling us to overcome the world, the flesh, *and* THE DEVIL! We are learning to overcome our own hearts! Isn't it wonderful!

To be continued...

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