

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

Systematic Theology Series

ANGELOLOGY

The Doctrine of Angels, Demons, and the Spiritual Realm

UNIT 7: THE DEFEAT OF SATAN AND THE DESTINY OF THE DEMONIC REALM

Lesson 19

The Final Judgment of Satan and His Angels

The Lake of Fire — The Eternal Destiny of the Demonic Realm

Key Texts: Revelation 20:1–10; Matthew 25:41; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Romans 16:20; 1 Corinthians 15:24–26

“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, NASB 1995

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Introduction

Lesson 18 established that the cross of Jesus Christ is the D-Day of the cosmic conflict: the decisive event in which the rulers and authorities were disarmed, the one who had the power of death was rendered powerless, the works of the devil were destroyed in principle, and the ruler of this world was judged and cast out. That decisive victory is the theological ground for everything that the present church does in its engagement with the demonic realm and in its proclamation of the gospel to a world still under the adversary's permitted influence. Lesson 19 turns to the V-Day of the same conflict: the final judgment of Satan and his angels described in the closing chapters of Revelation, the consummation in which everything that D-Day accomplished in principle is executed in its final, permanent, comprehensive form.

The final judgment of Satan and the demonic realm is not a peripheral or speculative element of the biblical eschatology; it is the specific and explicitly promised outcome toward which the entire narrative of the cosmic conflict has been driving since Genesis 3:15. The promised crushing of the serpent's head is not fully accomplished until the adversary is cast into the lake of fire. The already of the cross's decisive defeat demands the not yet of the consummation's final execution. And the Revelation 20 passage that describes that consummation is among the most pastorally significant, and most exegetically contested, in the entire apocalyptic literature. This lesson engages it with the theological care and the amillennial interpretive commitments that have governed the series from its opening lesson.

The lesson proceeds through the four major movements of Revelation 20:1–10: the binding of Satan for the thousand years (vv. 1–3), the reign of the saints during that period (vv. 4–6, treated briefly as background), the short release and final futile rebellion (vv. 7–9), and the definitive casting of the devil into the lake of fire (v. 10). It then widens the scope to include the judgment of the fallen angels more broadly (Matthew 25:41; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6), the certainty of the outcome as the governing pastoral frame, the theological significance of the permanence of evil's punishment, and the eschatological hope that the series has been building toward from its opening pages. The lesson closes with 1 Corinthians 15:24–26 as the Pauline statement of the final abolition of every demonic power and its integration into the comprehensive sovereignty of the God who will be all in all.

A note on the amillennial commitments of this lesson: the series has consistently affirmed the amillennial eschatology that understands the “thousand years” of Revelation 20 as the present age of the church between the first and second comings of Christ. This interpretation is exegetically defensible, historically rooted in the Reformed tradition (Augustine, Calvin, and the confessional Reformed churches have consistently held it), and consistent with the New Testament's pervasive “already/not yet” eschatological framework. Where the interpretation intersects with the specific content of the lesson, particularly in the understanding of the binding of Satan in Revelation 20:1–3, it will be stated with appropriate clarity and with acknowledgment of the range of responsible eschatological positions within the Reformed tradition.

I. The Binding of Satan: Revelation 20:1–3

Christ's First Coming Inaugurated the Binding That Limits the Adversary's Deception

A. *The Text and Its Imagery*

Revelation 20:1–3 introduces the dramatic imagery of Satan's binding with apocalyptic vividness: "And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time" (NASB 1995). The passage deploys a rich concentration of the adversary's names and identities in a single verse: the dragon (the creature of Revelation 12 whose tail swept a third of the stars of heaven), the serpent of old (the Eden serpent of Genesis 3), the devil (the diabolos of the New Testament), and Satan (the adversary of the Old Testament). This fourfold identification establishes that the being who is bound in Revelation 20 is the full complexity of the personal adversary who has been the subject of this series since Lesson 9.

The purpose of the binding is stated with precision: "so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed." The binding is not a binding unto complete inactivity; as the preceding lessons have documented, the adversary continues to be genuinely active in the present age through temptation, deception, accusation, and affliction. The binding is specifically a binding of his capacity to deceive the nations in the comprehensive, universal way that would prevent the gospel's advance among all peoples. This specific purpose provides the key to the amillennial interpretation: the binding of Satan in Revelation 20 is the fulfillment of the strong man parable of Matthew 12:29, in which the binding of the strong man makes possible the plundering of his goods. The cross bound the strong man in the specific sense of limiting his capacity to prevent the gospel from reaching all nations, and the church age, the thousand-year reign of Revelation 20, is precisely the age in which that plundering is taking place.

B. *The Amillennial Interpretation*

The amillennial interpretation of the thousand years (Latin: mille anni, from which "amillennial" derives, though the "a" is better understood as indicating a non-literal reading of the millennium rather than a denial of it) understands the thousand years as a symbolic period representing the entire era of the church between Christ's first and second comings. Several exegetical considerations support this reading. First, the binding described in Revelation 20:1–3 is consistent with what the New Testament describes as the consequence of Christ's first coming: in Matthew 12:28–29 the binding of the strong man is already accomplished in Jesus' earthly ministry; in John 12:31 the ruler of this world is cast out at the cross; in Luke 10:18 Jesus witnesses Satan falling from heaven. The Revelation 20 binding is the apocalyptic and comprehensive statement of what these New Testament texts describe as already accomplished.

Second, the specific purpose of the binding, that Satan would not deceive the nations, is consistent with the new redemptive-historical situation inaugurated by Christ's first coming: the gospel is no longer

restricted to one nation (Israel) but is advancing among all nations (the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19–20), a development that would have been impossible if the adversary retained the same comprehensive authority over the nations that he exercised before the cross. The cross’s defeat of the demonic powers has created the missional conditions in which the elect from every tribe and tongue and people and nation can be gathered in. Third, the thousand years is almost certainly a symbolic number, consistent with Revelation’s pervasive use of symbolic numbers, representing a complete and perfect period of time rather than a literal millennium. The series affirms this amillennial reading while acknowledging that historic premillennialism and postmillennialism represent other responsible Reformed eschatological positions, and that the certainty of Satan’s final judgment is the shared conviction of all three.

“He laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.” Revelation 20:2, NASB 1995

II. The Short Release and Final Rebellion: Revelation 20:7–9

The Adversary’s Last Desperate Act and Its Immediate, Total Defeat

At the close of the thousand-year period, Revelation 20:7–9 describes a brief, dramatic, and immediately crushed final rebellion: “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. 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” (NASB 1995). The passage is remarkable in several respects, and each requires theological attention.

First, the adversary’s release is itself within divine control: he “will be released”, passive voice, the release is granted, not self-achieved. Even at the end of the age, the adversary does not break free from his binding; he is released by the sovereign God for the specific and limited purpose of the final rebellion that precipitates the consummation. This detail confirms what the series has consistently emphasized about the leash: the adversary never operates outside divine permission, even in his most desperate and most destructive moments.

Second, the rebellion’s apparent scale, “like the sand of the seashore,” surrounding the camp of the saints and the beloved city, is deliberately staggering in its imagery of overwhelming force. The people of God are surrounded, vastly outnumbered, apparently about to be destroyed by a final, massive assault. This is the image of the church at its most vulnerable, the apparent final defeat of the people of God by the forces of evil, the moment at which the adversary appears to have recovered everything the cross cost him. And then: “fire came down from heaven and devoured them.” No battle. No resistance from the saints. No dramatic spiritual warfare. Simply the immediate, comprehensive, divine destruction of the assembled forces of evil by the sovereign act of God Himself. The final rebellion is not a close contest; it

is a violent interruption by the God who has permitted the rebellion precisely in order to demonstrate, one last time, how completely the outcome has been in His hands from the beginning.

The theological significance of the brief rebellion and its immediate destruction is the demonstration that the church's apparent vulnerability in the world, its smallness, its exposure to persecution and opposition, its apparent powerlessness before the assembled forces of the fallen world order, is never the whole truth. The beloved city is surrounded; the fire comes from heaven; and the surrounding forces are devoured. The final word belongs to the God who holds the leash.

III. The Lake of Fire: Revelation 20:10

The Eternal Destiny of the Adversary Who Has Deceived the World

Revelation 20:10 is the most definitively final verse in the entire series of lessons: "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" (NASB 1995). The verse requires sustained attention because every element of it carries theological significance that must be carefully received.

The adversary is identified by his characteristic activity: "the devil who deceived them." The final identification at the moment of the final judgment is not by his power or his rank or his name but by his defining activity, the deception through which he has exercised his influence over the nations throughout the entire period between his first fall and his final judgment. He is, at the last, the deceiver who is finally, permanently prevented from deceiving anyone ever again. The lake of fire and brimstone is the specific eschatological location of the final judgment: the same lake into which the beast and the false prophet have already been cast (Revelation 19:20), and into which death and Hades are subsequently cast (20:14), and into which all whose names are not found written in the book of life are cast (20:15). The lake of fire is the eschatological destination of everything that belongs to the fallen order that is being permanently and comprehensively excluded from the new creation.

The phrase "tormented day and night forever and ever" (Greek: *basanisthēsontai hēmeras kai nyktos eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn*) is unambiguous in its temporal scope: this is eternal, not temporary, punishment. The phrase "forever and ever" (*eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn*) is the strongest temporal expression available in the Greek language, the same phrase used in Revelation 4:9 and 10 for the eternal life of God Himself. The punishment of the adversary is eternal in exactly the same linguistic sense that the life of God is eternal. This is not a comfortable doctrine; it is an unavoidable one, and the attempt to soften it through annihilationist or universalist readings requires the kind of hermeneutical accommodation to cultural sensibilities that the Reformed tradition's commitment to the authority of Scripture does not permit.

The theological function of the eternal punishment of the adversary in the biblical narrative is multi-dimensional. It is the ultimate and permanent expression of divine justice: the one who has perpetrated the most comprehensive and the most sustained evil in the history of creation receives the punishment

that the comprehensive and sustained character of his evil demands. It is the permanent guarantee of the safety and peace of the new creation: as long as the adversary exists and is free, no created environment is permanently safe from his influence; the lake of fire is the divine provision that makes the permanent safety of the new creation possible. And it is the final vindication of every soul that the adversary has deceived, afflicted, and destroyed, the public, permanent demonstration that God's justice has prevailed over the most sustained rebellion against it that creation has ever seen.

“And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone... and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

Revelation 20:10, NASB 1995

IV. The Judgment of the Fallen Angels: Matthew 25:41 and 2 Peter 2:4

The Entire Demonic Realm Shares the Adversary's Eternal Punishment

The final judgment is not limited to Satan alone; the entire demonic realm, the fallen angels who joined him in his primordial rebellion, shares his eternal punishment. Matthew 25:41 provides the most explicit statement of this corporate judgment, spoken by Jesus Himself in the context of the great judgment scene of the parable of the sheep and the goats: “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels’” (NASB 1995). The “eternal fire” of Matthew 25:41 is the same eschatological reality as the lake of fire of Revelation 20:10, and its recipients include not only “the devil” but “his angels”, the full cohort of the fallen angelic beings who constitute the demonic realm that the series has engaged across its entire demonological section.

The specific phrasing “eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels” is theologically significant in several respects. First, the eternal fire was prepared, it is not a divine afterthought, not an improvised response to unexpected demonic rebellion, but a provision that God determined in advance as the appropriate and just response to the rebellion He foreknew from eternity. The eternal fire is part of the comprehensive divine plan within which the entire cosmic conflict has been conducted. Second, it was “prepared for the devil and his angels”, it was designed specifically for the demonic realm, not primarily for human beings. The fact that unbelieving human beings share the same eternal fire reflects the tragic consequence of aligning oneself with the rebel whose rebellion has been condemned from the beginning, not the original divine intention for the human race. This distinction has profound pastoral significance for the preaching of hell to human beings.

The apostolic testimony of 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6, examined in Lesson 12, provides an additional dimension of the judgment's comprehensiveness: some fallen angels, identified in those texts as those who “did not keep their own domain”, are already confined, already in chains of darkness, already

reserved for the judgment of the great day. Their present confinement is a proleptic judicial act: the sentence has been passed, the imprisonment has begun, and the final execution awaits the appointed time. This “already reserved” dimension of the demonic realm’s judgment reinforces the already/not yet framework that has governed the series: the final judgment is not an event with an uncertain outcome that may or may not go well for God’s people; it is the execution of a sentence already rendered, which some portions of the demonic realm are already experiencing in anticipatory form.

V. The Certainty of the Outcome: No Suspense in the Biblical Narrative

The Only Question Is When, Not Whether

One of the most theologically significant and pastorally sustaining features of the biblical narrative about the final judgment of Satan and his angels is the complete absence of dramatic suspense about the outcome. There is no moment in the entire biblical narrative, from the protoevangelium of Genesis 3:15 to the final casting into the lake of fire in Revelation 20:10, where the outcome of the cosmic conflict is genuinely uncertain. The serpent’s head will be crushed; the only question is when. The lake of fire has been prepared for the devil and his angels; the only question is when they will be cast into it. The eternal fire will be the final home of every demonic being; the only question is the appointed time of its ignition.

This absence of suspense is itself a theological statement about the nature of God’s sovereignty over the cosmic conflict. The narrative is not a drama whose ending is uncertain; it is a drama whose ending has been declared from its beginning. God announced the serpent’s defeat in Genesis 3:15 before the serpent had done anything more than deceive Eve and Adam. He pronounced the judgment of the fallen angels in 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6 while the judgment’s final execution still awaits. He described the lake of fire as already prepared (Matthew 25:41) before the final casting into it. The certainty of the outcome is not a late addition to the biblical narrative once the victory is secured; it is its governing assumption from the beginning, communicated by the One who “declares the end from the beginning” (Isaiah 46:10, NASB 1995) and whose purposes no demonic rebellion can ultimately frustrate.

The pastoral significance of the outcome’s certainty is the most directly consoling truth the entire eschatological section of the series provides for the church engaged in the present conflict. The congregation that knows the end of the story, that has read to Revelation 20:10 and knows what happens to the deceiver who deceived them, is the congregation best equipped to endure the present conflict with the settled confidence that Hebrews 11 commends in the great cloud of witnesses: “those who had been martyred for the word of God and for the testimony they had maintained” (Revelation 6:9, NASB 1995) are already asking how long; the answer is already determined. The only question is when. And the God who holds the leash has set the time.

VI. The Theological Significance: Evil Will Not Endure Forever

The Permanent Removal of Evil from God's Good Creation as the Condition of New Creation

The final judgment of Satan and his angels is not merely the punishment of guilty parties, though it is that comprehensively and justly. It is simultaneously the act of cosmic and creation-wide purification that makes the new creation possible. The new creation of Revelation 21–22, the new heaven and the new earth in which God dwells with His people, in which there is no more death or mourning or crying or pain (21:4), in which the nations walk by the light of the Lamb (21:24), in which nothing unclean will ever enter (21:27), presupposes the comprehensive and permanent removal of everything that has produced death and mourning and crying and pain and uncleanness in the present age. The lake of fire is the divine provision that makes the new creation's permanent safety and permanent peace possible: it is the place to which everything that belongs to the fallen order is permanently consigned, so that the new order can be permanently free of it.

The doctrine that evil will not endure forever, that the final judgment is not merely a future possibility but a certain and appointed reality, is one of the most important and most frequently under-preached eschatological truths in the contemporary church. The congregation that lives as though the present experience of evil in the world, the suffering, the injustice, the demonic affliction, the cultural rebellion against God, the personal experience of sin and its consequences, might simply continue indefinitely, has lost the eschatological horizon that gives the present suffering its proper theological context. Paul's magnificent declaration in Romans 8:18, "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (NASB 1995), is an eschatological comparison: the suffering is real, but it is finite; the glory is coming, and it is infinite. The lake of fire is the instrument of the transition: the permanent, comprehensive removal of everything that has produced the suffering that is not worth comparing with the glory to come.

The specific theological truth that evil will not endure forever also speaks directly to the experience of those who have suffered most severely at the hands of the demonic realm's activity: those who have experienced the most devastating forms of spiritual affliction, those who have witnessed the most horrifying expressions of the demonic influence over nations and cultures, those who have been most intimately acquainted with the "great wrath" of Revelation 12:12. For them, the lake of fire is not primarily a doctrine of judgment to be approached with theological caution; it is the eschatological promise that what has been done to them and to those they love will not simply be absorbed into the ongoing fabric of creation. The Judge of all the earth will do right (Genesis 18:25). The deceiver who deceived them will be tormented day and night forever and ever. The certainty of that outcome is not a source of vindictive satisfaction; it is the foundation of the patience of the saints (Revelation 13:10) who endure the present conflict in the certain knowledge of its end.

"I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." Romans 8:18, NASB 1995

VII. The Eschatological Hope: Romans 16:20 and the Approaching Consummation

The Promise That Grounds the Church's Confident Endurance in the Present Age

Romans 16:20, the verse that has appeared as a recurring eschatological beacon across multiple lessons of this series, now receives its full context and its final resonance: “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you” (NASB 1995). The verse is Paul’s application of the Genesis 3:15 protoevangelium to the specific congregation he is addressing at the specific moment of the letter’s composition, and by extension to every congregation that has received this letter as the inspired Word of God. The crushing of Satan under the feet of the church is the final execution of the sentence pronounced in the garden, accomplished in principle at the cross, and to be consummated at the appointed time that the God of peace has determined.

The word “soon” (Greek: *en tachei*, in quickness, with dispatch, speedily) is the New Testament’s characteristically urgent eschatological vocabulary. It does not mean “immediately” in the human sense of “within the next few years”; the nineteen hundred and more years that have elapsed since Paul wrote these words are evidence enough that “soon” operates on the divine rather than the human temporal scale. But it does mean urgency, nearness, the certainty that the consummation is not infinitely distant but approaching with divine dispatch toward an appointed time that has been set since before the foundation of the world. The “soon” of Romans 16:20 is not a disappointed expectation; it is the ongoing, pressing reality of the eschatological urgency that should characterize the church’s posture in every generation between the cross and the return.

The pairing of “The God of peace will soon crush Satan” with “The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you” is the most condensed possible statement of everything the series has been building toward: the peace that the God of the cross provides in the midst of the conflict, the crushing of the adversary that the cross has already accomplished in principle and will consummate in fact, and the grace that is the ongoing provision of the one who has bound the strong man and continues to plunder his goods through the gospel’s advance. The God who is about to crush the adversary under the feet of His church is the same God whose grace accompanies that church in every moment between the promise and its final fulfillment. Stand in that grace. Endure in that peace. Await that crushing. It is coming with dispatch.

VIII. 1 Corinthians 15:24–26: The Final Abolition of Every Enemy

The Pauline Vision of the Completed Kingdom and the God Who Will Be All in All

The final text of this lesson is the Pauline vision of the completed kingdom in 1 Corinthians 15:24–26: “Then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death” (NASB 1995). The passage occurs within Paul’s great resurrection discourse (1 Corinthians 15:1–58) and describes the sequence of eschatological events that

culminates in the consummation of all things: Christ reigns until all enemies are abolished; the last enemy to be abolished is death; and then the Son hands over the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all (v. 28).

The vocabulary of verse 24 is significant and connects directly to the spiritual warfare theology of the series: “all rule and all authority and power” (Greek: *pasan archēn kai pasan exousian kai dynamin*) uses the same hierarchical terminology that appears in the demonological sections of Ephesians 1:21 (“far above all rule and authority and power and dominion”) and Ephesians 6:12 (“the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness”). The abolition of “all rule and all authority and power” is the abolition of the entire ranked structure of the demonic realm, the rulers, the powers, the world forces, the spiritual forces of wickedness, every level of the hierarchy described in Lesson 12 permanently and comprehensively eliminated. Not defeated and bound, as at the cross; not cast into the lake of fire, as in Revelation 20; but abolished, made inoperative, rendered null, removed from the fabric of reality that the consummation brings into being.

The abolition of the last enemy, death itself, is the culmination of the entire series’ theology in its most comprehensive form. Death is not a demonic being in the personal sense that Satan is; but it is the comprehensive consequence of the fall, the last and most universal expression of the fallen order that the consummation will permanently overcome. Death’s abolition is the completion of what Hebrews 2:14–15 described as the purpose of the Incarnation: the rendering powerless of the one who had the power of death. At the cross, the devil’s power over death was rendered powerless; at the consummation, death itself is abolished. The last enemy’s abolition is the ultimate expression of the Incarnation’s purpose, the final application of the cross’s victory, and the permanent establishment of the new creation in which death will be “no more” (Revelation 21:4).

And then: “God will be all in all” (v. 28). The entire series, all nineteen lessons from the worship of the holy angels to the consummation of the demonic realm’s judgment, has been building toward this single sentence. The God who created the invisible realm for His glory; the God who made the angels and pronounced their creation good; the God who permitted the fall of the adversary within His sovereign purposes; the God who sent His Son to take hold of the seed of Abraham and crush the serpent’s head; the God who provided the full armor of God for His people in the present conflict; the God who holds the leash; the God of peace who will soon crush Satan under His people’s feet, this God, in the consummation of all things, will be all in all. Every resistance will have been abolished. Every demonic power will have been eliminated. Death itself will have been overcome. And the glory for which all of creation was made, through and by and for the Son in whom all things hold together, will fill the new creation without remainder, without opposition, without end. *Soli Deo Gloria*. To God alone be the glory. Forever.

Theological Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
Amillennialism	The eschatological position that understands the “thousand years” (Latin: mille anni) of Revelation 20 as a symbolic period representing the entire church age between Christ’s first and second comings, rather than a literal future thousand-year reign of Christ on earth. Amillennialism holds that Christ presently reigns at the right hand of the Father, that the binding of Satan in Revelation 20:1–3 was inaugurated at Christ’s first coming, and that the consummation will arrive at Christ’s return in a single eschatological event encompassing the resurrection, the final judgment, and the new creation. Associated with Augustine, the Reformed confessions, and major Reformed theologians including Calvin, Berkouwer, and Ridderbos. The position affirmed by the Westminster Standards and the Three Forms of Unity.
The Lake of Fire	The eschatological location of the final judgment described in Revelation 19:20 and 20:10–15: the eternal destination of the beast and false prophet, the devil and his angels, and all whose names are not found in the book of life. Identified with “the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41) and with “the second death” (Revelation 20:14–15). The lake of fire is the instrument of the permanent removal of everything belonging to the fallen order from the new creation, and the eschatological expression of divine justice upon the most sustained and most comprehensive rebellion against God in the history of creation.
Gog and Magog	The designation used in Revelation 20:8 for the nations gathered for the final rebellion at the end of the thousand years. The names derive from Ezekiel 38–39, where Gog (a king) and Magog (his territory) lead a comprehensive coalition of enemies against Israel in the last days. John’s deployment of these names in Revelation 20 identifies the final rebellion as the ultimate fulfillment of the Ezekiel prophecy: a comprehensive, worldwide coalition of all who remain opposed to God, gathered at the adversary’s instigation for one final, futile assault against the people of God. The assembly’s immediate destruction by fire from heaven (Revelation 20:9) is the definitive confirmation that no human-demonic coalition can prevail against the sovereign God whose people they surround.
The Second Death	The designation in Revelation 20:14–15 and 21:8 for the lake of fire as the ultimate and permanent death, distinguished from the first death (physical death) by its permanence and its eschatological character. The second death is the eternal separation from God and from the life that belongs to God’s presence, experienced by those whose names are not in the book of life. The

Term	Definition
	devil, his angels, death and Hades, and all the unrighteous are cast into the second death at the final judgment. The second death will have no power over those who share in the first resurrection (Revelation 20:6), those who belong to Christ, whose death He has already borne in their place.
En Tachei	Greek: in quickness, with dispatch, speedily (Romans 16:20; Revelation 1:1; 22:6, 7, 12, 20). The characteristic New Testament vocabulary of eschatological urgency. “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet”, the “soon” is en tachei, the divine dispatch with which the appointed eschatological events will arrive at their predetermined time. The word communicates not an expectation of imminence within human reckoning but the divine perspective of certainty and urgency: from within the economy of God’s sovereign purposes, the consummation is as certain and as pressing as though it were moments away. En tachei is the vocabulary of those who live under the conviction that the God who has promised has the power and the will to fulfill His promise with divine dispatch.
Abolition (Katargein)	Greek: to render inoperative, to abolish, to make of no effect (1 Corinthians 15:24, 26). The verb Paul uses for what Christ does to “all rule and all authority and power” at the consummation, and for what happens to death as the last enemy. Katargein implies not merely defeat or confinement but the comprehensive rendering inoperative, the making null and void of the entire ranked structure of demonic opposition and the power of death itself. The abolition of every enemy at the consummation is stronger than the binding of Satan at the cross (which permitted continuing limited activity) and the casting into the lake of fire (which confinement continues). Abolition is the final, permanent, comprehensive rendering inoperative of every form of opposition to the reign of God.
The Last Enemy	Paul’s designation in 1 Corinthians 15:26 for death: “The last enemy that will be abolished is death.” Death is the last, not because it is the most powerful, but because its abolition requires the completion of the resurrection of all the dead, the event that precedes the final judgment and inaugurates the new creation. Death’s abolition is the final application of Hebrews 2:14–15’s declaration that the Incarnation’s purpose was to render powerless the one who had the power of death: at the cross the power was rendered powerless; at the consummation death itself is abolished. The abolition of death fulfills Revelation 21:4’s promise that in the new creation “there will no longer be any death.”
God Will Be All in All	Paul’s description of the consummated state in 1 Corinthians 15:28: “then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.” The phrase describes the comprehensive,

Term	Definition
	universal, and uncontested reign of God over the new creation in which every enemy has been abolished, every opposition has been eliminated, and the glory of God fills all things without remainder or resistance. The consummation is not merely the defeat of the demonic realm; it is the full and final establishment of the divine glory as the encompassing reality of all that exists. The series has been building toward this sentence from its first lesson's description of the angelic worship before the divine throne.
Proleptic Judgment	A present, anticipatory, partial execution of the final eschatological judgment, whose completeness remains to be accomplished at the appointed time. The confinement of certain fallen angels described in 2 Peter 2:4 ("pits of darkness, reserved for judgment") and Jude 6 ("eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day") is a proleptic judgment: the sentence has been pronounced and the imprisonment has begun, but the final execution awaits. Similarly, the cross's disarming and rendering powerless of the demonic powers is a proleptic judgment of Revelation 20's final casting into the lake of fire. The proleptic character of present judgments provides the church with a present experience of the certainty of the future judgment.
New Creation	The eschatological reality described in Revelation 21–22 as the new heaven and the new earth: the comprehensive renewal of the created order that follows the final judgment and the casting of death, Hades, and every opponent of God into the lake of fire. The new creation is characterized by the immediate and unmediated presence of God with His people ("Beheld, the tabernacle of God is among men", 21:3), the permanent absence of death, mourning, crying, and pain (21:4), the illumination of the nations by the light of the Lamb (21:24), and the absolute exclusion of everything unclean (21:27). The new creation is the permanent condition made possible by the permanent removal of everything that corrupted and threatened the first creation, including the devil and his angels, confined forever in the lake of fire.

Practical Application

A. For the Mind: What Must We Believe?

We must believe that the final judgment of Satan and his angels is not a peripheral eschatological curiosity but a central element of the biblical theology of creation, redemption, and consummation. It is the completion of the protoevangelium's promise, the execution of the cross's sentence, the permanent guarantee of the new creation's peace, and the final expression of the divine justice that the suffering church has been trusting throughout the entire period between the cross and the return. The congregation that does not know where the story ends is a congregation that has been deprived of the eschatological framework within which the present conflict has its proper theological context.

We must also believe that the certainty of the outcome is a present theological reality, not merely a future aspiration. The sentence has been pronounced. The fire has been prepared. The time has been appointed. The lake of fire awaits the adversary with the same certainty with which the resurrection awaits the saints. Both are certain because both depend on the same faithful God whose word does not return to Him empty. Stand in the certainty of the one; endure with the certainty of the other.

B. For the Heart: What Must We Feel and Desire?

Let the certainty of the final judgment produce in the church the specific combination of eschatological hope and present endurance that the New Testament consistently commends. The hope is not wishful thinking; it is the confident expectation of those who have read Revelation 20:10 and know what happens to the deceiver. The endurance is not mere grim determination; it is the patient, faith-sustained perseverance of those who know that the God who holds the leash has set the time and that the time is approaching with divine dispatch. "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." Soon. With dispatch. Certainly. Stand in that certainty. Endure with that hope.

Desire also the specific form of theological gravity regarding the eternal punishment of the adversary that the passage demands. The lake of fire is not a comfortable doctrine; it is not designed to produce comfort. It is designed to produce the sober recognition that the God of the universe takes evil with absolute seriousness, that the suffering of those who have been deceived and afflicted and destroyed by the adversary's activity will not simply be absorbed into the ongoing fabric of a universe that continues as though it had not happened. The Judge of all the earth will do right. The weight of that conviction is itself a form of the patience of the saints.

C. For the Hands: What Must We Do?

- **Read Revelation 19:11–20:15 as a single continuous eschatological sequence.** Identify the sequence of events: the rider on the white horse and the defeat of the beast and false prophet (19:11–20:3), the thousand-year reign (20:4–6), the release and final rebellion (20:7–9), the great white throne judgment (20:11–15). Note how the cast of characters is assembled at judgment, the beast (19:20), the false prophet (19:20), the devil (20:10), death and Hades

(20:14), the unrighteous dead (20:15), and how each is cast into the lake of fire in sequence. Then read Revelation 21:1–8 as the description of what is left when everything belonging to the fallen order has been permanently removed: the new creation in which God is all in all.

- **Preach or teach 1 Corinthians 15:20–28 as the Pauline theology of the resurrection and the consummation.** Paul’s argument moves from the resurrection of Christ as the firstfruits (v. 20) through the order of resurrection (vv. 22–23) to the sequence of the consummation (vv. 24–28). The abolition of every rule and authority and power (v. 24), the subjection of every enemy (v. 25–26), and the final handing over of the kingdom to the Father (vv. 27–28) constitute the most comprehensive Pauline vision of what the consummation means for the demonic realm and for the reign of God. Preach it with the doxological register it demands: this is not merely eschatological information but the final, comprehensive declaration of the glory for which all things were made.
- **Memorize and pray Romans 16:20 as a daily eschatological declaration.** The verse is the most concentrated possible summary of the eschatological hope: the God who provides peace in the present conflict is the God who will crush the adversary under the feet of His people with divine dispatch. Pray it not as a formula but as an act of eschatological faith, the deliberate reception of the certainty of the consummation into the present moment of the conflict. And pair it with Genesis 3:15, so that the promise made in the garden and the promise given to the Roman church are received as the single promise they are: the serpent’s head will be crushed by the seed of the woman; the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet. It is the same promise. It is coming. It is soon.
- **Develop pastoral counsel for those who struggle with the doctrine of eternal punishment.** The eternal torment of the adversary and of all who share his rebellion against God is among the most pastorally sensitive doctrines in the entire Christian theological tradition. The pastoral counsel must hold two truths simultaneously: the reality and justice of the eternal punishment (which the text does not permit to be softened through annihilationism or universalism) and the God whose justice in eternal punishment is the expression of the same holiness and love that accomplished the atonement. The lake of fire was prepared for the devil and his angels, not for human beings; every human being who ends there ends there because they have aligned themselves with the rebel whose rebellion was condemned from the beginning. The pastoral urgency of the eternal punishment doctrine is not its terrifying character but its evangelistic character: the certainty of the outcome makes the gospel’s invitation imperative.
- **Read the closing chapters of Richard Bauckham’s *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*** (Cambridge, 1993) for a theologically rich engagement with the eschatological sections of Revelation and their pastoral significance. Bauckham’s reading of Revelation as a thoroughgoing theology of the comprehensive lordship of the Lamb over all powers and authorities, including the ultimate judgment of the demonic realm, provides the systematic theological context that situates the specific passages of this lesson within the broader eschatological vision of the Apocalypse. His treatment of the new creation in particular illuminates the connection between the permanent removal of evil and the permanent establishment of the divine glory that 1 Corinthians 15:28’s “God will be all in all” describes.

Study and Discussion Questions

Opening Question

- Before engaging the discussion questions, take stock of how the eschatological material of Lessons 18 and 19 has affected your experience of the preceding doctrinal content. Has knowing where the story ends, the lake of fire, the abolition of every demonic power, God all in all, changed the way you receive the earlier lessons' descriptions of the adversary's activity, his names and methods, his limits, and the spiritual warfare in which the church is presently engaged? What specific truth from Lesson 19 has most directly affected your experience of the preceding content?

Observation Questions (What Do the Texts Say?)

- Read Revelation 20:1–10 carefully as a continuous narrative. Identify the sequence: the binding (vv. 1–3), the thousand-year reign (vv. 4–6), the release and rebellion (vv. 7–9), and the final judgment (v. 10). What is the stated purpose of the binding in verse 3? What is the character and the outcome of the final rebellion in verses 7–9? And what are the specific details of verse 10, who is cast in, what is the nature of the punishment, and how long does it last?
- Read Matthew 25:31–46 carefully. In what context does Jesus identify the eternal fire as having been prepared for the devil and his angels (v. 41)? What does the phrase “prepared for the devil and his angels” suggest about the original intent of the eternal fire and its application to human beings? And how does the judgment of the nations in this passage illuminate the relationship between solidarity with the adversary's rebellion and sharing in the adversary's judgment?
- Read 1 Corinthians 15:20–28 carefully. What is the order of resurrection described in verses 22–24? What is the sequence of events described in verses 24–26? What does the abolition of “all rule and all authority and power” in verse 24 encompass, and how does the vocabulary connect to Ephesians 1:21 and 6:12? And what does Paul mean by “the last enemy that will be abolished is death” (v. 26), why is death described as an enemy and why is it the last?
- Read Revelation 21:1–8 as the description of the new creation that follows the final judgment. What specific features of the new creation are named in this passage? What is the comprehensive promise of verse 4 (“no longer”: death, mourning, crying, pain)? What is the character of the new creation's inhabitants (verse 7: “the one who overcomes”)? And how does verse 8's list of those cast into the lake of fire (“the second death”) illuminate what must be permanently removed for the new creation's features to be permanently maintained?
- Read Romans 16:20 in its context (Romans 16:17–20). Who are the people Paul is warning about in verses 17–18? What is the connection between the warning about those who cause divisions (possibly false teachers serving the adversary's purposes) and the promise of the adversary's impending crushing? And how does the pairing of the crushing promise with the blessing “The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you” illuminate the relationship between the eschatological certainty of the consummation and the present provision of grace?

Interpretation Questions (What Does It Mean?)

- The lesson presents the amillennial interpretation of the thousand years as the church age between Christ's first and second comings, supported by the connection to Matthew 12:29 (the binding of the strong man making possible the plundering of his goods) and the gospel's advance among all nations as the specific effect of the binding. How persuasive do you find this interpretation? What are the strongest exegetical arguments for and against it? And how does the certainty of the final judgment in Revelation 20:10 function as the shared conviction across the range of responsible Reformed eschatological positions, regardless of the specific interpretation of the thousand years?
- The lesson argues that the eternal fire of Matthew 25:41 "was prepared for the devil and his angels", not primarily for human beings, and that the pastoral significance of this distinction is the evangelistic urgency it creates: every human being who ends in the lake of fire ends there because they have aligned themselves with the rebel whose rebellion was condemned from the beginning. Is this distinction between the original design of the eternal fire and its application to human beings theologically significant? And what pastoral and evangelistic implications does it carry?
- The lesson presents the certainty of the outcome as "the most directly consoling truth the entire eschatological section of the series provides." Is certainty of outcome the same as comfort? How does the certain knowledge that the adversary will be cast into the lake of fire actually function as a source of pastoral comfort for those presently experiencing the adversary's great wrath? And what makes the certainty of the judgment a more secure ground of comfort than the present experience of spiritual power or victory?
- The lesson argues that the final judgment of Satan and his angels serves as the permanent guarantee of the new creation's safety and peace. Is this argument theologically sound, does the permanent confinement of the demonic realm actually address the conditions required for the new creation's permanent freedom from evil? Or does it leave unaddressed the question of how the new creation's inhabitants, redeemed human beings who still have the remnants of the old nature, are themselves permanently secured against the possibility of renewed rebellion?
- First Corinthians 15:28 describes the ultimate state as God being "all in all." How does this phrase function as the comprehensive theological summary of the entire series? And what does "God will be all in all" mean in relation to the creatures, both angelic and human, who will inhabit the new creation? Does "all in all" suggest absorption of the creatures into the divine being (pantheism), or the comprehensive and uncontested reign of God over a creation that remains genuinely creaturely in its relation to Him?

Application Questions (What Does It Demand of Us?)

- The lesson argues that the church that does not know where the story ends has been deprived of the eschatological framework within which the present conflict has its proper theological context. Evaluate your congregation's current eschatological awareness. Does your congregation know where the story ends? Is the certainty of the adversary's final judgment a living, operative conviction in the way your congregation interprets its present experience of

spiritual conflict? And what specific teaching, from this lesson, from the series as a whole, would most effectively cultivate the eschatological awareness that the present conflict requires?

- The lesson recommends developing pastoral counsel for those who struggle with the doctrine of eternal punishment. Identify a specific member of your congregation or a specific type of questioner you regularly encounter who finds the doctrine of eternal punishment most difficult. What is the specific nature of their difficulty: moral (the doctrine seems incompatible with a God of love), intellectual (annihilationism seems more coherent), emotional (the thought of eternal torment is distressing), or pastoral (the doctrine seems to have harmful effects on the congregation's self-understanding or its engagement with those outside the faith)? And what specific truth from this lesson most directly addresses that specific form of the difficulty?
- The lesson presents the lake of fire as the permanent guarantee of the new creation's peace and the eschatological promise that evil will not endure forever. For those in your congregation who have suffered most severely at the hands of the demonic realm's activity, through spiritual affliction, through the influence of false teaching, through experiences of demonically inflected abuse or oppression, how does the certainty of Revelation 20:10 function as a pastoral resource? How do you communicate the certainty of the adversary's final judgment to those who most need to receive it as consolation rather than as doctrine?
- The lesson closes with 1 Corinthians 15:28's "God will be all in all" as the comprehensive theological summary toward which the entire series has been building. Write a brief doxological statement, a prayer, a declaration, or a reflection, that receives "God will be all in all" as the summary of the entire Angelology series and as the ground of the confident, worshipping endurance that the series has been equipping the church to practice. What specific truths from the series, the worship of the holy angels, the comprehensive lordship of Christ, the cross's decisive defeat, the certainty of the consummation, find their resolution in that single sentence?
- Lesson 20 is the final lesson of the series. It addresses the application of the entire series to the life of the local church: living with awareness of the invisible world, worshipping with the angels, recognizing the church as a spectacle to the spiritual realm, and the Christological conclusion that Angelology rightly studied exalts Christ who created, sustains, and judges the entire invisible realm. As you prepare for that concluding lesson, what single truth from Lesson 19 do you most want to carry into the series' conclusion? And how has the eschatological certainty of Lessons 18 and 19 prepared you to receive the practical and doxological conclusion of Lesson 20 with the full theological weight it deserves?

Prayer Focus

Open this lesson's prayer time with a reading of Revelation 20:10 followed immediately by Revelation 21:1–4. Read them in sequence, without interruption or commentary. The first passage is the permanent removal of the deceiver; the second is what remains when he is permanently removed: the new heaven and the new earth, the tabernacle of God among men, no death, no mourning, no crying, no pain, the former things having passed away. The sequence is the pastoral point: the lake of fire is not the end of the story; it is the condition of the end of the story. What follows the permanent removal of evil is the permanent establishment of the divine glory in the new creation. Read it slowly. Let the two passages do their work.

Begin the prayer with adoration of the sovereign God whose plan encompassed the entire cosmic conflict from before the foundation of the world. He announced the serpent's judgment in Genesis 3:15 before the serpent had done anything beyond the garden. He prepared the eternal fire before history began. He determined the time of the consummation before creation was made. He holds the leash; He set the time; He will execute the sentence with the divine dispatch that "soon" (*en tachei*) communicates. Worship the One whose sovereignty is so comprehensive that not even the most sustained and most malicious rebellion in the history of creation has frustrated His purposes by so much as a single moment. He is God; there is no other. His plan stands; His purpose will be accomplished. To Him alone be the glory.

Pray for the church's eschatological formation, specifically for the cultivation of the eschatological awareness that this lesson has established as essential to the proper theological interpretation of the present conflict. Pray that your congregation would know where the story ends: not as a piece of theological information that occupies a compartment in the doctrinal framework, but as a living, operative conviction that shapes the way they interpret their present experience of spiritual conflict, their endurance under trial, and their engagement with the gospel's advance among those who are presently in the domain of darkness. Pray for the eschatological consciousness that says, in the midst of the most intense spiritual opposition: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under my feet." Not eventually. Not someday. Soon.

Pray the eschatological hope for those in your congregation who are most severely suffering at the hands of the demonic realm's activity and most in need of the consolation that the certainty of the consummation provides. Name them specifically, by name, before the God who knows them by name and has their names written in the book of life. Pray Revelation 20:10 as an intercession for them: that the God who has appointed the adversary's eternal confinement would grant them, in their present experience of his great wrath, the settled peace of those who know how the story ends. Pray Romans 16:20 as a specific blessing over their specific conflict: the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

Close with a declaration of 1 Corinthians 15:24–28 as the eschatological summary of the entire series. Speak it as a profession of faith in the God who will abolish every rule, every authority, and every power;

who will put every enemy under the feet of His Son; who will abolish death itself, the last enemy; and who, when all things have been subjected to the Son, will be all in all. This is the end toward which every lesson in the series has been pointing. This is the destination toward which the protoevangelium has been journeying since Genesis 3:15. This is the glory for which all things were made. The God who created the angels for His worship, who sustains the visible and invisible alike by the word of His power, who sent His Son to crush the serpent's head and render powerless the one who had the power of death, who provides the full armor of His grace for His people in the present conflict, who holds the leash, and who has set the time of the consummation, this God, in the fullness of the appointed time, will be all in all. Soli Deo Gloria. To God alone be the glory. Forever and ever.

"Then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power... so that God may be all in all."

1 Corinthians 15:24, 28, NASB 1995

Key Texts: Revelation 20:1–15; 21:1–8; Matthew 25:31–46; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Romans 16:20; 1 Corinthians 15:20–28; Romans 8:18; Isaiah 46:10; Genesis 18:25; Genesis 3:15

Soli Deo Gloria
To God Alone Be the Glory

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

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