

A Cage for Every Unclean Bird

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By examining a number of scriptures, it is apparent that Satan has various forms of punishment for those within his realm, including incarceration. In order to gain more clarity on this subject, it is important to understand the figurative and symbolic language used in God's word. For example, when the meaning of the phrase "a cage for every unclean bird" is understood, it opens up a number of related truths, or mysteries, occurring within the spirit realm (1Cor. 15:51; Eph. 19; 5:32; Col. 1:26).

And he (an angel of God) cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and **the hold** (SGD 5438; a hold with guards *keeping watch*; cf. Mt. 14:25; 24:43; Lk. 2:8; prison) of every foul spirit, and **a cage** (SGD 5438; a hold with guards; prison) **of every unclean and hateful bird!**' (Rev. 18:2; Ed. Notes in parentheses; emphasis added; KJV).

There will come a time during the judgment of God when Satan's realm, referred to as "Babylon the Great", becomes a state of imprisonment for those who are described as "foul spirits" and "unclean and hateful birds." To understand who these hateful birds represent, it is important to examine other scriptures describing "birds."

In the 14th chapter of Leviticus, the term "*birds*" is used symbolically to represent spiritbeings. One of these birds has blood sprinkled on it prior to being released. This bird symbolizes a sinful spirit-being with the potential to repent and be forgiven of sins through the blood of another bird that was sacrificed. This latter bird's death and shed blood prefigured the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which reconciles every repentant sinner to Almighty God.

Then the priest shall command to take for him (a leper) who is to be cleansed two living and clean birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop. ⁵And **the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed** in an earthen vessel over running water. ⁶As for the living bird, he shall take it, the cedar wood and the scarlet and the hyssop, and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water. ⁷And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed from the leprosy, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall **let the living bird loose in the open field** (Lev. 14:4-7; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).

The earthen vessel pictured the body of Christ that was broken for the spiritual healing of all repentant sinners (Isa. 53:5). The running water symbolized the action of Almighty God's Spirit in the life of Jesus Christ enabling him to complete the work he was given by his heavenly Father (Lk. 4:14; Jn. 5:36; 10:25, 38). The cedar wood prefigured the stake that Christ would be nailed to (Ac. 5:30; 10:39; 13:29; Gal. 3:13; 1Pet. 2:24). The scarlet represented all the sins that have been covered by Christ's shed blood (Isa. 1:18; cf. Heb. 9:22), and the hyssop is connected to the last moments of Christ's life on a wooden stake (Jn. 19:29-30). Finally, the bird that was dipped in the blood of the slain bird represents a sinful spirit-being that repents and is released from their debt, which is everlasting death. Therefore, depending on the context in which it is given, "living bird", "bird of the air", "hateful bird", etc. can picture spirit-beings, and in particular, angels - either loyal or disloyal.

Do not curse the king, even in your thoughts; do not curse the rich, even in your bedroom; for **a bird of the air may carry your voice, and a bird in flight may tell the matter** (Eccl. 10:20; emphasis added).

In this case, "a bird of the air" is a reference to a spiritual messenger and not a physical bird that is incapable of speaking any human language.

Are they (angels) not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? (Heb. 1:14; Ed. note in parenthesis)

Jesus Christ spoke to "imprisoned birds" prior to the flood during the time of Noah.

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us (you) to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, ¹⁹by which also he went and preached to **the spirits in prison** (cf. Rev. 18:2), ²⁰who formerly were disobedient, when once the longsuffering (patience) of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water (prefiguring baptism; cf. 1Pet. 3:21) (1Pet. 3:18; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

This is the same "prison" that the demons did not want to be sent to during the time of Christ's earthly ministry.

And when he (Christ) stepped out on the land, there met him a certain man from the city who had demons and for a long time wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs. ²⁸When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, 'What have I to do with you, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me!' (Lk. 8:27-28; Ed. note in parenthesis)

Jesus asked him, saying, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Legion,' because many demons had entered him. ³¹And they begged him that he would not command them to go into the abyss (SGD 12; bottomless pit) (Lk. 8:30-31; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The abyss, mentioned by this Legion of demons, is a place of total isolation and therefore synonymous with being dead. This is why the same Greek word was used to describe the three days and nights that Christ was in the grave.

Or, 'who will descend into the abyss (SGD 12; bottomless pit)?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead) (Rom. 10:7; Ed. note in parenthesis)



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Satan is described as the king of the bottomless pit, which is not a physical location.

And **they** (*locusts*; symbol of a specific group of demons; cf. vs 2-3) **had a king over them the angel of the bottomless pit**, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon (Destruction), but in Greek he has a name Apollyon (Destroyer) (Rev. 9:11; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

It is not a coincidence that the demons in Revelation 9:1-3 are described as locusts because these insects remain as *nymphs* underground for most of their lives prior to emerging as adults after multiple stages of development known as *instars*. While still nymphs they feed on *xylem sap* from roots and use their strong front legs for digging.

It is this place of restraint, where the "locusts" live, that Satan will be cast into at the time of Christ's return to rule this planet.

And he (God's loyal angel) cast him (Satan; vs. 2) into the bottomless pit (SGD 12), and shut him up, and set a seal on him (cf. Dan. 6:17; Mt.

27:66), so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while (Rev. 20:3; Ed. notes in parentheses).

In essence, Satan is going to be placed into the same prison that "holds" some "hateful birds", "locusts", "foul spirits" and "unclean birds". So, he will be keeping company with these members of the fallen host for approximately a thousand years. Metaphorically, he will be "rubbing shoulders" with those he is responsible for mistreating and confining to the bottomless pit. Therefore, it should be no surprise that the demons who spoke with Christ did not want to go there. Instead, they preferred to go into a herd of swine (Lk 8:33). This information may come as a surprise to some, but it shows that not all of Satan's spirit-followers are happy with him (Rev. 12:4). In fact, the next prophecy confirms that some of the fallen host eventually turn on Satan, and undo his schemes (Dan. 8:23). Apparently, it will be some of the demons who Satan will make deals with in order to garner their support for the battle that will occur upon his release at the end of Christ's millennial rule on this planet.

And the ten horns (symbol of leaders) which you (John) saw are ten kings (from the fallen host) who have received no kingdom as yet (because they are still restrained in the abyss), but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. ¹³These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings... (Rev.17:12-14; Ed. notes in parentheses).

And **the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot** (symbol of Satan's corrupt civil and religious system), make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn

her with fire (Rev. 17:16; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Another group of fallen angels were placed in custody pending their final judgment, and this was done at God's command between the time of Adam and Noah.

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to Tartarus and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment (2Pet. 2:4).

According to The Companion Bible, Tartarus is a Greek word, not used elsewhere or at all in the Septuagint translation of the Bible. Homer describes it as subterranean (cf. Dt. 32:22) and the prison of the Titans, or giants (Rephaim) who rebelled against Zeus. The Septuagint uses the terms *gigas and titan*es from where we get the word titan, in several places in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Apart from the reference to Zeus, if there is any validity to this, the Rephaim will have an opportunity to repent following their resurrection from the dead at the end of Christ's millennial rule on earth. Some misread Isaiah 26:14 and interpret it as saying that Rephaim will never be resurrected, which it does not state. Instead, the memory of these giants has perished in the same manner that anyone's memory ceases following death.

They are dead, they will not live; they are Rephaim, they will not rise (in the first resurrection). Therefore You have punished and destroyed them, and made all their memory perish (Isa. 26:14; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

For the living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for **the memory of them is forgotten** (Eccl. 9:5; emphasis added).

So foul spirits, unclean birds, hated birds, and locusts are confined or "imprisoned" by Satan and are awaiting judgment following Christ's millennial rule on earth, while Rephaim are deceased but will also come up in a future period of judgment. In the next section of scripture, Satan is described as someone who refuses to release his prisoners, and this has implications for both the fallen host and mankind,

Those (in a future period of judgment) who see you (Satan) will gaze at you, and consider you, saying: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, ¹⁷who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities, who **would not release his prisoners**' (Isa. 14:16-17; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Figuratively speaking, human beings are held in Satan's prison through his many deceptions which prevent them from correctly understanding God's truth (Rev. 12:9). Thankfully, Christ's sacrifice provided the means through which ever sinner can be liberated from Satan's deception, forgiven upon repentance, and reconciled with Almighty God (Ac. 2:38). This freedom that Christ came to provide was prophesied in a number of scriptures.

I, the Lord (Almighty), have called you (Jesus Christ) in righteousness, and will hold your hand; I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles, ⁷To open blind eyes, **to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house** (Isa. 42:6-7; cf. 61:1; Jn. 8:31-36; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

In conclusion, with a better understanding of God's symbolic and figurative language, activities in the spirit realm become more transparent and various truths explained to

God's servants who seek to obey His word (Mt. 4:4; cf. Rev. 12:17).

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