

Sooke Baptist Church

Sunday, November 21, 2021

9:30 am, in-person, also on Facebook and YouTube

ALREADY, BUT NOT YET, Part Two

Revelation 20

**IN SUCH A FEARFUL
WORLD, WE NEED A
FEARLESS CHURCH**


C.S. LEWIS
PICTUREQUOTES.COM

Coffee/Question:
Explain what you think
Lewis meant?

03:00

Revelation 20:1-10


Last week we asked four questions of these verses.




1. Is the "one thousand years"
a symbol or a statistic?



2. When does the "one thousand
year" reign begin?



3. Does Jesus reign now or will he
begin to reign when he returns?



4. What is the current status of God's
people, the church of Jesus Christ?

There are four additional questions we want to ask today.



5. What is the key to the Abyss?

There are three references in the Revelation to a key.

Revelation 1:18 (Jesus speaking to John)

"I hold the keys of death and Hades."

Revelation 3:7 (Jesus speaking to the church at Philadelphia)

"These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open."

Revelation 9:1 (a vision seen by John)

...the star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss...

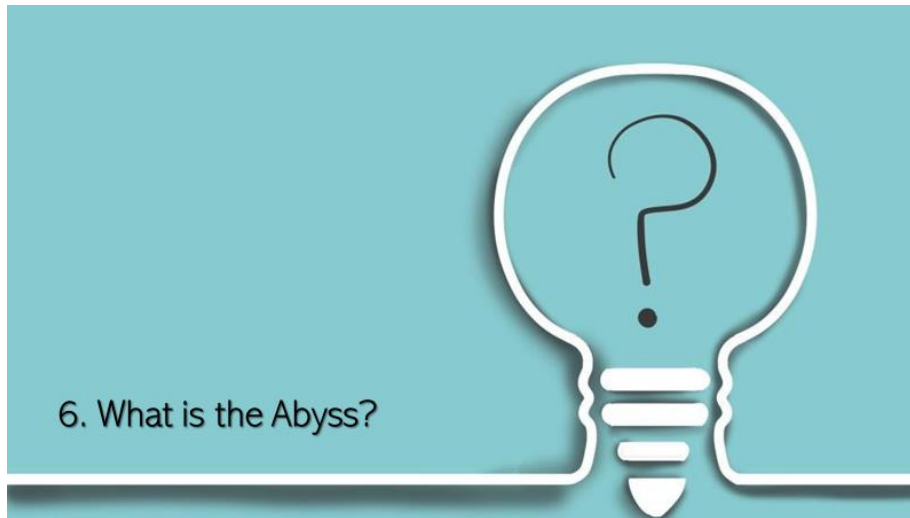
The key in these three instances is...



a symbol of authority

Satan used to hold the key of death and Hades.
But by his death and resurrection, Jesus the “Living One,” now hold this key.
Jesus has all authority... in heaven and on earth... including the realm of the dead
and the Abyss.

There is no longer any place, seen or unseen, where Satan is free to do as he
pleases.



Do you remember the encounter Jesus had with a demon possessed man who
lived in the tombs?

When the man approached him, Jesus spoke to the demon and asked, “What is
your name?”

The demon answered, “Legion,” because many demons had gone into the man.
Luke 8:31 particularly makes clear that this interaction between Jesus and Legion
was not an encounter of equals.

Luke 8:31

**[Legion] begged Jesus repeatedly not
to order them to go into the Abyss.**

Whatever the Abyss is, Legion did not want to be sent there. This is why he begged Jesus to be allowed to go into a herd of pigs, to which Jesus gave his permission.

But what Legion did when he left the man and went into the pigs made it clear that he and all the other demons with him... are the thief Jesus spoke of in John 10, who steal, kill and destroy.

In addition to Revelation 20, there are two other passages in Revelation that speak of the Abyss.

Revelation 9:1-11

v.1 - ...I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth.

The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss.

v.2 – When he [the star] opened the Abyss...

What we read here is that the Abyss was locked and a key was given from God to open the Abyss for the purpose of releasing the fallen angels who were confined within it.

Revelation 9:1-11

v.1 - ...I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth.

The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss.

v.2 – When he [the star] opened the Abyss...

v.11 – They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is 'Abaddon' and in Greek 'Apollyon,' which means Destroyer.

Do you see who else was confined in the Abyss – the angel who had appointed himself as king of the Abyss – the angel whose name describes who he had become – the Destroyer.

Revelation 11:7

Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower them and kill them.

Where does the beast who attacks the people of God, who overpowers them and even kills them – where does he come from?

While it is not stated in this passage, the beast comes up from the Abyss because the Abyss has been opened for him to leave.

Which means – that heaven has permitted him to go out into the earth.

It is here we need to restate some biblical history.

Before the creation of earth, there was war in heaven.

According to Revelation 12:9, “[Satan] was hurled to the earth and his angels with him.”

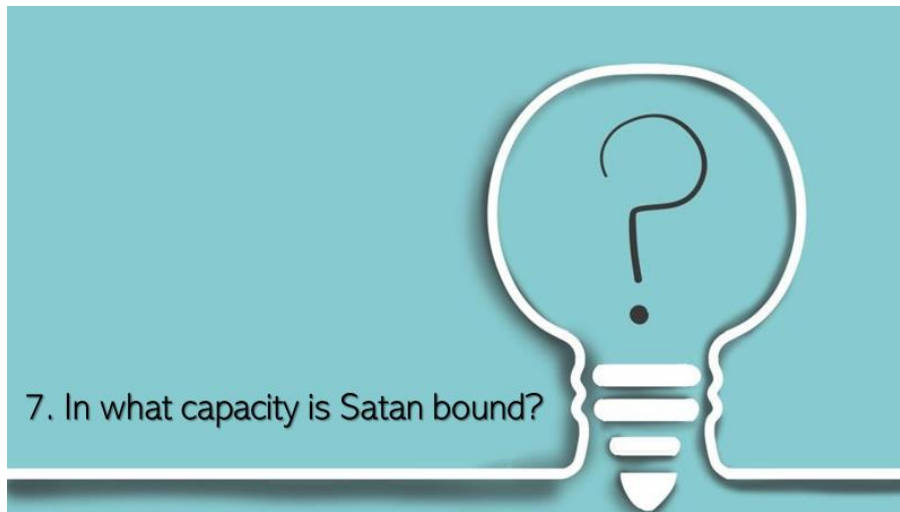
When Satan tempted and deceived our first parents, the LORD God cursed him for his part in humanity’s fall and told him that a Rescuer would come from the woman and that this Rescuer would crush his head.

At the cross, this is what Jesus did – he crushed and disarmed the powers of darkness.

But Jesus’ defeat of Satan at the cross did not immediately result in Satan being exiled to the lake of fire.

Rather, in the last days, as we have read, he is bound and confined to a temporary spiritual prison which the scripture calls the Abyss.

In the Abyss the powers of darkness cannot act unless God permits them to do as he wills...as we've already seen in Revelation 9, 11 and 20.



This is an important question.

To answer it we will need to place two other scripture passages alongside of Revelation 20:2-3.

The first is found in Matthew 4.

After Jesus' baptism... he was led by the Spirit into the wilderness... where for forty days Satan tempted him.

Matthew 4:8-9

...the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.

"All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."



Do you see what Satan offered Jesus?

In the garden, through deception, Satan usurped humanity's God given role... to rule the earth and care for its creatures like God would.

Then with great malice.... Satan enslaved human beings through their fear of death.

This is how Satan came to be in charge of the earth... how he brought the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve under his rule and reign.

With the third temptation, Satan offered to make Jesus what he was... the god of this world.... if Jesus would but worship him.

Jesus said no to Satan, just as he had said no to every other temptation.

In the desert Jesus won a great victory over Satan evidenced by the freedom Jesus had over the next three and a half years to preach good news to the poor, proclaim freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind and release for the oppressed.

The things done by Jesus during those years demonstrated that through him God's Jubilee had come.

Matthew 12 explains in greater detail what had happened in the desert.

Matthew 12:28-29

If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house.

The reason a demon(s) left a person when Jesus told them to go, was because...? In the person of Jesus, the kingdom of God has come. In the person of Jesus, heaven has invaded the earth.

But it was the illustration of a strong man that made it so clear what Jesus had done in the desert.

Matthew 12:28-29

If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house.

Jesus stated that Satan is a strong man, who guarded the treasures of his house. The treasure he guarded were his slaves, and his home was the earth.

In coming to the earth, Jesus had entered into the strong man's house.

Jesus had tied Satan up... because he is greater than him.

Jesus was robbing Satan's house, as he set people free, from their sin and from their physical and spiritual illnesses.

When did Jesus tie up Satan?

He tied him up in the desert.

After Palm Sunday, in the Temple, Jesus announced that there would be a second spiritual clash with Satan.

Just as he had tied Satan up three and a half years earlier, now Jesus would drive him out.

John 12:31-32

Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.

The proof of Jesus' victory over Satan, would be evidenced in what way?
As Jesus draws... to himself... all people.

Since the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, the salvation of men and women, teens and children... by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone... is the proof... that Jesus has...

1 John 3:8

The reason the Son of God appeared was to
destroy the devil's work.

... destroyed the work of the devil and is continuing to plunder "his house."

So, then what is this scene in Revelation 20 communicating?

8. In what capacity is Satan now
bound, and when and why will he
be released?



When he lived on the earth, Jesus declared to his disciples...

Matthew 16:18
...I will build my church,
and the gates of Hades
will not overcome it.

In this present time Jesus is building his church.
Jesus is gathering to himself a people from every nation, tribe, people and language.

This explains why Jesus has not yet visibly returned to the earth.
But his sure and certain promise is – “I am coming soon!”

This also explains why Satan is being restrained from going out to deceive the nations and gathering them as one, to wipe out the church of Jesus.

This is Satan’s ultimate passion.

We know this because as soon as he is released from the Abyss this is what he will attempt to do.

The message of Jesus, and the message of the scriptures is that in the last days there will be persecution against the people of God... at various times in various places.

But Jesus also tells his church, at the end of this age, for a very short time, both the beast, 11:7, and Satan himself, 20:3,7, will be released from the Abyss to deceive the nations, and to gather them to war against God and his church.

The people of God are to keep their eyes fixed on Jesus and not fear... for he promises...though they gather, though they move against you... there will be no war... their plans will not succeed.

Jesus will appear and the victory of the cross, won two thousand years ago on a hill called Golgotha... will be implemented in every sphere, seen and unseen, physical and spiritual.

The Rescuer will only need to speak a word and the enemies of God will be undone... and this present age will end.

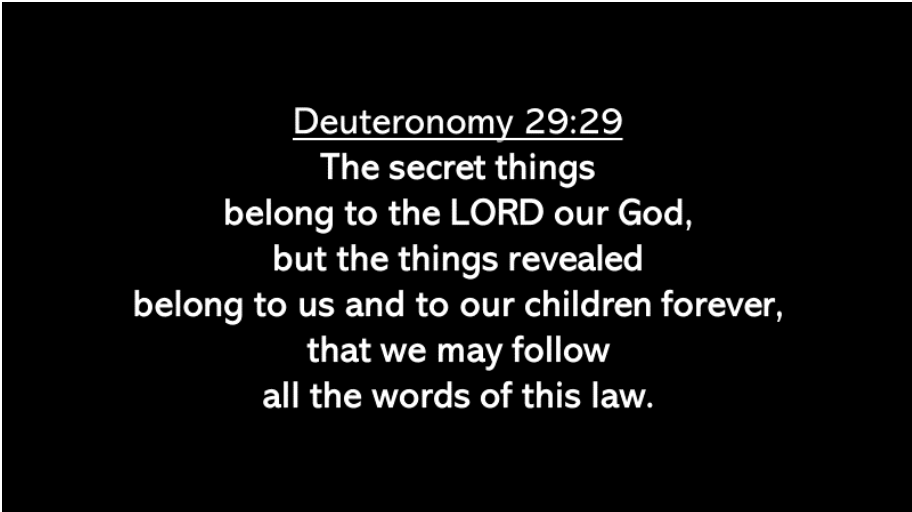
This is as far as we will go today.

We are not yet done with Revelation 20.

We will return to it in the new year, after the Advent teaching series.

As we study the Revelation, it is important for us to be wise.. to only go as far as the scriptures permit, which means we will have to live with tension in this present time, because we do not yet know all things.

I love what God said to the people of Israel in Deuteronomy 29:29



Deuteronomy 29:29
The secret things
belong to the LORD our God,
but the things revealed
belong to us and to our children forever,
that we may follow
all the words of this law.

There are things that are secret; things that we do not yet know; things that belong to the Lord.

That said, there is much that God has revealed to us.

In the Revelation he has shown to the followers of Jesus how to live in between the ascension and return of Jesus.

He has impressed upon us that he is the Sovereign One, the Living One, the Holy One, the Wise One... I could go on and on.

The Revelation has urged to live not just on the basis of what our physical eyes see, but most importantly to live on the basis of what the eyes of faith see – the Glorious Three-in-One who reigns!

I've mentioned this before... the week before my father passed into the presence of Jesus, there was a morning when his soul was greatly troubled. He said to me that he wondered if his faith was enough... to be accepted by God.

I assured my father that his hope was not in the strength of his faith but in the strength of his Savior.

This is what we have seen and focused upon this morning – the strength and sufficiency of our Savior, the Lord Jesus.

In our coffee/question we interacted with CS Lewis' statement...



The truth of God that we have considered this morning impresses.... upon us... how to become and how to be a fearless church, a fearless people.

The Spirit of God would urge us to think deeply and often upon our Savior the Lord Jesus:

- **who he is**
- **what he has done**
- **what he is doing**
- **what he will do**

...who he is Son of God and Son of Man

... the Lion and the Lamb

... the Living One

...what he has done... his salvation

... his victory over Satan (hurled down, tied up, drove out, seized, bound and locked up, and ultimately... thrown into)

...what he is doing... building his church

...and what he will do.... at his appearing

... at his wedding

... in the ages to come

There is no one who loves us more.
He loved us when we were still his enemies.
We pushed him away and he pursued us.
We refused to listen to his voice and still he sang songs of love over us.
We cursed him and he blessed us.

Who has ever loved us like our Lord Jesus?

Deceived by and enslaved to sin, he came to us in our prison and opened the door... so that we could walk out.
When we believed him and repented of our sin, he removed off of us the burden of our guilt, and then he cleansed us.
By a miracle of new creation, he made us alive spiritually.

But he has done even more.
He has betrothed himself to us, pledging that he will come again for us and when he does, he will bind our lives to his, in a covenant like that of marriage.
He will be our husband.

Oh the love of our Savior!
Live in awe of him.
Live in faith upon him.
Trust in him and obey him.

Think upon his victory over Satan, sin and death.
Think upon his promise – he is coming soon.

Already but not yet describes how the followers of Jesus live in this present time.
The same phrase applies to Satan – already but not yet.

There are limitations which God has placed on him.
And yet there remains in the world a presence of evil.
We are not to magnify nor underestimate our adversary.

The binding of Satan in the desert by Jesus did not result in a complete cessation of his activities.

We know that Satan still worked in the lives of the religious leader and Pilate and even in the crowd who called for his crucifixion... to attempt to kill Jesus and rid himself of what Satan believed Jesus to be... a rival, who threatened his power and reign.

GK Beale writes, "Satan is still active, but now must operate subject to Christ's authority. Satan's destructive powers mysteriously serve to further the deeper and wider purposes of God."

Look at how 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 describes it.