

OBSERVATION STUDY SERIES

# REVELATION

SATAN IS  
RELEASED

20:7-10

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### Satan is Released

Intrigue. Conspiracy. Betrayal. Deceit. Treachery.

Can you tell when someone is lying to you? There are usually tell-tale signs whether we notice them or not; most people don't. And when you consider the fact that most people are liars, the chances of being deceived once in awhile are relatively high.

Even professional experts in the area would have a hard time telling when they are being deceived by Satan; after all, he has spent all of eternity sharpening his duplicity skills. However, he will be forced to give up his deceit addiction because he will have to go cold turkey in the abyss when he has absolutely no access to the nations. He will spend those 1,000 years plotting and strategizing his master scheme. He will deceive again; it will be his grand finale. His game plan is ingenious and will work just as he designed it. But it seems he forgets about Just. One. Little. Thing.

***When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore.*** Revelation 20:7-8

One thousand years in prison would feel interminable, except that God told us Satan must be released after 1,000 years are completed. I'm assuming Satan has read "The Book," or at least the parts that concern him, so he knows that he must be released after 360,000 days (That's a prophet's reckoning of a month as 30 days timed by 1,000. I thought I needed to share that with you. Grinning.) Here we are in Revelation 20:7; the goal is reached, and Satan is released from the abyss.

What does he do as soon as he flies out the door? Does he take a vacation in the Bermuda Triangle? Or perhaps go to Reptile Gardens? What about a five-star Serpent Spa? None of the above. Revelation 20:3 also told us that he will only have a little bit of time, so he knows he can't waste any of it. When he comes out, he has an agenda; and wants to feel superior; even supreme; he wants to be God. The one thing that will satisfy his lust for glory is to bring God down. And the way he plans to do it is to deceive the nations into believing blasphemous lies about the Lord and His people. His targets? All the peoples of the world.

During the 1,000 year rule and reign of God's Son, the Word of God, the nations have populated the terrestrial globe once again, so Satan sends his minions everywhere. The words "Gog and Magog" represent distant nations from the four corners of the world.

(Take note that Ezekiel's battle in Ezekiel 38 only has enemies from the north and came before the Millennial reign. There are many other dissimilarities. These are two different wars at two different times.) Satan will spare no expense or energy to get everyone on the planet on board with him. We are told the number of them is like the sand of the seashore, an unimaginably vast number. His mission? To deceive them, to hoodwink every single one of them if he can.

But, now, let's think about it. Who are these nations? They're the ones who have been on earth the last 1,000 years; many, many generations; they are the righteous descendants of the peoples which the Lord struck down in the War of the Great Day of God, the Almighty—the sheep of Matthew 25. (The goats of Matthew 25, the unrighteous, were thrown into the lake of fire 1,000 earlier.)

Will they have had the Word of God? Who will have been reigning during that thousand years? Jesus will have been ruling with a rod of iron; He will have secured their obedience. He won't just let them wander off and do whatever they want to do. He makes them obey! The law will go forth from Mount Zion; they will know what's right and understand what God demands. The entire world will be in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords for those 1,000 years. They will know (and see) that if a nation does not go up to Jerusalem for the annual celebration of the Feast of Booths, He will withhold rain from that nation! He will literally kill them if they do not obey.

Satan, who's been bound for a thousand years, thinks he will suddenly come out of the abyss and deceive the world's population so that they put their faith in him rather than God! Think about it! His goal is insane, but he trusts in it, and in the end, it actually works. He deceives them into believing they don't have to obey God; he bamboozles them to the extent they actually travel to Jerusalem, intending to wage war against the Almighty! Talk about lemmings; the nations will most certainly rush headlong to destruction! And yet, they are most certainly not blameless.

Satan quickly gathers his witless lackeys to what God calls "the war of Gog and Magog," a war in which they will be consumed. This will be the last battle; the actual final war. The war of Gog and Magog happens *after* the War of the Great Day of God, the Almighty, which occurred right before the Millennial reign. The war of Gog and Magog takes place right after the 1,000 years (although what happens won't be your typical warfare!)

***And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.*** Revelation 20:9

Where do Satan's human minions gather? We are told they come up on the broad plain of the earth and surround the saints' camp and the beloved city. God's beloved city is Jerusalem. The saints' camp could be referring to the Feast of Booths when God's followers construct booths out of branches and fronds and sleep outdoors in them for a

week as they worship the God of their provision.

Specifically, we are told they will gather together on the broad plain of the earth. Do you remember what happens to the topography around Jerusalem and to Jerusalem herself when the Lamb dismounts His white horse on the Mount of Olives? How Jerusalem rises in altitude, and all the rest of the terrain lowers in elevation? The earth around Jerusalem will be "flattened" so that Jerusalem, herself, will be seen in all her glory by the nations during the Millennial reign. The Greek word for broad plain is "*platos*." It means the breadth of the earth. This speaks of just how large the area is and reminds us of how many countless people will occupy the land surrounding the camp of the saints and God's beloved city, Jerusalem.

Okay, we now have Satan and his warriors who are assembling 360 degrees around the camp of the saints and Jerusalem.

Let's back up to Revelation 19:11 and take a running start at this scene. His mighty angels, the church, and possibly others will follow The Lamb as He returns to earth and wages war. Israel is saved, the beast and the false prophet are thrown alive into the lake of fire, and Satan is bound by an angel in the abyss so he *can no longer deceive the nations*. Different groups are ruling over the earth; the church will rule over the individual nations with Christ, who rules over the entire world, and David will reign over Jerusalem. Satan is released from the pit so that he *can deceive the nations* again, but he is only given a short time to do so. He works his little dragon claws off and gathers an immeasurable assembly of people, so many the number is compared to the sands of the seashore. Satan and his armies are gathered outside Jerusalem, surrounding her 360 degrees, and take their stance against GOD.

How will it begin? Who will make the first move? As evil incarnate postures himself to give the war cry of "Charge!" it is over, just like that. Fire comes down from heaven and devours them. Over and done with. No war at all. Just a lot of pomp turned to puff.

What one little thing did Satan forget? He forgot God's plan. God said His people would no longer be in danger once they entered the New Covenant on the day He saved them all. He means what He says. His promises are sure. Nothing and no one can thwart God's plans because He is El Elyon, the Most High God, Sovereign God of the universe!

Satan should have studied the Book better!

*And He will judge between many peoples and render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they train for war. Micah 4:3*

*Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace! Celebrate your feasts, O Judah; pay your vows. For never again will the wicked*

*one pass through you; he is cut off completely.* Nahum 1:15

I am often asked why God allows for another battle to take place (or at least lets them try). Why not go straight from the triumphal return of Christ into His eternal reign? Why does He stick the Millennial Reign and then this Gog and Magog fiasco into His plan? I am sure God has His reasons, many, many reasons. He hasn't disclosed them all to us; one day, He will. In the meantime, we can reason together from His Word to catch a glimpse of one of His reasons.

People, ordinary people, will be on the earth while the Lord is reigning over them. For 1,000 years, Satan will not be allowed to deceive even one of these people, not even one time. Previous generations would have told stories about the Great War of God, the Almighty, and the God who was victorious! Families would share how an individual nation didn't go up to Jerusalem for the annual Feast of Booths and was consequently eliminated because the Lord did not send any more rain. Their eyes will show them stories of the power of the Lord ruling and reigning from Jerusalem, as they watch Him year after year.

The people Satan deceives have to know that the Lord is more powerful. They are deceived, although their eyes have shown them something different as long as they can remember. But they didn't want to be ruled over. For centuries these nations were made to obey, and they hated it. Psalm 2 perfectly pictures what the flesh thinks and feels when it has not surrendered sovereignty to the Only Sovereign.

People are arrogant and do not like anyone telling them what to do, yet no one is to blame but themselves. Multitudes choose to not bow their knees to their Creator. They decide to rule over themselves; they keep wanting the wrong thing over and over again. They just won't do the right thing.

How many of us really understand our depravity? Depravity has come to mean the perverse wickedness of our sin. However, the biblical word conveys a broader meaning. Depravity is a word that points to our sinful condition, to be sure, but it also includes the idea of not being able to do anything about our condition. We are helpless to change anything about the state we are in. We cannot save ourselves from the wrath of God.

Most people don't understand their depravity, but these people will. The ones who are on the earth when Satan is released will totally understand their depravity. They will not be able to blame anyone or anything other than themselves. Can't even blame Satan. He didn't have a thing to do with their choice to rule themselves; they each rejected their God, each one separately, one at a time.

They could have done something about their state; they could have surrendered to the Lord during that 1,000 years, His Millennial Reign; some did, but these did not. And so they are unable to help themselves when the deceiver comes.

It adds to God's glory when you can understand your depravity. Satan's abyss time perfectly reveals the depravity of man. Those precious 1,000 years show our inability, and our failure shows His Glory! Think about it. Because these people are deceived *after* living with Jesus, Perfection Himself, for 1,000 years, (during which time Satan was *not permitted to deceive them*), ONLY the *man, himself*, can be blamed! Which means ONLY God can save man! And therefore, God's Glory is magnified!

Man needs God! Think of God's immeasurable mercy, that He would reach down and take us out of the pit of death. Think of His compassion, His love, His long-suffering over our sin, His patience, His grace, His power! Think about all that He is! The Millennial Reign and all it entails is an accurate and final display of how perfect our God is and how we should be eternally grateful for His salvation! Thank You, thank You, thank You, our Lord, and our God!!!

***And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."*** Revelation 20:10

Satan, the devil, the one who deceived the entire planet, finally gets his retributive justice! He is thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone. He will be met with contempt by its inhabitants, the beast and the false prophet (and don't forget the goats). He promised to lead them to victory over God; instead, his promises secured the opposite—imprisoned torment, day and night forever.

Besides the goats, the lake of fire and brimstone now houses what some people call the "unholy trinity"—the devil, the beast/antichrist, and the false prophet. They correlate the devil to God, the beast/antichrist to Christ, and the prophet to the Holy Spirit. However, the devil just found out that he is not equivalent to God in Any. Way. At. All! The beast and the false prophet found that out the hard way 1,000 years ago!

The lake of fire and brimstone will burn eternally, along with its inhabitants. A lake we can understand, but just to a point; we comprehend lakes of water; this is a lake of fire. This fire is inextinguishable for all of eternity. The Greek word used here for fire is "*pur*" and means fire, especially lightning. The lake will also be of brimstone, which we might not understand at all. Brimstone is sulfur. Brimstone has a fascinating history, but suffice it to say it will be burning, sulfurous stones emitting foul, sulfurous fumes. You might be more familiar with sulfur, and it's smell; it smells like rotten eggs. It's hard to forget.

I don't know what you picture in your mind when you think of the lake of fire and brimstone; perhaps we all need to adjust our ideas a bit. I used to imagine the lake of fire and brimstone being similar to the abyss, or at least a pit as if it were way deep in the earth. But the Greek word for lake is "*limne*" and literally means pond, a track of standing water. In this case, it would be a track of standing fire. Hmmm... Interesting, don't you think? Just a minute. I'm adjusting my mental picture of this whole thing. There. Done. That's better. I want what *God's word* says in my mind, not what I think.

As I start to hang the new picture of the lake in my mind, I realize I have to change my mind's view of the fire, too! (Just like painting; if you paint the living room, it makes the kitchen next to it look wrong, so you have to paint the kitchen. Of course, the hallway to the bedrooms can be seen from the kitchen, so the hall gets a new fresh coat of paint, which makes all the bedrooms look really bad...) The fire, if you remember, meant fire, especially lightning. My new picture needs to have fire, not just as the body of the lake, but also as continual lightning strikes. Perhaps the lightning strikes help to keep the eternal flames of this fire and brimstone lake ablaze?

The Greek word for torment is "*basanizio*" and means torment or torture. I think it is impossible for any of us really grasp what eternal torment is. We can't actually understand the torment's magnitude even if we take away the fact that it is never-ending.

Have you ever suffered through pain that was just unimaginable? Have you ever been in agony from a horrendous toothache, kidney stone, or labor pains? What about the torment from depression or other mental illness? The anguish of losing a child or loved one? The misery of watching a loved one deteriorating and in excessive chronic pain can be unbearable. Some of you may have even gone through the torture of severe burns. Perhaps you have endured physical, mental, or emotional pain that others could never understand. Whatever the pain, whatever the sorrow, whatever the suffering, we have hope—hope that helps us endure because we believe the torment is temporary, even if its termination only comes through death.

Nothing we have ever felt or been through can even begin to compare to the torment of those in the eternal lake of fire and brimstone. The flesh will burn and burn and burn; the fire is never quenched and is never extinguished. The body shrivels and melts, but it doesn't die. And every moment, the reek of sulfur fills the nostrils. And this goes on forever and ever. There is no break at night. No time off. Just moment by moment, torture, with the faithful promise that it will Never. Ever. Stop. The despair of hopelessness creates its own wretchedness, and yet eternity continues. Relentless. Perfect. Justice.

Is the torment too much? Is it unwarranted? Never! God's judgments are righteous and true! It's not that the suffering is too much; it's that the sin is so great.

According to Isaiah 66:24, we're actually going to see the lake of fire and brimstone and its prisoners. Contrary to what we might feel like this side of eternity, we will praise God for it and His perfect justice. Why? How? Because we will finally see pure holiness (His) and pure wickedness (those in the lake) side by side. Yes, we will praise Him. And yes, we will bow before Him in zealous gratitude because He saved us from this same fate.