

Handout 1: Revelation Lesson 23, Chapter 20

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word *satan* always appears with the article “the” except in 1 Chronicles 21:1, where it is a proper name. In the Greek Septuagint (LXX), the word appears as *diabolos* (devil in English), which we translate as accuser, adversary, or slanderer. The primary reference to *satan* in Hebrew is “an accuser in a court of law.” Satan in the New Testament:

1. Jesus referred to Satan as “the strong one [man]” (Mt 12:29; Mk 3:27; Lk 11:21); the “evil one” (Mt 13:19); and “the prince of this world” (Jn 12:31).
2. Satan even tried to tempt the Son of God (Mt 4:3-11; Mk 1:13ff; Lk 4:2ff).
3. When St. Peter tried to dissuade Jesus from fulfilling His Passion, Jesus called Peter “satan” because his thoughts were human and not in accord with God’s divine plan (Mt 16:23; Mk 8:33).
4. Satan takes away the “seed” of the word of the Gospel from the mouth of those who receive it (Mt 13:19; Mk 4:15; Lk 8:12).
5. He put the betrayal of Jesus into the heart of Judas (Jn 13:2), and then entered Judas for the consummation of the terrible deed (Lk 22:3; Jn 13:27).
6. Satan tried to “sift the disciples like wheat” (Lk 22:31), and he filled the heart of Ananias with deceit (Acts 5:3).
7. He tempts man with designs (1 Cor 7:5, 2 Cor 2:11), with wiles (Eph 6:11), and with snares (1 Tim 3:7; 2 Tim 2:26).
8. He can disguise himself as an angel of light (2 Cor 11:14), and he can even seduce some of the faithful (1 Tim 5:15).
9. He is the enemy who is like a roaring lion seeking prey (1 Pt 5:8), and Christians should give him no room to attempt his wiles in their lives (Eph 4:27).
10. As the prince of darkness, he can do physical harm (Lk 13:16; 1 Cor 5:5; 1 Tim 1:20) and has the power to kill (Heb 2:14).
11. He has a house and a kingdom (Mt 12:26; Mk 3:23, 26; Lk 11:18), and before Christ’s resurrection, he could claim that all the nations of the earth were in his power (Lk 4:6).
12. He has sons and daughters: those who do not act in righteousness and do not love their brothers (1 Jn 3:8, 10).

However, he is subject to the power of God, and Christ defeated him on the Cross!

The terms for Satan in 20:2 identifying the “evil one” are throughout the Bible. In the Book of Revelation, the names or titles for Satan appear in these passages:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Revelation Reference</b>
The Dragon	12:3-4, 7, 9, 13, 16-17; 13:2, 4, 11; 20:2
The Serpent	9:19; 12:9, 14-15; 20:2
The Devil	2:10; 12:9, 12; 20:2
The Deceiver	2:20; 12:9; 13:14; 18:23; 19:20; 20:2
Abaddon (Hebrew)	9:11
Apollyon (Greek)	9:11

Rev 9:11 calls Satan the “destroyer” *Abaddon* (Hebrew) and *Apollyon* (Greek) when naming him as the “angel of the Abyss,” but as powerful as this evil enemy may seem, he is no match for Jesus Christ!

In Romans 6:5-10, St. Paul focused on Christian conformity to the life of Christ. He made an argument in two steps, beginning each with a conditional statement in verse 5 and again in verse 8. Each statement expresses the hope that everything we believe will become a reality through

the promises of Jesus Christ. His argument centers on the Christian’s conformity to the ethical pattern of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection that brought about a release from slavery to sin, from God’s wrath and His glorious Resurrection to new life:

- Conditional statement #1, verse 5: *If we have been joined to him by a death like his → “so we shall be by a resurrection like his*
- Conditional statement #2, verse 8: *if we died with Christ → then we shall live with him too.*

According to St. Paul, in Romans 6:5-6, our baptism crucifies our old self with Christ. The new life Christ calls the believer to live is not only freedom from sin but redemption from “self.” In Romans 6:6, Paul writes: *our former self is crucified with him, so that the self which belonged to sin should be destroyed, and we should be freed from the slavery of sin.* Our new life is not merely symbolic because the regenerative waters of baptism yield a transformation and rebirth (see 2 Peter 1:3-4).

The Regenerative Power of Christian Baptism which images Christ:

Christ’s crucifixion and death →	Christ’s Resurrection →	Christ’s glorified new life
Our crucifixion with Christ and our death to sin & self into the waters of baptism →	Our resurrection to new life through the power of the Holy Spirit = “born again” or “born from above” in the image of Christ “raised up” through the water of baptism →	Our final resurrection and glorification in Christ’s Second Advent

The Book of Revelation identifies two classes of people, especially in 20:4-6:

1. The elders who will render judgment (verse 4a) and those they represent (faithful who persevered in both Old and New Covenants) who receive the promised that they will live and reign with Christ “for a thousand years” (verses 4-6).
2. The rest of the dead, unbelievers, probably both physically and spiritually, since all who refuse baptism or later reject the grace of baptism are truly “dead” in their sins.

The sixth vision may be the eternal future, breaking into the historical past and introducing the theological principle of “compenetration” (the interfusion of two ideas or principles). It is a principle that expresses the action of Biblical prophets who describe a present event (or an imminent event) in terms that transcend the events that are about to happen because those events prefigure what will occur at the end of time. St. Paul wrote that all the events in the Old Testament happened *for our benefit, so that we should never set our hearts, as they did, on evil things* (1 Cor 10:6).

The “country of Magog” is an invented name that means “country of Gog.” The Book of Revelation is tied to the Book of Ezekiel at many points, especially the last twelve chapters of Ezekiel and the concluding chapters in the Book of Revelation. In Revelation 20:8, St. John uses the vivid imagery of Ezekiel Chapters 38-39, where there are ungodly forces called Gog and

Magog, but it cannot be the same enemy as in Revelation. We cannot neglect the differences between the passages:

1. The reason for Gog's invasion of Israel in the Ezekiel passage is to plunder her silver and gold and take her cattle (Ez 38:11-13).
  2. All of Gog's warriors are on horseback (Ez 38:15); there are no soldiers in motorized vehicles like trucks, jeeps, tanks, helicopters, or jets.
  3. All Gog's warriors carry swords, wooden shields, and wooden bows (Ez 39:3, 9).
  4. The victorious Jews will burn their weapons for fuel for seven years (Ez 39:9-10).
- None of these details point to events taking place in the modern age.

The war of Gog and Magog in Revelation cannot be identical to the Gog prophesy in Ezekiel for these reasons:

1. In Ezekiel, the enemy is Gog from the land of Magog, but in Revelation, Gog and Magog are one entity.
2. Ezekiel's Gog is a "chief ruler" (in Ez 38:2, the Hebrew word *rosh* means "head" or "chief"), but in Revelation, Gog and Magog is a confederation of nations across the face of the earth (Rev 20:7).
3. In Ezekiel, Gog comes against Israel with people from various countries in the geographic region of Israel. In Revelation, Gog and Magog are nations beguiled by Satan from the four quarters of the earth, as numerous as the sands of the sea.
4. In Ezekiel, Gog's warriors come against Israel, a people who have recently returned from captivity and are dwelling in towns without walls. In Revelation, Gog and Magog come to encompass the city of the saints from the breadth of the earth.
5. In Ezekiel, Israel defeats the army of Gog, and the people burn the remaining wooden weapons. In Revelation, God destroys Gog and Magog with fire from heaven, and nothing remains.
6. In Revelation, Gog and Magog (mentioned as one like the combination of Hitler and Germany) become a symbol for Gentile nations that oppose God and His divine plan for Israel (see Ps 2).

It is the same way that the Jezebel of Revelation 2:20 is not the same woman as the queen in the Book of Kings (1 Kng 16:29-31; 18:3-4, 19; 19:1-18; 21:5-16; 2 Kng 9:30-37). And as Sodom in Revelation 11:8 is not the same Sodom as in Genesis 19. Nor is Babylon in Revelation 11:8; 18:8-9, 24, etc., the Babylon of the Old Testament books, and the "new" Jerusalem in Revelation 3:12; 19:7-9; 21:1-22:5 cannot mean the old Jerusalem. In each instance, the former serves as a Biblical type. Queen Jezebel was long dead, the cities of Sodom and Babylon had already received God's judgment, and the battle of Ezekiel 38-39 had already met its fulfillment within the setting of the time before the First Advent of the Christ.

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Theories concerning the thousand-year reign in Revelation Chapter 20:

<b>Historic Millennium</b>	<b>Postmillennial</b>	<b>Premillennial</b>	<b>Amillennium</b>
God works with Israel	God works with Israel	God works with Israel	God works with Israel
Christ's mission, death, Resurrection, and Ascension	Christ's mission, death, Resurrection, and Ascension	Christ's mission, death, Resurrection, and Ascension	Christ's mission, death, Resurrection, and Ascension
The Age of the Church	The Age of the Church	The Age of the Church	Church Age: -Tribulation and a symbolic thousand-year reign of Christ over the Kingdom of Heaven on earth occurs in the same time frame with a significant increase of evil at the end of the age
Tribulation views are divided. Many historicists do not believe in a single period of Tribulation	The Great Tribulation	The Rapture = 1st Second Coming of Christ followed by Pre 3 1/2 years Great Tribulation Post 3 1/2 years	
Second Advent of Christ		2nd Second Coming of Christ	
Millennial Reign of Christ and the Church	Triumphant Millennial Reign of the Church (literal/symbolic)	Millennial Reign of Christ and the Church	
	Second Advent of Christ		Second Advent of Christ
Final Judgment	Final Judgment	Final Judgment	Final Judgment
Eternity	Eternity	Eternity	Eternity
<b>Biblical problems with these views</b>			
<b>Tribulation for the Church? A golden age of Christ and His Church on earth for a thousand years</b>	<b>Fails to acknowledge that the Church is the cause of Christ's return</b>	<b>Fails to show any suffering for the Church; there is only one Second Advent of Christ not two, and no second chance for unbelievers</b>	

What is the thousand-year reign of Christ in Revelation 20:4? Is it before Christ's glorious return in His Second Advent, or after? That issue is what separates the Pre from Post Millennialists. Then there are the Amillennialists who believe there is no literal millennium. All views hinge on when Christ returns in relation to the thousand-year reign and when the Great Tribulation occurs. Since so many of John's numbers are symbolic in Revelation (**remember Jesus told him from the beginning of his visions that this is a book of "signs"**), it is reasonable that the thousand-year reign represents the perfection of order of the number 10 multiplied by itself three times ( $10 \times 10 \times 10 =$  a trinity of the perfection of God's plan). In other words, the thousand-year/Millennium reign of the Church will last the perfect length of time, according to God's will.

The thousand years may be the symbolic reference to the period that runs from the Incarnation of Christ to the establishment of His Church, reigning with Him until the end of time. It is what Christ promised. The Messianic Kingdom is, therefore, established in two stages:

- His First Advent in which Christ demonstrates His power over the devil and inaugurates the Kingdom of God, and
- His Second Advent at the end of time, with the Kingdom of Jesus Christ in its complete form as the heavenly Jerusalem.

In the first stage, Satan is bound, but that does not mean he does not have influence. We still must fight evil, but evil cannot overcome us during the Age of the Church. Many Catholic scholars believe the Great Tribulation will come at the end of this Great Age of the Church, Christ's Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Although the Church has suffered persecution down through the ages, it will be much more intense at the end when Satan's influence is no longer limited, and through his influence, the Antichrist will declare war on the Saints. The Catholic Church does not support a "Rapture" of Christians before or during the Tribulation. There is nothing in Scripture to support two Second Advents of Christ. A "Rapture" followed by another appearance of Christ to collect the rest of humanity makes two Second Comings. Also, why should God spare the Church the great period of tribulation when He did not spare His Son or His mother from suffering? The intense persecution will end when there is a final conflict between the forces of Christ and those of Satan. We will, through Christ, be victorious, and He will destroy Satan and death to establish His new, heavenly Jerusalem (see Rev 21 and CCC # 671-677).

Saints Augustine and Jerome preferred to interpret the thousand years of Revelation as a symbolic reference to the age of the Church that spans the time between the First and Second Advents of Christ (St. Augustine's *City of God*, 20:7-8). Most Catholic scholars ascribe to Augustine and Jerome's view, although the Catholic Church has not officially endorsed it or any other theory. However, the Church has decreed by the Holy Office in 1944 that millenarianism, understood as a future kingdom on earth, could not safely be taught as authentic Christian doctrine. "The Church will enter to glory of the kingdom only through this final Passover, when she will follow her Lord in his death and Resurrection. The kingdom will be fulfilled, then, not by a historic triumph of the Church through a progressive ascendancy, but only by God's victory over the final unleashing of evil, which will cause His Bride to come down from heaven" (CCC#677).

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