

## **Then and Now -- Studying the Past to Shape our Future**

By Ed Stevens -- Sunday evening, April 17, 2011

Title of this broadcast: *First Century Events (Part 7)*

### **Role of Satan After AD 70**

Before we get started, you need to download the **Cosmology Chart** from the AD70.net website, or copy it from the CD to your hard drive. Then open it using your Adobe Reader program and either print it out, or view it on screen. We will be discussing that chart here in this lesson, so you will want to have it in front of you to look at as we talk about it.

We want to look at cosmology again in this lesson, especially as it relates to **Satan and his activity in the UNSEEN realm**. The cosmology chart will help us make sense out of this.

We noted last time that a significant portion of the language in the book of Revelation is cosmological, in the sense that it is describing what was literally happening in the UNSEEN realm. Calling that language symbolic or apocalyptic or figurative or covenantal is not really sufficient. The apocalyptic language is unveiling the UNSEEN realm so that we can see how the eschatology and our redemption was being consummated both in the UNSEEN heavenly realm, as well as in the SEEN realm on earth. The apocalyptic language is describing cosmological events that are changing the covenants and accomplishing our redemption and restoring the true paradise, which is the celestial or heavenly paradise. The book of Revelation shows that heaven is not just one big open space where we float around as bodiless spirits forever. It has a temple and a city. It has thrones and judgment seats. There is a hierarchy of angels. They are ministering spirits sent out for the sake of the elect. We will have new immortal bodies in which to live there. We will be like the angels, and will have a body like the glorious body of Jesus. All of this is a part of the cosmology that we are studying here, which is the relationship between the SEEN and the UNSEEN realms, and how they interact with each other.

When we talk about cosmology, we are not just talking about a changing of the covenants. That is only one aspect of the world-changing events at AD 70. Certainly the Old Covenant Jewish system passed away when the heavens and earth were changed. But that does not mean that the old heaven and earth is the same thing as the Jewish system. When we use the phrase "heavens and earth" we are talking about cosmology (the UNSEEN realm and the SEEN realm) and how these two realms interact with each other. There was an old arrangement of the "heavens and earth" (from Adam to Christ), and a new arrangement from Christ onwards. The old world (or kosmos) had to be removed and replaced by the new world. We are talking about changing not only the religious systems in the SEEN realm, but the principalities and powers in the heavenly places (UNSEEN realm) as well.

Few Christians think about the changing of the ages (or worlds) in cosmological terms. We look only at the seen things. But Paul reminds us that there is another whole realm of the cosmos that we need to think about and understand (the UNSEEN spiritual realm where God and the angels dwell and maintain their activity). There was more happening at AD 70 than met the casual eye of unbelievers. It was far more than just

the downfall of Jerusalem and the changing of the covenants. Those were just two aspects of it.

Far more was happening in the unseen realm as Satan and his dominion of darkness was defeated and cast into the lake of fire. The prince of the power of the air (Satan) was overwhelmed by the angelic forces of Christ, who fought with the supernatural power that came from the Cross and the Resurrection. So it was not just visible kingdoms and covenants that were changed. It was the whole cosmological world order (seen and unseen realms) that was changed.

When I talk about "the heavens and the earth" I am not talking about the "physical heavens and the physical earth." That is not the biblical concept of "heavens and earth". It is not a PHYSICAL "heavens and earth" but rather a SEEN earthly realm and an UNSEEN heavenly realm. So we need to think cosmology, not just covenants. Think unseen realm also, not just the seen realm. Think about spiritual things in the UNSEEN realm, not just physical things in the SEEN realm.

We mentioned last time that Theophanies, Angelophanies, Satanophanies, demonophanies, prophecies, visions, dreams, and other miraculous events, are all examples of the supernatural interactions between the Unseen and Seen realms. This is what cosmology is all about.

A good example of interactions between the SEEN and UNSEEN realms is the text which states that "some have entertained **angels** without knowing it." (Heb. 13:2) Another example is the fiery angelic chariot which took Elijah up into the sky. Elisha is the only one of the 51 prophets watching it who saw the **angelophany**. The rest only saw a whirlwind. Another example is Elisha's servant who had to have his eyes opened by God to see the **angelic armies** protecting them in the city of Dothan. Even though the spiritual realm is always there, and angels are always there, very few humans were ever allowed to see into that realm and see what is happening there. That is why the prophets were called "SEERS." They were allowed by God to "SEE" into that realm. All of these events give us a glimpse into the nature of the spiritual realm and its relationship to the physical realm.

Any time we talk about the angels or Satan or the demons, we are automatically dealing with cosmology, since the angels and demons maintain their activity in the unseen realm. Satan was created in the unseen realm, and has maintained his residence there ever since, even though he temporarily appeared on earth in different forms from time to time. For instance, he entered into the serpent and tempted Eve. Paul said that he disguised himself as an angel of light. He appeared to Jesus during his forty-day fast in the wilderness. He entered into Judas Iscariot.

He is a limited being, however. He does not have all power at his disposal. He is not omni-present either. He is a limited finite creature like all the other angels. He could never do anything except what God allowed him to do.

He has always been a liar, deceiver, adversary, and accuser against the saints. No matter which part of the UNSEEN realm he happened to be in at any given time throughout Biblical History, he was always able to exert some influence upon humans in the SEEN realm. Even though he was bound during the transition period from deceiving the nations to go to war, the New Testament shows that he was still very active in other ways, tempting the saints, throwing stumbling blocks in their way, generally causing

confusion and wreaking havoc upon the church in the form of persecution and tribulation.

[<http://www.lovethe truth.org/demons1.html>] (source of 3 paragraphs below)

**Matt. 12:24-28** “But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, “It is only by Beelzebub, **the prince of demons**, that this fellow drives out demons.” Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? And if **I drive out demons** by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then **the kingdom of God has come upon you.**”

We learn much from this scripture. We learn (1) that Satan has a kingdom; (2) that his kingdom consists of demons under the rule of higher ‘princes’; (3) that, whenever Jesus or one of His disciples casts out a demon, that is a victory for Christ’s Kingdom: in fact, it is said to be a coming of the Kingdom—“*then the kingdom of God has come upon you.*” In the model prayer we call The Lord’s Prayer, Jesus told us to pray, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10). In that prayer we are asking God to “destroy the works of the Devil” in our lives, and for His rule to replace the rule of Satan through his demons.

...demons prove themselves useful servants of “our Adversary, the Devil.” It is their duty, a duty which they willingly fulfill, to bind, frustrate, torment, accuse, cripple, destroy, kill and afflict with all kinds of illnesses both physical and mental the sons and daughters of Adam, whom they hate with an unrelenting, perfect hatred.

Even though he was thrown into the Lake of Fire in AD 70, it does not automatically mean that Satan has no more ability to influence humans in the SEEN realm. Apostle Paul warns us against taking him for granted. We are not ignorant of his devices. It is much safer to suspect that he might still have some kind of influence upon us, even from his location in the Lake of Fire. He is still in existence, and he is still in the UNSEEN realm. So it is certainly possible that he could still have influence, even if it is only indirect and highly restricted. We dare not let our guard down. Satan would love nothing more than for us to take him for granted. That kind of deception is what he has always been very good at.

However, there are many ways in which Satan was definitely defeated and utterly crushed in AD 70. We will look at that with this cosmology chart. His attempt to defeat the redemptive plan was nuked by the Cross and the resurrection of Christ out of Hades. Today is Palm Sunday, the day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. Next week is the first day of the week after Passover, which celebrates the resurrection of Jesus, and His triumph over Death and Hades. It is the most important day on the Biblical calendar, the day when Adam’s race was redeemed by his descendant, the Son of Man. Few Christians understand the significance of the phrase “Son of Man.” In Jewish writings such as the Talmud and the book of Enoch, there are references to a descendant of Adam who would save his fallen race and restore them to Paradise.

Adam's name means "man." So when they called this kinsman-redeemer the Son of Man, they were actually saying that he was the Son of Adam who would fulfill the prophecy in Genesis 3:15 about the Seed of Eve crushing the serpent's head. The whole Bible is the historical record of that redemptive drama, culminating in the death of that Son of Adam to redeem Adam's fallen race. But since Jesus never sinned, he was not subject to death, so Hades could not hold him captive.

Apostle Paul told the Roman Christians in 57 AD that God was soon going to crush Satan under their feet. This at least means that Satan's power and activities against the Plan of Redemption would be negated, including especially his ability to hold souls captive in Hades and separate them from their heavenly rewards after death.

**Rom. 16:20** The God of peace will **SOON** crush Satan under your feet.

The cosmology chart shows what was happening in the UNSEEN realm when Jesus returned in AD 70 to consummate the redemptive plan of God.

### **[Cosmology Chart]**

Notice the contrast between the invisible things in the heavens and the visible things on the earth mentioned in Col. 1:16 –

**Col. 1:16** For by Him all things were created, both **in the heavens** and **on earth, visible** and **invisible**, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created through Him and for Him.

As we pointed out in past studies, there are many mentions of Satan throughout the Bible and the New Testament especially. It should not be surprising to notice that each of these references to Satan mention different locations of Satan, and different activities associated with each location. Each context has to be studied in terms of which part of the Unseen realm Satan was in, and what his condition and activities were in that particular location.

Satan was bound, then loosed, and finally cast into the Lake of Fire. Those are cosmological events that occurred in the Unseen realm, but which relate to his influence in the Seen realm. Wherever Satan happened to be within the Unseen realm, he always had some kind of influence upon the Seen realm. If his residence now in the Lake of Fire does not allow him to have any impact of any kind upon the Seen realm today, it would be the first time in his existence that this was the case.

Apostle Peter mentioned in his first epistle (1 Pet. 5:8) that at the time he wrote (AD 63), Satan was stalking them like a roaring lion, seeking whom he could devour. This was in the middle of the persecution upon the church, right after Paul had been imprisoned, James had been killed, John had been exiled in Patmos, and shortly before Nero unleashed his great tribulation. The Jews were looking for opportunities to destroy the Church. This does not have to be speaking about the release of Satan, since Rev. 20 states the primary thing he was restricted from was "deceiving the nations to go to war." However, that could be easily be interpreted as Nero and the Gentiles being deceived by the Jews into persecuting the Christians. That appears to be what

happened in AD 64 when someone in Rome convinced Nero to put the blame for the fire in Rome upon the Christians. The Jews were referred to as a brood of vipers and sons of their father the Devil. Did Satan use the Jews to deceive Nero and the Romans to go to war against the Church? If Peter is not talking about the release of Satan, then we have Satan still bound in the Abyss at the same time Peter said that he was stalking and devouring Christians. Either Satan was released, or we have to believe that Satan could somehow stalk and devour Christians while being bound in the Abyss.

Furthermore, there are plenty of scriptures to tell us exactly what parts of Satan's powers were limited or bound at any given time. For instance, most of us Preterists believe that the millennium was the period from 30 to 70 AD, and that Satan was bound in some sense during that period. But none of us believe that Satan was bound in all senses during that period. Rev. 20 says that he was bound with a chain and put in the Abyss for that thousand years. Few of us take the chain literally, so what about the Abyss, as well as the Lake of Fire? Do we just wave our magic spiritualizing wand over the Abyss and Lake of Fire also?

The origin of the demons (evil unclean spirits) was when the fallen angels cohabited with human women (before and after the flood) and produced a race of giants (hybrids - who were half angelic and half human). When these giants died, their unclean spirits were released into the world to trouble mankind. And we see many instances of that in the pages of our Bible, especially in the New Testament.

**Luke 8:30-31:** "Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?' 'Legion,' he replied, because many demons had gone into him. And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into **the Abyss**."

**Mt. 8:29:** "What do you want with us, Son of God?" they shouted. "Have you come here to **torture us before the appointed time?**"

However, in the two passages quoted above (Matt. 8:29; Luke 8:30-31) it seems that at the judgment these spirits would be sent into some kind of torment. We know that they did not want to be put into **the Abyss**, where Satan was bound during the millennium. But it is hard to tell what would become of them after the judgment.

It seems that they can no longer enter into a human today in the same way they could before, because they are separated from us now in the Abyss or in the Lake of Fire. But what does that really tell us? Just because they can no longer affect us the same way they did in the first century, does that mean that they have no influence of any kind upon us today?

Can they (from their location in the Lake of Fire, or the Abyss) still have some kind of influence? We know that Satan, from his location in **the Abyss** during the transition period, could still influence humanity. He was bound from deceiving the nations to go to war, but he was not prevented from other tempting and persecuting activities, during his confinement in **the Abyss**. At the judgment, were the demons cast into **the Lake of Fire** or into **the Abyss**? And from that location in the unseen realm, can they still have any kind of influence or impact upon humanity? That is the question.

We all realize that Satan still had some activities which were not bound during the millennium, while he was in **the Abyss**. We also know that he was crushed and

thrown into the Lake of Fire at AD 70. But it is not clear whether that restricted all of his activities and influence, or whether it was just those activities which involved accusing us before God, hindering the arrival of the Kingdom of God, separating us from our heavenly reward, holding us captive in Hades, Prince of the Power of the Air, and other such activities that are discontinued, now that the Kingdom has arrived.

His power to do anything against our salvation and the Kingdom is totally crushed. But that says nothing about his ability to tempt us, influence us, and throw stumbling blocks in our way. Apostle Paul urged us not to let our guard down, since we are not ignorant of Satan's schemes. He would love nothing more than for us to think that we have nothing to fear from him any longer. That would deceive us into letting our guard down and becoming vulnerable to his attacks. It is much safer for us Christians to assume that Satan might still be able to influence in some limited way from his residence in the Lake of Fire. I refuse to let my guard down. It is better to be safe than eternally sorry.

Notice what the following texts say about the activity of Satan in the unseen realm, and the powerful defeat that he suffered when Christ Jesus came into this world.

**Eph. 2:1-2** -- And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to **the course of this world**, according to **the prince of the power of the air**, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

**[AMPLIFIED] Eph. 2:2** In which at one time you walked [habitually]. You were following **the course and fashion of this world [were under the sway of the tendency of this present age]**, following **the prince of the power of the air**. [You were obedient to and under the control of] the [demon] spirit that still constantly works in the sons of disobedience [the careless, the rebellious, and the unbelieving, who go against the purposes of God].

**[NET BIBLE] Eph. 2:2** in which you formerly lived according to **this world's present age**, according to **the ruler of the kingdom of the air**, the ruler of the spirit that is now energizing the sons of disobedience, [see Eph. 1:21 "this age"]

**Eph. 6:12** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against **the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places**.

**1 Jn 3:8** -- The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to **destroy the works of the devil**.

**Heb 2:14-15** -- ...that through death [Jesus] might **render powerless** him who had the **power of death**, that is the devil, and might **free those** who through fear of death were **subject to slavery** all their lives

**2 Tim 1:10** ...now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who **abolished death** and **brought life and immortality to light** through the gospel

**Luke 4:18** “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim **release to the captives**, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed.”

**Eph. 4:8** Therefore it says,  
“When he ascended on high, he led **captive** a host of **captives**, and he gave gifts to men.”

**Eph. 1:9** He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him

**Eph. 1:10** with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the **summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth**. In Him

**Eph. 1:19** ...the **surpassing greatness of His power** toward us who believe. *These are* in accordance with the working of the **strength of His might**

**Eph. 1:20** which He brought about in Christ, when **He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places**,

**Eph. 1:21** **far above all rule and authority and power and dominion**, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

**Eph. 1:22** And He **put all things in subjection under His feet**, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,

**Eph. 1:23** which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

**Bottom line:** I think it is unwise and unsafe for us as Christians to assume that there is no more activity or influence of Satan and his demons in the world today. The possibility exists that he may very well be able to interfere in some limited way (even though his major powers to separate the saints in Hades and stall off the establishment of Christ's Kingdom have been totally and irreversibly and eternally crushed).

To believe otherwise is to put ourselves at risk of being deceived. As Paul says, we are not ignorant of his schemes. Satan would love nothing more than for us to believe that he is totally out of the picture, so that we will let our guard down and be vulnerable to his attack. I would rather stay on the safe side and assume that he may still have some limited capability of tempting and throwing stumbling blocks in our way. I believe it is still wise to keep the whole armor of God on us.

There are two dangerous extremes, both of which we need to avoid:

**[[http://www.religioustolerance.org/chr\\_demo2.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/chr_demo2.htm)]**

C. S. Lewis wrote in 'The Screwtape Letters,' 'There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them.'

It still seems to me that while I am still in a mortal body of flesh on earth, I am still subject to the testing and training and disciplining of God, which includes all the challenges that he allows his spirit creatures to throw at us (all for our molding and shaping and preparation for our eternity in heaven with God). So I do not discount the possibility that Satan may still be able, in a limited way, to interfere in the affairs of the visible realm. I have heard missionaries to China tell me their experiences when inside

Buddhist temples and while preaching to Buddhist monks. They are not superstitious guys, and they are fully aware of the preterist implications of Satan's crushing in AD 70. So I simply have to back away from the typical preterist answer to this question. Cosmologically it seems possible to me that Satan may still have some limited ability to interfere in the affairs of the visible realm from his location in the Lake of Fire in the unseen invisible realm. That does not compromise our preterist apologetic, as far as I am concerned. I would rather be safe than sorry.

One thing is for sure, Satan's ability to separate us from our heavenly reward and to imprison us in Hades, is fully crushed and terminated forever. Whether he has any other kinds of activity or influence beyond AD 70 is yet to be determined. At this point I do not feel safe in assuming that he has no influence whatsoever. We are not ignorant of his scheming and deception and trickery in the past. He would love nothing more than for us to be unaware of his activity, thus leaving ourselves open and vulnerable. So I am not willing to put myself at risk of being overly-confident until I can see clearly exactly what his cosmological role and activity really is beyond AD 70.

All of us preterist teachers need to take this issue much more seriously. I am not content to wave my magic (ALL FULFILLED) wand over it and give it the quick brush-off (as I have done in the past). The only thing I feel safe in doing at this point is to affirm that Satan's adversarial role against the plan of redemption, and his ability to separate us from our heavenly destiny, has ended. He can no longer separate us, nor can he rule over our disembodied spirits in Hades. He was taken out of the AIR above (in the unseen realm) where he reigned and ruled as "prince of the power of the air." (Eph. 2:2) But he was always in the unseen spiritual realm, and he remained in the unseen spiritual realm after AD 70. He is now in a different location in that unseen spiritual realm (the Lake of Fire), but the point is that he is still in existence in the unseen spiritual realm. Whether he can still exert some kind of tempting or stumbling block influence (directly or indirectly) upon us today from his permanent location in the Lake of Fire in the unseen spiritual realm, is the big question. Email me if you have any questions about all this: <preterist1@preterist.org>

If you would like a couple of great books which detail all of these events, I would recommend **ISRAEL AND THE NATIONS** by F. F. Bruce, which is available for order at our website ([www.preterist.org](http://www.preterist.org)), and **JEWISH BACKGROUNDS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT** by J. Julius Scott, which is available from Amazon.com. Be sure to get a copy of my book, **First Century Events**, which deals with the Roman, Jewish, and Christian events of the first century. We will be using it as a study guide here in our studies of the first century. You can purchase it from our website: [www.preterist.org](http://www.preterist.org)

**Some further recommended reading:**

Josephus *Antiquities* and *Wars* (sections which deal with the Herodian rulers)