

The Voice of Truth # 537

God's Sovereignty Forever Established

In our study today, we want to pick up the thread of Satan's history, which we dropped with Revelation 20, the third verse. Now let's read Revelation 20, beginning with the seventh verse.

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of 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. 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.

The first phrase of verse 7 says, **And when the thousand years are expired**. After Christ reigns a thousand years on earth from Jerusalem, his capital city, and from the camp of the saints, or the Millennial Temple, as described by Ezekiel in the closing part of his prophecy, Satan again appears on the scene as he's loosed out of prison for a little season. He goes up on the earth to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle.

Before we look at God's purpose in permitting Satan to mobilize the nations of the world in rebellion against the Lord Jesus Christ, let's look at the inhabitants of the world who are deceived. We are told that during this thousand-year reign of Christ on earth all Israel is saved, according to Jeremiah 31:31. Let's read it, will you?

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an

husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Paul brings this same truth out in Romans 11:26. **And so all Israel shall be saved. As it is written, there shall come out of Zion, the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.** In these scriptures, we see that all Israel will be saved during the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth; and when the thousand years come to a close, every Jew on earth is a born-again believer. There'll not be one unsaved Jew on the earth. What grace God shows to his people, the Jews. Now turn with me to Isaiah 59:20, and let me read you another great truth.

And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; my spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever.

Not only will the Jewish nation be saved as a whole during the millennial reign of Christ, but their seed's seed shall be saved forever and forever. Not one of them will be lost. This is God's covenant with the Jew. So, when we come to the close of the thousand years, we find the Jews as the ruling nation; everyone is saved in Christ and worshipping him, Christ their Redeemer, their Sovereign, their Savior, their Messiah, their near kinsman Redeemer, and their King. And I wanted to establish that fact from God's prophetic word before we proceed any further. Because in the Jews, God's own people, we see the sovereignty of God manifested and confirmed forever.

Therefore, the next thought I call your attention to that we find in this scripture, Revelation 27:9, is the fact that when Satan is loosed out of his prison, he goes 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. "The nations" are always the Gentile nations, never the Jews. Notice that here it doesn't say he goes to deceive the kings of the earth because there are no kings. Christ is the king and those who rule with him are his redeemed. Therefore, we face the fact that those whom Satan deceives are not saved during the millennium: They have only pretended obedience to the authority of the reigning Christ under the rule of the rod of iron. The scripture says here, the number is as the sand of the sea. There'll be multitudes, or shall we use the word myriads, or millions of the Gentiles, the nations, who will give only outward submission to the great monarch Christ. The number is so great that the only way the apostle Paul could describe it was to say that the number is as the sand of the sea. What is man? What a depraved human being he is.

When we read that Satan was bound and cast into the abyss or the prison house, before Christ, as King of kings and Lord of lords, set up his earthly rule, the question is raised in our minds, why did not Christ cast Satan into the lake of fire with the beast and the false prophet instead of just putting him in a prison? There's a reason for it. In our present study, we want to see if we can find out what God's purpose has been and is concerning Satan before his earthly history comes to a close. I believe if we'll approach God's Word with a reverent and earnest desire to know the truth, He will reveal it to us as far as He has put it in His Word, the Holy Scriptures.

Let's turn first to Isaiah 14:12, a familiar passage regarding Satan. And let's read the five awful "I wills" that Satan boasted against the will of God, which challenged God's sovereignty.

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning? How art thou cut down to the ground, which did weaken the nations? For thou hast said in thy heart, I WILL ascend into heaven. I WILL exalt my throne above the stars of God. I WILL sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north. I WILL ascend above the heights of the clouds. I WILL be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell.

I want you to notice Satan's challenge to God's sovereignty. These five "I wills" of Satan are the expression of one sin. That sin is rebellion against the sovereignty of

God. Let's look at these "I wills" closely and see where his rebellion expresses itself.

First, he said, **I will ascend into heaven**. According to Ezekiel 28:14, Satan was the anointed cherub. That is, he was the highest created being in heaven, the leader of the angelic host. The word 'anointed' refers to his office as priest, to lead the worship of the angelic host in the constant praise of the great Creator. **Thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire**. Because of his position, he had direct access to the throne of God and enjoyed the privilege of a near relationship with the Lord God. But his position did not entitle him to a permanent abode in the third heaven where God himself dwells. One day a self-seeking spirit was born in his heart that said, I will ascend into heaven. This is the first expression coming from Satan's heart, prompted by the sin of rebellion against God's authority. It's a bold declaration and an outrage against God's plan and purpose in creation.

Satan's second expression of rebellion, **I will exalt my throne above the stars of God**, indicates that his rebellion conceived a plan to set up a throne of his own and rule over the stars of God, or all the angelic beings. Satan, who was Lucifer, the son of the morning, the anointed cherub, not only led the worship of the angels, but was the guardian of the throne of God. Therefore, he took advantage of his position of leadership and trust to betray God on the throne, and to divert the obedience and worship of the creatures from God's sovereignty to himself. Come, said Lucifer, let's put God off the throne and I'll exalt my throne in the place of his throne and rule the entire universe! In setting up his sovereignty in the universe, he challenged God's sovereignty and God's Godhead, and sought to establish a name for himself. That is what Satan is doing through every unsaved individual today, whether in the church or out of the church.

Let's look at Satan's third 'I will', as rebellion and self-will grow bolder in their expression, **I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north**. Psalms 48:1-3 identifies **the mount of the congregation**: Listen, **Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of His holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion. On**

the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is known in palaces for a refuge.

This is Jerusalem, the capital city of the Lord, where he shall reign from his holy temple during the kingdom age, as set forth in Ezekiel. Then according to Psalms 132:13, the place he called Zion was chosen back in eternity for his habitation. Back in the councils of the eternities, when God the Father chose to elect a number to salvation as a peculiar people for himself; and through the Jewish nation sent his son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the head of the race, as the second Adam, who would rule and reign on earth, He mapped out the spot where he would place his throne. And back in eternity, before the foundation of the earth, Satan, knowing the plan of God, asserted his own self-will and said, I will sit on the throne of Christ on earth. I'm going to challenge the right to sit on that throne. That's why he marched on Jerusalem.

Now, let's notice the fourth I will of Satan. **I will ascend above the heights of the clouds.** The word cloud is used throughout the scriptures, usually referring to the glory of God. Clouds are a symbol of the glory of the Lord God of heaven. In this expression of his rebellion, Satan, in his self-seeking, aspired to take that glory unto himself. He determined to appropriate that glory to himself which belongs to God only. But God says, I will not give my glory to another, Isaiah 42:8. Let me make this statement: One of the most besetting sins of the average individual today is to want the glory for everything that is done. This is because the unsaved individual is a child of his father, Satan, and the lust of his father he will do. In John 8:44, God says to his child, I'll save you for my own sake. You go forth, gather people around you, lead them, teach them the way of Christ, but give me all the glory. There's the battle line that we have to fight as believers, that whatever Christ does through us and with us, we shall give him all the glory, not from our lips, but from our hearts.

Now let's notice the fifth assertion of self-will: **I will be like the Most High.** The expression **the Most High** means possessor of heaven and earth, Genesis 14:19, **And he blessed him and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth.** As possessor of heaven and earth, the Most High God has, and exercises, authority both in heaven and on earth. That is, he exercised

heavenly authority and earthly authority. When Satan said, I will be like the Most High, He could not mean that he wanted to be like the Lord Jehovah God himself, because he was more unlike God than he was like him. What he wanted was the title of Most High, which signifies possessor of heaven and earth. Possession virtually gives the right of authority. So, Satan's purpose was to gain authority over heaven and earth. That is, he determined to usurp God's sovereignty and God's authority. He wanted to steal his possessions and his position, as well as his authority. That's exactly what man's trying to do today; it is by science - do this, do that, do something else. God is never mentioned. God's never given any glory for anything in the world. You never hear them Give God the glory for anything. God's going to call a halt one of these days.

In all these five "I wills" of Satan, he's challenging the authority or sovereignty of God. So, in view of Satan's challenge of the right of God to rule in his universe, God set up a kingdom before the foundation of the world to manifest his sovereignty in the presence of all created beings of the universe. The kingdom of God stands in absolute opposition to the kingdom of Satan. When we view the immensity of the universe, we stand amazed that God selected one of the smallest of all the heavenly bodies to be the theater on which to display his mighty works, where he has chosen to manifest his sovereignty and to make known the riches of his grace to the utmost bounds of his universal kingdom. In time, he created Adam, and appointed him head of the race and ruler of the kingdom on earth under his own direct sovereignty. Satan, who had been cast out of heaven with the fallen angels, determined to wrest the lordship from Adam and fulfill his ambition to set up his throne on this earth and become the god of this world and the prince or ruler on the throne. He seduced Adam into handing over the authority to him. And ever since that time, he has ruled mankind in opposition to the kingdom over which God rules. Therefore, throughout the scripture, Satan is spoken of as the god of this age, the prince of the power of the air. He is presented in Matthew 4:8 as possessor of the kingdoms of this world, which Christ did not dispute when Satan offered to surrender these kingdoms to him if he would bow and worship him. Christ viewed them as Satan's domain, as though Satan had a right to do with them whatever he wanted to. Today, Satan is god of this world, which means he's the god of every world order, and the monarch over the kingdoms of this earth. He's the prince of the power of the air,

and as such, he is ruling the world in opposition to God. This is the reason the doctrine of the sovereignty of God is so hated and despised by the average individual today, including preachers, laymen, Bible teachers, and professors in every realm of world society. I wonder this morning when that spacecraft landed, I wonder where the crowds are gathered, did they all bow down before God and worship Him and say, thank you, Lord God of heaven, for all the laws you've let us discover in electronics. Thank you, Lord God, for your sovereignty. Are they giving Him the glory? No, sir, not a one. They're smoking and cursing and blaspheming God in every way possible and praising man. That's what Satan wants. Now you listen, will you?

When Satan offered the kingdoms of this world to Christ, if he would bow down and worship him, this was an attempt to seduce the second Adam, the man Christ Jesus, the surety of the eternal covenant, who was to sit on David's throne in the eternal kingdom. If he could have succeeded in enticing the Son of God to surrender his sovereignty into his hands, he would have accomplished his purpose. But the Lord Jesus Christ, the mighty Conqueror, accomplished our redemption, and today Satan is a defeated foe. He is under a reprieve until God calls out all of his elect; and he goes about his business of opposing and challenging God's right and God's authority over your heart and life and over everything that goes on in the world in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, always seeking to sit on the throne where God belongs. During the tribulation period when God withdraws his restraining hand, Satan will realize in part his age-long ambition when he sits in the temple of God showing himself that he is God. But this insult in God's face brings down all the fiery wrath of God's jealousy upon him.

In our study of the book of Revelation, from chapter 4 through chapter 20, when Satan is cast into the abyss, we saw the display of God's sovereignty in His judgments upon Satan, the Antichrist, and the false prophet, with all of Satan's followers, as God closed in on him to wrest from his hands the authority he has usurped from God through the fall of man. Then when Christ meets the Antichrist and the false prophet face to face and casts them into the lake of fire, and slays their followers with the sword of his mouth, God in his sovereign contempt sends a lone angel to bind Satan and cast him into the abyss. The Lord Jesus Christ takes

over the kingdom of this earth and sets up his kingdom in the beloved city of Jerusalem; rebuilds the temple, which becomes the camp of the saints, and for 1,000 years he rules with absolute authority over this earth, meting out judgment only on those who come out in open rebellion against his authority.

So now we come to the close of the 1,000 year reign of Christ, when the sovereignty of God is yet to be finally tested, and forever confirmed. Therefore, God looses Satan out of his prison for a little season, and when Satan comes out of the abyss under the direct will of God, we see no repentance, no change in him. Satan does not come forth at this time as the old dragon, nor as the serpent: He comes forth only under the name of Satan and the devil. He goes forth to deceive the nations, as the scripture says, with one purpose in mind, to lead a final revolt against the theocracy of God, which is God's right to rule. Now we see the last attempt on Satan's part to reach the goal of his first sin, which was rebellion against the sovereignty of God. We see him again, just as in the ages past when he plotted with the angels of God, going about up and down the length and breadth of the land to the four quarters of the earth, touching the life of every individual who has not bowed to the authority of Christ and accepted his sovereign rule in his heart. And he deceives them into thinking they can conquer and overthrow the Son of God, bring his authority to naught, and set himself on the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north, which is the location of the temple in Jerusalem. It is nothing but a complete revolt against the sovereignty of God.

Again, on the other hand, the release of Satan is set forth here at the close of the ideal society on earth as the final test that demonstrates the corruption of the human heart. Every test that God has ever subjected fallen humanity to has resulted in man's failure. God has tried and tested man under every possible condition and in every way possible, and man has always failed. So, when Satan is loosed out of his prison here, we see that man again fails when he is tested under the reign of the King of Kings - he is a complete failure. For a thousand years, men and women have been able to see the Son of God in person in all of His resurrected glory. They have been able to sit under the righteous rule of the saints of God in an almost perfect earth. Yet man by nature hates God, and will not have God to rule over him under any circumstances unless that individual has

been given the effectual call under God's elective grace and has been broken at the feet of Christ, made a new creature in Christ by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit and given that new nature, the nature of God, the nature that loves God, the nature that will obey the Lord God of heaven. Carnal man is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

As we look out upon the length and breadth of the earth, we see Satan, in all of his pride and rebellion, enraged by the spirit of revenge, driven by self-seeking covetousness and greed of his heart, leading the army of millions against the beloved city and the camp of the saints. There he comes, can't you see him? On the breadth of the earth. There they are, surrounding all the mountains of Jerusalem, the beloved city, and the temple where Christ sits enthroned, as King of kings and Lord of lords. And then all at once, without warning, without a calling to repentance, without anything, fire comes down from heaven and consumes every one of them. I mean every unsaved individual on earth is consumed at one time; and Satan is cast then into the lake of fire where the beast and the false prophet are, and that leaves the earth without one single rebellious individual on top side of this earth. God's sovereignty then is confirmed, and he stands as sovereign of the universe. All rebellion is put down. The challenge has been accepted and met, and God has confirmed his sovereignty forever.