

## THE BINDING OF SATAN

Revelations 20:2-3 says that Satan was bound for 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.*" When he is loosed he deceives a great number of people and raises an insurrection, but fire from heaven devours those involved in the insurrection and Satan is cast into the lake of fire. The last attempt to destroy the kingdom of Christ fails. Though there may be a change in the administration of the millennial kingdom at this time, the kingdom itself will last forever. (Interpreters differ as to whether Revelation 21 described a renewed and cleansed earth, or one that is entirely new.)

We shall mention three of the various attempts to interpret this binding of Satan as not referring to an event that will follow the return of Christ.

One such view is that of the great 19th century Lutheran scholar, E. W. Hengstenberg, who considered the binding of Satan to represent the conversion of the Germans to Christianity at about A.D. 800, and suggested that events in his own day might be evidence that Satan had then been "*loosed for a little season.*" A second view sometimes advanced is that the thousand years represents the condition of Christians between death and resurrection, and the binding of Satan his inability to deceive them during that time. A third view is that the binding of Satan represents Christ's victory at Calvary, that the thousand years represents the greater part of the time between Calvary and the return of Christ, and that the "*little season*" will be a short time just before Christ's return during which Satan will again be loosed.

The first two of these three views hardly need refutation. The third should be examined. First, it should be noted that he is to be bound so that he can no longer deceive the nations. The history of wicked and ungodly nations during these two thousand years has been too full of wickedness to allow the idea that Satan was bound. More important, we find that the New Testament frequently warns Christians to beware of Satan's clever schemes and also of his fiery darts (e.g. 1 Peter 5:8, Ephesians 6:11, 16). If Satan were already bound, such exhortations would be quite unnecessary.