

A Comprehensive Workbook:  
on the

*Book of Revelation*



**PREPARED BY:**

***Ray Reynolds***



# A Comprehensive Workbook: The Book of Revelation

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**GULF SHORES**  
CHURCH OF CHRIST

*This study guide was created by Ray Reynolds for the purpose of Sunday morning Bible classes at the Gulf Shores Church of Christ (Gulf Shores, AL). The material presented in this class series will be gleaned from personal notes, the New King James Study Bible, Dr. Coy Roper, Frank Pack, W.B. West, Homer Hailey and various other sources.*

# **A SURVEY OF REVELATION**

## **INTRODUCTION**

**AUTHOR:** John, identified as one "who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ" (**1:1-2**). This apostle was the brother of James, the author of the gospel of John, and three other epistles (**I John, II John, III John**). His authorship of this is supported by the testimony of Justin Martyr (165 A.D.), Clement of Alexandria (220 A.D.), Hippolytus (236 A.D.), Origen (254 A.D.), and several early councils.

**NATURE OF THE BOOK:** The word "revelation" in the Greek means "an uncovering" or "unveiling." The book was designed to uncover not to conceal. It starts off with letters to seven churches, then it intertwines history and prophecy.

**DIFFERENT VIEWS OF INTERPRETATION:** Different views of interpreting the book of Revelation generally fall into four categories:

(1) *The "preterist" view* - The book refers to events that were fulfilled in the first few centuries after the book was written. It's value for today would be didactic (teaching the value of faithfulness to God).

(2) *The "historicist" view* - The book provides a panoramic view of the future of the church from as it goes through history. This view finds in the book such events as the rise of Catholicism, Islam, the Protestant reformation, world wars, etc., ending with the return of Christ. It's value for today would be to encourage Christians no matter when they lived.

(3) *The "futurist" view* - Apart from the first few chapters, the book depicts events which immediately precede the second coming of Christ. Therefore most of the book has yet to be fulfilled (or is being fulfilled now). Within this view point there are three main divisions: Pre-tribulationists, Mid-tribulationists, and Post-tribulationists. It's value for today would only be for Christians living at the time Jesus returns.

(4) *The "idealist" view* - The book does not deal with any specific historical situation. Instead, it is simply enforcing the principle that good will ultimately triumph over evil. It's value for today would be that it is applicable to any age.

(5) *The "eclectic" view* - They take a combination of all of these views to fit their view.

**VIEWS OF THE MILLENNIUM:** The various views on tribulation are actually a subset of theological interpretations on the Millennium, mentioned in Revelation 20. There are three main interpretations: Premillennialism, Amillennialism, and Postmillennialism.

**INTERPRETATION & APPLICATION:** The early church, specifically the seven churches mentioned in the book, would have benefited greatly from this writing. John said, "*Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.*" (**1:3**). This thought is echoed from start to finish (**1:1, 1:4, 1:7, 1:9, 1:19-20, 22:6, 22:10**) and is evident by the messages to seven churches of Asia that were contemporaries of John who joined them in this suffering (**1:9-11**). Any application derived from the book is no different than that of any other prophetic book in the Bible. . . . God's way is the best way. His way is the only way to ensure victory!

**THE DATE OF THE BOOK:** Dating when the book was written is not without controversy. When one dates the book will certainly have a bearing upon one's interpretation of the book, especially if one follows the "preterist" view. Two dates are usually proposed: (1) An "early date", around **64-68 A.D.**, during the reign of the Roman emperor, Nero. (2) A "late date", around **95-96 A.D.**, during the reign of emperor Domitian.

**THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK:** Its purpose is stated at the beginning, and end of the book, to prepare the seven churches for persecution (**1:1,3, 22:10,16**) and to reveal "THINGS WHICH MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS." In particular, it is a revelation from Christ Himself of the judgment to come upon those who were persecuting His people (**6:9-11, 16:5-7**). This judgment was directed especially toward two enemies: (1) "Babylon, the harlot" (**17:6, 18;20,24, 19:2**). (2) The "beast" which supported the harlot (**17:7-13**). In fulfilling this purpose, the book is designed to warn and comfort. For erring disciples, it is a book of warning ("repent" or else, cf. **2:5, 16**). For faithful disciples, it is a book of comfort ("blessed" are those who "overcome", cf. **1:3; 2:7; 3:21; 14:13; 22:14**).

**KEY VERSE:** **Revelation 17:14** says, "*These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.*"

## **OUTLINE OF THE BOOK:**

### **INTRODUCTION (1:1-20)**

1. Introduction & benediction (**1-3**)
2. Greetings to the seven churches of Asia (**4-6**)
3. Announcement of Christ's coming (**7**)
4. The Lord's self-designation (**8**)

### **I. AN OVERVIEW OF THE CONFLICT (1:9-11:19)**

#### **A. VISION OF CHRIST AMONG THE LAMPSTANDS (1:9-20)**

#### **B. LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES (2:1-3:22)**

1. The church at Ephesus (**2:1-7**)
2. The church at Smyrna (**2:8-11**)
3. The church at Pergamos (**2:12-17**)
4. The church at Thyatira (**2:18-29**)
5. The church at Sardis (**3:1-6**)
6. The church at Philadelphia (**3:7-13**)
7. The church at Laodicea (**3:14-22**)

#### **C. THE THRONE SCENE (4:1-5:11)**

1. God on the throne (**4:1-11**)
2. The Lamb worthy to open the seven-sealed scroll (**5:1-14**)

#### **D. THE OPENING OF THE SEVEN SEALS (6:1-8:1)**

1. First seal: The white horse and its rider (**6:1-2**)
2. Second seal: The red horse and its rider (**6:3-4**)
3. Third seal: The black horse and its rider (**6:5-6**)
4. Fourth seal: The pale horse and its rider(s) (**6:7-8**)
5. Fifth seal: The martyrs under the altar (**6:9-11**)
6. Sixth seal: Cataclysmic disturbances (**6:12-17**)
7. Interlude: Sealing of the 144,000 on earth and multitude (**7:1-17**)
8. Seventh seal: Silence in heaven (**8:1**)

## **E. THE SOUNDING OF SEVEN TRUMPETS (8:2-11:19)**

1. Seven angels prepare to sound their trumpets (8:2-6)
2. First trumpet: Third of vegetation destroyed (8:7)
3. Second trumpet: Third of sea creatures and ships destroyed (8:8-9)
4. Third trumpet: Third of rivers and springs become bitter, many men die (8:10-11)
5. Fourth trumpet: Third of sun, moon, and stars struck, affecting day and night (8:12) and three-fold woe announced (8:13)
6. Fifth trumpet (first woe): Locusts from the bottomless pit, sent to torment men (9:1-12)
7. Sixth trumpet (second woe): Four angels with an army of two hundred million, killing a third of mankind (9:13-21)
8. Interlude: The angel with the little book (10:1-11) and the two witnesses (11:1-13)
9. Seventh trumpet (third woe): The victory of Christ and His kingdom proclaimed (11:14-19)

## **II. A CLOSER LOOK AT THE CONFLICT (12:1-22:5)**

### **A. THE GREAT CONFLICT (12:1-14:20)**

1. The Woman, Child, Dragon, and the Woman's offspring (12:1-17)
2. The beast from the sea (13:1-10)
3. The beast from the land (13:11-18)
4. The Lamb and the 144,000 on Mount Zion (14:1-5)
5. Proclamations of three angels (14:6-13)
6. Reaping the earth's harvest, and the grapes of wrath (14:14-20)

### **B. THE SEVEN BOWLS OF WRATH (15:1-16:21)**

1. Prelude to pouring out the seven bowls of wrath (15:1-8)
2. First bowl: Sores on those who worshipped the beast and his image (16:1-2)
3. Second bowl: Sea turns to blood, all sea creatures die (16:3)
4. Third bowl: Rivers and springs turn to blood (16:4-7)
5. Fourth bowl: Men are scorched by the sun (16:8-9)
6. Fifth bowl: Pain and darkness upon the beast and his kingdom (16:10-11)
7. Sixth bowl: Euphrates dried up, three unclean spirits gather the kingdoms of the earth for the battle at Armageddon (16:12-16)
8. Seventh bowl: Great earthquake, the great city divided, Babylon is remembered, cataclysmic events (16:17-21)

### **C. THE FALL OF BABYLON, THE HARLOT (17:1-19:10)**

1. The scarlet woman and the scarlet beast (17:1-6)
2. The mystery of the woman and beast explained (17:7-18)
3. The fall of Babylon the great proclaimed and mourned (18:1-24)
4. The exaltation in heaven over the fall of the great harlot (19:1-5)
5. The announcement of the marriage supper of the Lamb (19:6-10)

### **D. THE DEFEAT OF THE LAMB'S ENEMIES (19:11-20:15)**

1. Christ the victorious warrior and King of kings (19:11-16)
2. The beast, his armies, and the false prophet are defeated (19:17-21)
3. Satan is bound for a 1,000 years, the martyred reign with Christ (20:1-6)
4. Satan released to deceive the nations once more, but is finally defeated once for all (20:7-10)
5. The final judgment (20:11-15)

**E. THE ETERNAL DESTINY OF THE REDEEMED (21:1-22:5)**

1. The new heaven and new earth, the New Jerusalem, God dwelling with His people (**21:1-8**)
2. The New Jerusalem described (**21:9-27**)
3. The water of life, the tree of life, and the throne of God and the Lamb (**22:1-5**)

**CONCLUSION (22:6-21)**

1. The time is near, do not seal up the book (**22:6-11**)
2. The testimony of Jesus, the Spirit, and the bride (**22:12-17**)
3. Warning not to tamper with the book, and closing prayers (**22:18-21**)

# **A SURVEY OF REVELATION**

## **SYMBOLISM & APOCALYPTIC LANGUAGE**

**THE USE OF APOCALYPTIC LANGUAGE IN REVELATION:** Apocalyptic Literature is unique and causes the reader/interpreter to have a keen eye. John repeatedly uses the phrase that Jesus often used in His ministry, "He who has an ear, let him hear." What do we know about apocalyptic literature?

- (1) Apocalyptic literature often reflects dark times in history.
- (2) Apocalyptic literature often personifies good and evil in a state of conflict.
- (3) Apocalyptic literature gives predictions about the outcome of that struggle between good and evil.
- (4) Apocalyptic literature allows a message to be given through visions.
- (5) Apocalyptic literature challenges the recipient to pay attention and do his/her homework to interpret the entire message.

**THE SYMBOLISM OF NUMBERS IN REVELATION:** The reader/interpreter of Revelation must recognize the symbolism of numbers in the Apocalypse. In Revelation, as throughout the Bible, numbers often contain symbolic as well as literal connotations. Thus, the symbolic associations provide added dimensions to the literal understanding. The numbers which most commonly contain symbolic value in Scripture are listed below, with representative references:

- 1 = The number one represents unity, primacy, and independent existence (**Deuteronomy 6:4**). Often times Jesus will be referred to as the Holy One.
- 2 = The number two means an addition to give strength, help, confirmation (**Ecclesiastes 4:9-12**). The disciples were sent out by Jesus two by two into the ministry (**Mark 6:7**). Two witnesses are required to establish truth (**Deuteronomy 17:6, John 8:17, II Corinthians 13:1, I Timothy 5:19**). In Revelation are the beast out of the earth who has two horns like a lamb but spoke like a dragon (**Revelation 13:11**). He is the false prophet. However the two witnesses are the true prophets of God (**Revelation 11:3**).
- 3 = The number three is the simplest compound unity. This is the number for God (**Matthew 28:19**) or the Godhead/Holy Trinity.
- 3 1/2 = This is the number seven cut in half. This number represents incompleteness or imperfection. Christ's ministry was cut short to 3 1/2 years (**Daniel 9:26-27**).
- 4 = The number four represents the world with its four seasons and directions on the compass (**Revelation 7:1, 20:8**). The four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth (**Revelation 7:1, 20:8**). The great multitude from every nation, tribe, people and language is also a four-fold description.

- 5 = The number five is the one of a handful of numbers for humans. Man is portrayed by the various five-member parts of the body (**Leviticus 14:14-16**). Most of us have five fingers on each hand and five toes on each foot.
- 6 = The number six is also used to represent man, who was created on the sixth day of creation. However, this number should be seen as consummate evil and failure (**Revelation 13:18**), because it falls short of perfection, which is represented by the number seven (a combination of the numbers three and four). The most obvious use of this number is in the notorious passage containing 666 (**Revelation 13:18**). This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666.
- 7 = The number seven is a number of perfection or completeness (**Revelation 1:4**). The number seven is used 55 times in Revelation. It usually means fullness or completeness as in seven days of the week (God rested on the seventh day). This will be considered deeper in this study.
- 10 = The number ten is five doubled. It represents human completeness (**Revelation 2:10**). Ten is used to describe the days of persecution, ten horns and ten kings. Remember that God used Ten Commandments to teach the law to Israel (**Deuteronomy 20:1-17**). We also read of the ten plagues in Egypt (**Exodus 7-11**).
- 12 = The number twelve is God's perfect manifestation of Himself to the created order (**Revelation 21:12**). God established twelve tribes of Israel and twelve apostles. The woman of 12:1 with a crown of twelve stars on her head represents the Old Testament people of God who bring forth the Messiah (**Genesis 37:9**). We have the new Jerusalem with twelve gates and on the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel (**Revelation 21:12**). The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (**Revelation 21:14**). Both these indicate that the New Jerusalem has saints from both the old and new testaments. Also associated with the New Jerusalem are the numbers 144 (12x12) and 12,000 which are multiples of twelve. The 144,000 (12x12x1000) represents the church on the earth (**Revelation 7:4**) and in heaven (**Revelation 14:1**).
- 100 & 1000 = These numbers represent a perfect or complete period of time. It symbolizes a time of fullness or a long indefinite period. The Messianic reign of Christ will be as long as the Lord determines (**Revelation 20:6**).
- Other = Revelation also speaks of 1,260 days, 42 months, time, times and half a time. These numbers can be measured by their value in a decade, a year, a month, or a week. When these time periods are used in Revelation they indicate either persecution or protection, but they are limited, not infinite.

In this book John also combines three types of literature: apocalyptic, prophetic, and epistolary. The author alludes extensively and frequently to the Old Testament. There is no direct citation from the Old Testament, but the Book of Daniel is especially significant as a source in John's use of images, language, and allusions.

**THE SEVEN BEATITUDES OF REVELATION:** There are several key words in this book. However, you may have noticed that there are seven times that the word "blessed" is used in key places. We refer to these as the seven beatitudes of Revelation:

- (1) **Revelation 1:3** - *"Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near."*
- (2) **Revelation 14:13** - *"Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, 'Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' " "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."*
- (3) **Revelation 16:15** - *"Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."*
- (4) **Revelation 19:9** - *"Then he said to me, 'Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' " And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."*
- (5) **Revelation 20:6** - *"Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."*
- (6) **Revelation 22:7** - *"Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."*
- (7) **Revelation 22:14** - *"Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city."*

**THE SYMBOLISM OF THE NUMBER SEVEN IN REVELATION:** There are several times in the book of Revelation. Here are the references I have found:

7 Churches	<b>1:4, 2:1-3:22</b>
7 Letters	<b>2:1- 3:22</b>
7 Angels (Messengers)	<b>1:20, 2:1-3:22</b>
7 Spirits	<b>1:4, 3:1, 4:5, 5:6</b>
7 Golden Lampstands	<b>1:12, 20, 2:1, 4:5</b>
7 Stars	<b>1:16, 20, 2:1, 3:1</b>
7 Seals	<b>5:1, 5:5, 6:1</b>
7 Horns	<b>5:6</b>
7 Eyes	<b>5:6</b>
7 Angels (Heavenly)	<b>8:2, 6, 15:1, 6, 7, 15:8, 16:1, 17:1, 21:9</b>
7 Trumpets	<b>8:2, 6</b>
7 Thunders	<b>10:3, 4</b>
7,000 People	<b>11:13</b>
7 Heads	<b>12:3, 13:1, 17:3, 7, 9</b>
7 Crowns	<b>12:3</b>
7 Plagues	<b>15:1, 6, 8, 21:9</b>
7 Golden bowls	<b>15:7, 16:1, 17:1, 21:9</b>
7 Hills	<b>17:9</b>
7 Kings	<b>17:10, 11</b>
7 Visions	<b>20-21</b>

**THE SYMBOLISM OF NAMES & TERMS IN REVELATION:** The prominence of the names (i.e. the beast) alerts the interpreter to the symbolism of names in the Apocalypse. In Revelation, as throughout the Bible, names often contain symbolic as well as literal connotations. Thus, the symbolic associations provide added dimensions to the literal understanding. The names which most commonly contain symbolic value in Scripture are listed below, with representative references:

Adultery = Idolatry, apostasy, and false religion (**Hosea 4:13-14**)

Air = An area of jurisdiction or government (**Ephesians 2:2**)

Alpha = The first, the beginning, number one (**Revelation 1:8, 1:11, 21:6, 22:13**)

Amen = Declaration of affirmation, agreement (**Isaiah 49:7**)

Angel = Any agent or messenger of the divine will of God (**Psalms 104:4, Proverbs 25:13**)

Armageddon = "Mount Megiddo" - the struggle between good and evil (**II Kings 23:29**)

Babylon = The great city, the center of power (**I Chronicles 9:1**)

Balances = Justice, and a symbol of scarcity or famine (**Proverbs 16:11**)

Beast = (Earth & Sea) Powers of institution, religious and civil, cruelty (**Daniel 7-8**)

Blood = Warfare, carnage, or destruction (**Isaiah 34:3**)

Book = A record of the divine will of God (**Psalms 69:28, Philippians 4:3**)

Bow = War, victory, or God's judgment on nations (**Habakkuk 3:8-9**)

Bowl = Vessel for pouring and measuring, larger than a cup (**Isaiah 40:12**)

Bride = The church of Christ (**Romans 7:4, 16:16, Ephesians 5:23, 25, 27**)

Candlestick (Lampstand) = The church, the light of the world (**Matthew 5:14-16**)

Chain = Restraint, bondage, and affliction (**Psalms 2:1-3**)

Crown = Authority, power, and victory (**Isaiah 28:1-5**)

Darkness = Affliction, calamity, tragedy, or ignorance (**Luke 1:78-79**)

Day = A predetermined period of time, often means a year in prophesy (**Ezekiel 4:6**)

Diadem = Crown of royalty, worn by kings and those in authority (**Isaiah 62:3**)

Door = Point of access, place of entrance, or barrier if closed (**Matthew 7:7, John 10:1**)

Dragon = Cruel ruler, persecutor of God's people, the devil (**Revelation 12:9**)

## **THE SYMBOLISM OF NAMES & TERMS IN REVELATION CONT.:**

- Earth = Humanity, the world, God's creation (**Genesis 1:1-2, Nehemiah 9:6**)
- Earthquake = Political, moral, or spiritual upheaval, a great fall (**Haggai 2:21-22**)
- Egypt = A city with a spiritual meaning, place of bondage (**Exodus, Hebrews 11:24-26**)
- Fire = Destructive agent, a way of purification, or divine judgment (**Genesis 3:24**)
- First Resurrection = Spiritual resurrection or baptism (**Ephesians 2:5-6**)
- Flesh = Worldly things, can mean riches and possessions (**Galatians 5:16-21**)
- Flood = Distress, persecution, or a cleansing (**Psalms 66:12, Isaiah 8:7**)
- Forehead = (The Mark) Public confession, profession, or ownership (**Exodus 13:9, 16**)
- Fornication = Spiritual adultery, idolatry, and false religion (**Isaiah 23:17**)
- Garden = Place of safety, paradise, and peace (**Ezekiel 28:13, Joel 2:3**)
- Grave = Place of obscurity, forgotten (**Psalms 69:15, Ezekiel 31:16**)
- Gog = (Magog) A city or cities with spiritual meaning, place of evil (**Ezekiel 39:1, 11, 15**)
- Hail = Destruction from the heavens, calamity, and disaster (**Psalms 18:12-13**)
- Harlot = Prostitute, whore, agent of fornication and adultery (**Ezekiel 16:15-17**)
- Horns = Powers or kings (**Jeremiah 48:25**)
- Horse = Warfare (see colors for further indication), battle, struggle (**Hosea 14:1-3**)
- Hour = An undetermined period of time, usually a short amount (**Matthew 25:13**)
- Hunger = Famine, suffering, without nourishment (**Jeremiah 11:22**)
- Idols = Gold, silver, bronze, stone, or wood images (**I Chronicles 16:26**)
- Incense = The lives and prayers of the saints (**Ephesians 5:2, Philippians 4:18**)
- Islands = Distant countries, outlying areas, beyond the Mediterranean (**Isaiah 41:1-5**)
- Jerusalem = The holy city, the true church, heavenly kingdom (**Isaiah 66:8**)
- Jezebel = Unholy, unfaithful influence of evil, false teacher or prophet (**II Kings 9:7-37**)
- Judgment = Punishment, penalty, execution of a sentence (**Ezekiel 23:24**)
- Key = Authority, power, influence, or access (**Matthew 16:18-19**)

## **THE SYMBOLISM OF NAMES & TERMS IN REVELATION CONT.:**

Lamb = Jesus Christ, the sacrifice for our sins (**Isaiah 53:7**)

Lamps = Light, truth and good news (**Psalms 109:105**)

Lion = Kingship, the power of a ruler (**Hosea 5:14, Joel 3:16**)

Locusts = Armies that devour and bring destruction (**Judges 6:5, 7:12**)

Manna = The bread of life, the word of God, live-saving nourishment (**Nehemiah 9:20**)

Measuring Reed = (Rod or Stick) A standard of measurement (**Ezekiel 40:3, 5**)

Mountains = Kingdoms or governmental powers (**Amos 4:1**)

Nation = Tribe, tongue, language, or people on the earth (**Psalms 59:5, Jeremiah 46:28**)

Omega = The last, the end, finality (**Revelation 1:8, 1:11, 21:6, 22:13**)

Punish = Act of vengeance, execution of a sentence, judgment (**Luke 10:14**)

Resurrection = Recovery, restoration, recapturing the lost state (**Ezekiel 37:9**)

Sea = The pagan world, the realm under the surface, things not seen (**Daniel 7:3**)

Seal = Symbol of reservation, secrecy, security, and safety (**Isaiah 29:11**)

Second Death = Hell, spiritual death, separation (**Revelation 2:11, 20:6, 20:14, 21:8**)

Serpent = The devil, Satan, the deceiver (**Genesis 3**)

Sodom = A city with a spiritual meaning, place of sinfulness (**Isaiah 1:9-10**)

Star = (Sun, Moon, Stars) Dignitaries, leaders, government (**Matthew 24:29**)

Sword = Conquest, slaughter, weapon of warfare (**Ezekiel 6:3, 7:15**)

Temple = Place of worship, the church, the throne room of God (**Psalms 84:10**)

Throne = Authority, power, and symbol of rulers (**Proverbs 20:28**)

Trumpet = The sound of battle, proclaiming war or peace (**Isaiah 18:3**)

White Robes = The righteousness of the saints, purity (**Mark 16:5, Luke 9:29**)

Winds = Strife, commotion, uncontrolled destructive forces (**Ezekiel 5:10-12**)

Witness = One who gives testimony to what he/she has seen or heard (**Hebrews 12:1**)

Year = A predetermined period of time, a cycle of time (**Psalms 90:4, II Peter 3:8**)

**THE SYMBOLISM OF EZEKIEL & REVELATION:** You will notice in the aforementioned terms that Ezekiel is an important place of reference for the book of Revelation. In this book John combines three types of literature: apocalyptic, prophetic, and epistolary. The author alludes extensively and frequently to the Old Testament. There is no direct citation from the Old Testament, but Daniel, Ezekiel, and Isaiah are especially significant as a source in John's use of images, language, and allusions. Here are some of the similarities with the book of Ezekiel:

- (1) The Throne Vision (**Revelation 4, Ezekiel 1**)
- (2) The Book (**Revelation 5, Ezekiel 2-3**)
- (3) The Plagues (**Revelation 6:1-8, Ezekiel 5**)
- (4) The Slain Beneath the Altar (**Revelation 6:9-11, Ezekiel 6**)
- (5) The Wrath of God (**Revelation 6:12-17, Ezekiel 7**)
- (6) The Seal on the Foreheads (**Revelation 7, Ezekiel 9**)
- (7) The Coals from the Alter (**Revelation 8, Ezekiel 10**)
- (8) The Call For No Further Delay (**Revelation 10:1-7, Ezekiel 12**)
- (9) The Eating of a Book (**Revelation 10:8-11, Ezekiel 2**)
- (10) The Measuring of the Temple (**Revelation 11:1-2, Ezekiel 40-43**)
- (11) The Contrast/Comparison with Jerusalem & Sodom (**Revelation 11:8, Ezekiel 16**)
- (12) The Cup(s) of Wrath (**Revelation 14, Ezekiel 23**)
- (13) The Vine of the Land (**Revelation 14:18-20, Ezekiel 15**)
- (14) The Great Harlot/Prostitute (**Revelation 17-18, Ezekiel 16, 23**)
- (15) The Lamenting of the City (**Revelation 18, Ezekiel 27**)
- (16) The Feast/Meal (**Revelation 19, Ezekiel 39**)
- (17) The First Resurrection (**Revelation 20:4-6, Ezekiel 37**)
- (18) The Battle With God & Magog (**Revelation 20:7-9, Ezekiel 38-39**)
- (19) The Description of the New Jerusalem (**Revelation 21, Ezekiel 40-48**)
- (20) The River of Life (**Revelation 22, Ezekiel 47**)

**THE SYMBOLISM OF COLORS IN REVELATION:** The prominence of colors alerts the interpreter to the symbolism of the Apocalypse. In Revelation, as throughout the Bible, colors often contain symbolic as well as literal connotations. Here are some descriptions of some of the colors depicted in Revelation:

Black = Distress, destruction, calamity, and disaster

Emerald = Calmness, grace, and goodness

Gold = Royalty, riches, and affluence

Pale = Death, utter destruction, and famine

Purple = Pomp, luxury, and royalty

Red = War, bloodshed, and battle

Scarlet = Blood, cruelty, and persecution

White = Purity, innocence, and righteousness

**THE SYMBOLISM WILL BE REVEALED:** The Jews and the early Christians would have been better equipped to identify the symbols, but John hopes they will clarify:

- (1) The mystery of the woman.
- (2) The identity of the beast upon which the woman sat.
- (3) The identity of the woman drunken with the blood of the saints.
- (4) The identity of Babylon the great.
- (5) The identity of the beast of the earth and the beast of the sea.

# **A SURVEY OF REVELATION**

## **SEVEN LETTERS, SEVEN STARS, & SEVEN CHURCHES**

**THE UNIVERSAL MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH:** We can clearly see that the book of Revelation was written to the seven churches. However, there is a universal message to the Christians all over the world: Persecution is coming. This causes us to ask, "Why did the Romans hate the Christians?" Here are at least seven reasons:

- (1) Christianity was an illegal religion.
- (2) Christianity was an exclusive religion.
- (3) Christianity aspired to universality and equality.
- (4) Christians were accused of all manners of evil by the Jews.
- (5) Christians refused to go to war.
- (6) Christians refused to worship the Roman emperor or confess His name.
- (7) Christians were an easy target for warmongers.

**THE SEVEN STARS/ANGELS OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA:** John is instructed to give his message to the seven angels of the seven churches. Who are these angels?

- (1) They are simply men sent to John to inquire of his state spiritual state (Scofield)
- (2) They are heavenly angels who stand for and are responsible for the church's spiritual state (Mauro, Moffatt).
- (3) They are the chief pastors, bishops, evangelists, or entire elderships of each church or men in a leadership role (Barnes, Ellicott, Hendriksen, Henry, Hinds, Lenski, Summer, Tenney, Trench, West).
- (4) They represent the powers, character, as well as the history and life of the church (Ramsay).
- (5) They are the heavenly counterpart of the churches, the spiritual counterpart of human individuals (Alford, Caird).
- (6) They are a symbolic representation in which the active (as distinguished from the passive) life of the church finds expression (Milligan, Roberson).
- (7) They represent the spiritual character, inward state, or prevailing spirit of the church itself (Barclay, Erdman, Hailey, Pack, Pieters, Plummer, Swete, Wallace).

**THE MESSAGE TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA:** Each of the letters to the seven churches is unique. However, there are some common features to the letters including commendation, criticism, command, and compensation. Consider the words of Jesus:

\* What Did Jesus Say to the Church at Ephesus?

Commendation: *They rejected evil, they had perseverance and patience.*

Criticism: *They no longer loved Christ, they were no longer fervent.*

Command: *Repent, do the first works, He was coming quickly to remove their lamp.*

Compensation: *The tree of life.*

\* What Did Jesus Say to the Church at Smyrna?

Commendation: *They were gracefully bearing the suffering of persecution.*

Criticism: *None. They may have been fearful and discouraged by poverty.*

Command: *Be faithful until death.*

Compensation: *Receive a crown of life.*

\* What Did Jesus Say to the Church at Pergamum?

Commendation: *Steadfast and held the faith.*

Criticism: *They tolerated immorality, idolatry, and heresy among the membership.*

Command: *Repent.*

Compensation: *They would receive hidden manna, a white stone, and a new name.*

\* What Did Jesus Say to the Church at Thyatira?

Commendation: *They had love, service, faith, and great patience.*

Criticism: *They tolerated cults, idolatry, and sexual immorality.*

Command: *Judgment was coming, keep the faith.*

Compensation: *They would rule over nations and receive the Morning Star.*

\* What Did Jesus Say to the Church at Sardis?

Commendation: *Some kept the faith.*

Criticism: *They were a dead church.*

Command: *Repent and strengthen what remains.*

Compensation: *The faithful would be honored and clothed in white.*

\* What Did Jesus Say to the Church at Philadelphia?

Commendation: *They persevered in the faith.*

Criticism: *None.*

Command: *Keep the faith.*

Compensation: *They would have a place in God's presence, they would have a new name, and see the New Jerusalem.*

\* What Did Jesus Say to the Church at Laodicea?

Commendation: *None.*

Criticism: *They were not committed, lukewarm, and seemed to be indifferent.*

Command: *Be zealous and repent.*

Compensation: *They would share the throne of Jesus Christ.*

**THE WORKS OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA:** Jesus wanted the seven angels of the seven churches to be aware of the fact that He was watching. God is not ignoring the needs of His bride (the church). He clearly identifies what is going on in each church:

- (1) Ephesus: "*I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil.*" (2:1-7)
- (2) Smyrna: "*I know your works, tribulation, and poverty – but you are rich.*" (2:8-11)
- (3) Pergamon: "*I know your works, and where you live, where Satan's throne is.*" (2:12-17)
- (4) Thyatira: "*I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience.*" (2:18-29)
- (5) Sardis: "*I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.*" (3:1-6)
- (6) Philadelphia: "*I know your works. I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it.*" (3:7-13)
- (7) Laodicea: "*I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot... Because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth.*" (3:14-22)

**THE COMMON EXPRESSIONS OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA:** We have already noted that symbols and repetitive phrases are important, especially in this book. There are some common expressions which challenge us to pay attention:

- (1) "I know . . . ."
- (2) "He who overcomes . . . ."
- (3) "He who has an ear, let him hear. . . ."
- (4) "I come. . . ."

**THE THREATS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA:** There is some commonality between the congregations. We can identify at least five distinctive threats to the spiritual life of the seven churches:

- (1) Paganism & Emperor Worship
- (2) Harassment by the Jews
- (3) Temptation of Materialism & Lawlessness (i.e. Nicolaitans, Balaam, Jezebel)
- (4) The Loss of Zeal, Love, or Effectiveness
- (5) The Presence of Lukewarmness, Indifference, or Indecision

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF JESUS:**

Eight-fold Description of Jesus (**1:13-16**)

1. His Body
2. His Hair
3. His Eyes
4. His Feet
5. His Voice
6. His Right Hand
7. His Mouth
8. His Countenance

## **DESCRIPTIONS OF JESUS IN REVELATION CHAPTERS 1-3:**

- 1:5** Jesus is the Faithful Witness  
**1:5** Jesus is the Firstborn of the Dead  
**1:5** Jesus is the Ruler of the Kings of the Earth  
**1:6** Jesus is the One who loosed us from our sins (by His blood)  
**1:7** Jesus is the One who will come with clouds  
**1:7** Jesus is the One who everyone will see (even those who stabbed Him)  
**1:13** Jesus was walking among the seven golden lampstands (seven churches)  
**1:13** Jesus resembled the "Son of Man" (**Daniel 3:25, Matthew 24:30**)  
**1:13** Jesus wore a long robe with a gold band around His chest (**Isaiah 6, Hebrews 8**)  
**1:14** Jesus had a head full of white hair, like wool, white as snow (**Matthew 13:43**)  
**1:14** Jesus had eyes that were like a flame of fire  
**1:15** Jesus had feet like bronze (brass) glowing like in a hot furnace (**Malachi 4:1-3**)  
**1:15** Jesus had a voice like that of rushing (flooding) waters (**Ezekiel 1:24**)  
**1:16** Jesus held seven stars in His right hand  
**1:16** Jesus had a double-edged sword coming out of His mouth (**Hebrews 4:12**)  
**1:16** Jesus looked like the sun shining at the brightest time of the day  
**1:17** Jesus is First and the Last (Alpha & Omega, Beginning & End)  
**1:17** Jesus is the One who lives, was dead, but is now alive forevermore  
**1:17** Jesus is holding the keys of death and of Hades  
**1:20** Jesus is wanting to reveal the present and the future  
**1:20** Jesus is wanting to reveal the secret of the seven lampstands and stars  
**2:1** Jesus spoke to the church at Ephesus  
**2:1** Jesus is holding 7 stars (ministers) and walking around 7 lampstands (churches)  
**2:2** Jesus knew the works of Ephesus  
**2:5** Jesus will come to them in their hour of need  
**2:7** Jesus hopes to reward them with victory  
**2:7** Jesus hopes to reward them with the tree of life  
**2:8** Jesus spoke to the church at Smyrna  
**2:8** Jesus is the First and the Last,  
**2:8** Jesus is the One who died and rose again  
**2:9** Jesus knew the works of Smyrna  
**2:11** Jesus hopes to reward them with victory over the second death  
**2:12** Jesus spoke to the church at Pergamon (Pergamos)  
**2:12** Jesus is the One with a sharp, double-edged sword  
**2:13** Jesus knew the works of Pergamon (Pergamos)  
**2:16** Jesus will come to them quickly and make war with the sword  
**2:17** Jesus hopes to reward them with hidden manna, a white stone, and a new name

## **DESCRIPTIONS OF JESUS IN REVELATION CHAPTERS 1-3 CONT.:**

- 2:18** Jesus spoke to the church at Thyatira
- 2:18** Jesus is the Son of God (**Matthew 16:15-17, Luke 1:32-35**)
- 2:18** Jesus is the One with eyes that blaze fire and feet like bronze
- 2:19** Jesus knew the works of Thyatira
- 2:23** Jesus searches the hearts and minds of men
- 2:24** Jesus hopes to reward them with no other burdens
- 2:26** Jesus hopes to reward them with power over the nations and victory
- 2:27** Jesus will reign with a rod of iron
- 2:28** Jesus hopes to reward them with the morning star
- 3:1** Jesus spoke to the church at Sardis (Sardes)
- 3:1** Jesus is the One who has the 7 spirits and the 7 stars
- 3:2** Jesus knew the works of Sardis (Sardes)
- 3:3** Jesus is coming like a thief in the night (**I Thessalonians 5:2, II Peter 3:10**)
- 3:5** Jesus hopes to reward them with white garments
- 3:7** Jesus spoke to the church at Philadelphia
- 3:7** Jesus is the One who is holy and true
- 3:7** Jesus is the One who is holding the key of David (**Matthew 9:27, 15:22, 21:9**)
- 3:7** Jesus is the One who can open doors that no one can close
- 3:7** Jesus is the One who can close doors that no one can open
- 3:8** Jesus knew the works of Philadelphia
- 3:9** Jesus will make the synagogue bow at their feet and know they are loved
- 3:11** Jesus is coming soon
- 3:12** Jesus hopes to reward them with the name of God
- 3:12** Jesus hopes to reward them with the name of the new city (new Jerusalem)
- 3:12** Jesus hopes to reward them with the name of Jesus (Christian)
- 3:14** Jesus spoke to the church at Laodicea
- 3:14** Jesus is the Amen, the faithful and true witness from the beginning (**John 1:1**)
- 3:15** Jesus knew the works of Laodicea
- 3:19** Jesus will rebuke and discipline (chasten) those He loves (**Proverbs 3:11-12**)
- 3:20** Jesus stands at the door and knocks
- 3:21** Jesus hopes to reward them with victory and sit on the throne with them

# **A SURVEY OF REVELATION**

## **SEVEN SEALS, SEVEN TRUMPETS, & SEVEN ANGELS**

**THE LAMB OF GOD:** In Revelation chapter four, the beloved apostle gains entrance into heaven. He receives the vision of living creatures singing praise to the Holiness of God. Then, He witnesses the heavenly work of the Lamb of God:

- (1) Stands in the midst of the throne because He was slaughtered (5:6)
- (2) He is worthy of praise (5:12)
- (3) He opened the seals (6:1)
- (4) He is capable of great wrath (6:16)
- (5) The redeemed ascribe salvation to Him (7:9-10)
- (6) The redeemed have their robes washed in His blood and made white (7:14)
- (7) The redeemed overcome by His blood (12:11)
- (8) The names of the redeemed are in the book of life because of Him (13:8)
- (9) The redeemed have the name of the Lamb on their forehead (14:1)
- (10) The redeemed follow the Lamb wherever He goes (14:4)
- (11) The redeemed sing the song of the Lamb (15:3)
- (12) The redeemed gain victory in warfare through His victory (17:14)
- (13) The redeemed share in His marriage feast (19:7-9)

**PRAISE FOR THE LAMB OF GOD:** When the Lamb of God is praised in the book of Revelation, seven Greek words are ascribed to Him:

- (1) "Power" - *dunamis* - **Colossians 1:15-17**
- (2) "Riches" - *ploutos* - **Ephesians 3:8**
- (3) "Wisdom" - *sophia* - **Colossians 2:3**
- (4) "Strength" - *ischus* - **II Corinthians 12:9**
- (5) "Honor" - *time* - **Hebrews 2:9**
- (6) "Glory" - *doxa* - **I Timothy 6:16**
- (7) "Blessing" - *eulogia* - **Ephesians 1:3**

**THE LAMB OF GOD BREAKS THE SEVEN SEALS:** In Revelation, the Lamb of God is the only One worthy to open the seal(s) that are visible to John. Therefore, Jesus breaks the seals to issue in the following judgments:

- (1) First Seal: One who is both a king and conqueror rides forth on a white horse (**6:1-2**)
- (2) Second Seal: A rider on a red horse brings war. (**6:3-4**)
- (3) Third Seal: A rider on a black horse brings famine (**6:5-6**)
- (4) Fourth Seal: A rider on a pale horse brings death (**6:7-8**)
- (5) Fifth Seal: The souls of the martyrs "under the altar" cry out for vengeance (**6:9-11**)
- (6) Sixth Seal: There are earthquakes and natural disasters (**6:12-17**)
- (7) Seventh Seal: The breaking of the seventh seal initiates the seven trumpets (**8:1-5**)

**THE FIVE GREAT EVENTS:** In Revelation chapter six there are five great events that lead to judgment. God has used these methods repeatedly in the Old Testament. John is challenging his readers to remember those word pictures and symbols. The five great events that lead to judgment here include:

- (1) A great earthquake (**6:12**)
- (2) The sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood (**6:12**)
- (3) The stars of heaven fell to the earth (**6:13**)
- (4) The sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up (**6:14**)
- (5) Every mountain and island was moved out of its place (**6:14**)

**THE SEVEN CLASSES OF MANKIND:** In Revelation chapter six there are seven classes of people that experience the judgment. The classes effected include:

- (1) Kings of the Earth
- (2) The Great Men
- (3) The Rich Men
- (4) The Commanders
- (5) The Mighty Men
- (6) Every Slave
- (7) Every Free Man

**THE SEVEN SEALS & THE PROPHECY OF JESUS COMPARED:** Some scholars point out that there are some interesting similarities between the seven seals and the warning of Jesus to be prepared for judgment in **Matthew 24**. Consider the following:

	<b>The Seven Seals</b>	<b>Matthew 24</b>
First	<i>Christ or Gospel</i>	<i>And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (v.14)</i>
Second	<i>War - Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other.</i>	<i>You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. (v.6)</i>
Third	<i>Famine - "A quart of wheat for a day's wages, and three quarts of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!"</i>	<i>Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. (v.7)</i>
Fourth	<i>Death - Killed by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts</i>	<i>Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. (v.7)</i>
Fifth	<i>Martyrs - Souls were under the altar that had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained.</i>	<i>Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. (v.9)</i>
Sixth	<i>Disaster - There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. (vs.12-13)</i>	<i>The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.' At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. (vs.29-30)</i>
Seventh	<i>Silence - Followed by the seven angels and seven trumpets, followed by the seven bowls of wrath, whereby God execute judgment and gathers His chosen people from every part of the world</i>	<i>The Lord will use a loud trumpet to send his angels all around the earth, and they will gather his chosen people from every part of the world. (v.31)</i>

**THE SEALING OF THE 144,000:** Between chapter seven and eight we have the sealing of the 144,000. This is one of many symbols that is debated among various circles. It is possible that the 144,000 were not Jews, but only called Jews symbolically. To those who aspire to this point of view, they will argue the following points:

- (1) In Revelation there is no distinction made between Jews and Gentiles in Christ, all are God's servants.
- (2) These who are sealed are upon earth, while the great multitude are those who are victorious before the throne.
- (3) The winds are restrained until the servants (all, not one segment of servants) of our God have been sealed.
- (4) Satan puts a mark upon the foreheads of all his subjects and it seems reasonable to suppose that God would seal all His subjects unto Himself also, not just some of them.
- (5) It is customary of John, especially in Revelation, to heighten and spiritualize all Jewish names for the sake of symbolism (i.e. temple, tabernacle, Mt. Zion, Jerusalem).

**THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL:** There are a few times that the twelve tribes are mentioned in this book. Therefore, I thought it would be wise to refresh your memory and compare the order they are found in Numbers and in Revelation:

**Numbers 1-2**

- (1) Reuben
- (2) Simeon
- (3) Levi
- (4) Judah
- (5) Dan
- (6) Naphtali
- (7) Gad
- (8) Asher
- (9) Issachar
- (10) Zebulun
- (11) Joseph - Ephraim & Manasseh
- (12) Benjamin

**Revelation 7:5-8**

- (1) Judah
- (2) Reuben
- (3) Gad
- (4) Asher
- (5) Naphtali
- (6) Manasseh
- (7) Simeon
- (8) Levi
- (9) Issachar
- (10) Zebulun
- (11) Joseph - Ephraim & Manasseh
- (12) Benjamin

**THE GREAT TRIBULATION:** Drawing on language similar to **Isaiah 49:10**, John hopes to balance the wrath of God with His protection. However, the scene of great tribulation is also one of debate (**6:12-13**). There are some views that should be noted:

- (1) Jesus had told His people about a great tribulation which would destroy Jerusalem (**Matthew 24**) which happened when Titus destroyed the city (70 AD).
- (2) Some believe that this tribulation will take place at the end of this age between the rapture and the revelation, but those things are foreign to the Bible.
- (3) Jesus said that His disciples would face tribulation from the world (**John 16:33**). Therefore, this could be the sum of all tribulations from Pentecost to the second coming.
- (4) This persecution could be the one that took place during the time of the writing. John's contemporaries faced persecution from Nero (64 AD) to Constantine (313 AD).

**ESSENTIAL TEACHINGS NEEDED DURING THE GREAT TRIBULATION:** During the Great Tribulation it seems that some essential Bible doctrines needed to be taught. There are lessons we can learn from it:

- (1) The salvation of man is only given through faith in Christ
- (2) The state of man is death, because of the wages of sin
- (3) The second coming of Jesus is imminent
- (4) The search for safety on that day will be in vain
- (5) The sanctuary (or temple) of God on earth will be destroyed

**THE ANGEL OF GOD SOUNDS THE SEVEN TRUMPETS:** The seven seals are immediately followed by the seven trumpets. Here is an overview:

- (1) First Trumpet: Hail and fire destroy a third of the trees and grass (**8:6-7**)
- (2) Second Trumpet: A third of the oceans are destroyed (**8:8-9**)
- (3) Third Trumpet: A third of the rivers and springs are poisoned (**8:10-11**)
- (4) Fourth Trumpet: A third of the sky is darkened (**8:12-13**)
- (5) Fifth Trumpet: A plague of "locusts" terrorize the Earth for five months (**9:1-12**)
- (6) Sixth Trumpet: An army of 200 million kills a third of Earth's population (**9:13-21**)
- (7) Seventh Trumpet: The ark of the covenant appears in the temple (**11:15-19**)

**THE SEVEN ANGELS OF ENOCH:** Who are these seven angels? The book of Enoch (an apocrypha book) clearly identifies seven archangels of God:

- (1) Gabriel
- (2) Raphael
- (3) Michael
- (4) Uriel
- (5) Raquel
- (6) Sariel
- (7) Remiel

**THE MYSTERY OF GOD:** Before the certainty of the judgment (**Revelation 15-19**), and the prophecies of God are fully revealed, we have a brief section that outlines some other key events in history (**Revelation 12-14**). Before John describes those events he talks about the "mystery" of God. The New Testament speaks of this thought:

- (1) The mystery of God was accomplished in Jesus Christ (**Ephesians 1:9-11, 3:8-11**)
- (2) The mystery of God was revealed by the Holy Spirit (**I Corinthians 2:6-13, Ephesians 3:1-5, I Peter 1:12**)
- (3) The mystery of God was made known to the Gentiles (**Colossians 1:24-29, 2:2**)
- (4) The mystery of God was preached by the apostles to all men (**Ephesians 6:19, Colossians 4:3, I Peter 1:12**)

**THE TWO WITNESSES:** In Revelation chapter eleven, John describes two witnesses that will be slain in the streets. There are differing opinions on this matter:

- (1) The law and the prophets of the Old Testament.
- (2) The New and Old Testament combined.
- (3) Two actual people (similar to Moses and Elijah).
- (4) The church as a whole and its ministers.

## **DESCRIPTIONS OF JESUS IN REVELATION CHAPTERS 4-11:**

- 5:5** Jesus is the Lion from the tribe of Judah
- 5:5** Jesus won the victory, so He is able to open the scroll with the 7 seals
- 5:6** Jesus is the Lamb standing, yet He had been killed
- 5:6** Jesus appears to have 7 horns and 7 eyes (7 spirits sent into the world)
- 5:7** Jesus took the book from God the Father to open it
- 5:9** Jesus was the only One worthy to take the book and open it
- 5:9** Jesus was slain so that He could purchase every tribe, language, people, nation
- 5:10** Jesus made a kingdom of priests to rule the earth
- 5:11** Jesus receives power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and praise
- 5:13** Jesus, along with the One who sits on the throne, receive praise forever
- 6:1** Jesus opens the first seal
- 6:3** Jesus opens the second seal
- 6:5** Jesus opens the third seal
- 6:7** Jesus opens the fourth seal
- 6:9** Jesus opens the fifth seal
- 6:12** Jesus opens the sixth seal
- 6:15** Jesus is feared by the kings, rulers, generals, rich, powerful, slaves and free
- 7:10** Jesus is recognized as One who brings salvation
- 7:11** Jesus is worshipped by the multitude before the throne
- 7:14** Jesus washed the robes of those who came from great disaster
- 7:14** Jesus made the multitude white in His own blood
- 7:17** Jesus becomes their Shepherd (**John 10, I Peter 5:4**)
- 7:17** Jesus guides them to the fountain of life (**John 4:13-14, 7:38**)
- 7:17** Jesus leads them to where God will wipe away "every tear" from their eyes
- 8:1** Jesus opens the seventh seal
- 8:2** Jesus ushers in the 7 angels with the 7 trumpets
- 11:8** Jesus shares the common plight of the two witnesses
- 11:15** Jesus rules the world with power, all of it belongs to Him
- 11:15** Jesus will rule the world forever

# **A SURVEY OF REVELATION**

## **THE WOMAN, THE DRAGON, THE BEASTS, & SEVEN BOWLS**

**DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN THE KINGDOMS:** There is often confusion about the kingdom of God. God ruled over His people in the Old Testament, as it is referred to as the kingdom of Israel (**I Samuel 15:28, 24:20, Hosea 1:4, Acts 1:6**). In Jesus' ministry He spoke in parables concerning the kingdom of God, which was yet to come. He revealed to the apostles that the kingdom of God was the church (**Matthew 16:18-19**). The earthly kingdom of God must not be confused with the kingdom of heaven described in Revelation. When we study the Word of God we learn that:

- (1) The kingdom came during the apostles' lifetime (**Mark 9:1, Acts 1:8**).
- (2) The kingdom came under the Roman kings/emperors (**Daniel 2:44, Luke 2:1, 3:1**)
- (3) The kingdom was at hand during the time of Christ (**Matthew 3:2, 4:7, 6:10**)
- (4) The kingdom is led by Christ who now reigns (**Acts 2:29-36, Hebrews 1:8**)
- (5) The kingdom was established in Paul's day (**Colossians 1:13**)
- (6) The kingdom was established in John's day (**Revelation 1:9**)
- (7) The kingdom was purchased by the blood of Jesus (**Acts 20:28, Revelation 1:5-6**)
- (8) The kingdom was made up of those "called out" of the world (**Colossians 1:13**)
- (9) The terms kingdom and church are used synonymously (**Matthew 16:19, Revelation 11:5**)

**THE PARADOXES OF REVELATION:** There are several paradoxes in the book of Revelation. It seems that after chapter twelve they begin to become more frequent. Here are a few of those paradoxes:

- (1) There will be no pain or crying in heaven (**Revelation 7:17, 12:2, 21:4**).
- (2) There will be no childbearing or marriage in heaven (**Matthew 22:29-30, Mark 12:24-25, Luke 20:34-36, Revelation 12:2,4**).
- (3) There will be no child-eating dragons in heaven (**Luke 20:36, Revelation 12:3**).
- (4) There will be no children caught up and then returned (**Revelation 12:5**).
- (5) There will be no wilderness of solitude in heaven (**Revelation 12:6,14**).
- (6) There will be no war in heaven (**Matthew 25:46, II Corinthians 5:1, Hebrews 5:9, 9:15, Revelation 12:7**).
- (7) There will be no falling angels in heaven (**Hebrews 2:7-8, Revelation 12:8-9**).

**THERE ARE VARIOUS PARALLELS IN REVELATION:** One way to describe things is to place them beside things that are exactly the opposite (Apples vs. Oranges). John does that in the book of Revelation. Here are some examples:

<b>Good</b>	<b>Evil</b>
God the Father	Satan (The Devil)
The Lamb: Jesus Christ (Divine)	The Beast: Antichrist (not divine)
The Holy Spirit	The False Prophet
Woman attacked by Dragon = Bride or the New Jerusalem (Church)	The Prostitute = Babylon (Destroyed before the wedding of the Bride)
Witnesses, Multitudes, 144,000	Rulers of the World
Angelic Armies	Demonic Armies

**THE CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE LAMB AND THE BEAST:** John does an effective job contrasting the descriptions and values of the Lamb of God with the beast of Revelation. Here are some examples of the contrasts of their followers:

<b>The Followers of the Lamb</b>	<b>The Followers of the Beast</b>
They Worship the Lamb: Jesus	They Worship the Beast: Antichrist
They Worship Something Divine	They Worship Something Created
Sealed	Marked
Blessed	Tormented
Good Works Follow Them	Evil Works Follow Them
Headed for Heaven	Headed for Fire & Brimstone
Die in the Lord	Separated from the Lord
Suffering Ends	Suffering Forever
Rest Day & Night	No Rest Day & Night
Pure & Chaste	Adulterous
Righteousness of Heaven	Wickedness of Earth
The Saints Will Reign	The Rulers Will Be Overthrown
Chose Eternal Life	Chose Eternal Death
Experience God's Blessings	Experience God's Wrath

**CONFLICT BETWEEN THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON:** John describes a conflict between the woman/Israel and the dragon/Satan (**Revelation 12**). We first learn about this conflict in the Garden of Eden and the need for the seed of the woman to prepare for battle (**Genesis 3:15**). The woman represents the Old Testament people of God who are to bring forth the Messiah. The Messiah descended from Israel, but the dragon (Satan) tried to destroy the promised seed. There are various events recorded in the Old Testament in which there are attempts to destroy the line from which the Christ will be born. Here are just a handful of those examples:

- (1) The devil is successful in his attempt to tempt Adam & Eve, but God provides a way of escape through her seed (**Genesis 3**).
- (2) Cain slays Abel, but Eve gives birth to Seth (**Genesis 4**).
- (3) Wickedness overtakes man, but Noah finds grace in God's eyes (**Genesis 6-8**).
- (4) Famine, barrenness, stolen birthrights, family squabbles, and temptation nearly overtake the patriarchs, but God guides them through to the safety of Egypt.
- (5) Pharaoh orders the Israelite male babies to be killed (**Exodus 1:15**), but God raises up Moses to lead the people out of Egypt.
- (6) The struggles in Joshua and cycle of the Judges reveal the struggle with good vs. evil.
- (7) Saul tries to kill David (**I Samuel 18:11**) but David refused to do the same.
- (8) When Athaliah proceeded to destroy the whole royal family (**II King 11:1**), but God was looking after Joash.
- (9) Haman tried to kill all the Jews but Esther intervened (**Esther 3:6, 7:3**).
- (10) Herod tried to kill all the young male children (**Matthew 2**), but Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt and kept Jesus safe.

**THE SYMBOLISM OF THE SEA:** Why does John use the sea as symbolism in Revelation (**Revelation 13**)? I believe he is helping us to focus on Old Testament prophesy (**Daniel 7**). Consider the fact that:

- (1) The sea is a part of creation (**Revelation 5:13, 10:6, 14:7**).
- (2) The sea describes the limits of the angel's voice (**Revelation 7:1-3**).
- (3) The sea symbolically indicates God's transcendence (**Revelation 4:6, 15:2**).
- (4) The sea signifies the whole society known at that time (**Revelation 8:8, 10:2,8, 12:12, 13:1, 20:13, 21:1**).

**THE BEAST & WORSHIP OF THE BEAST:** John describes the beast as having ten horns (**Daniel 7, Revelation 13**). This will be discussed at length later (**Revelation 17**). However, in the meantime we begin to wonder who are the ten horns or ten kings? Here are a few thoughts from commentators:

- (1) They are unknown future rulers toward the end of the Roman Empire who will join in helping to destroy her.
- (2) They are governors of provinces under the Roman Senate that hold office for a year.
- (3) They are Parthian satraps that will be coming back with Nero at the head of the Parthian forces to capture the Roman Empire.
- (4) They are purely symbolic powers, representing all of the powers of the nations that are subservient to the beast.
- (5) They are the mighty people of all the earth in every realm of endeavor who serve evil influence and work against the cause of Christ.

**THE TEN HORN & TEN KINGS:** John identifies the fact that these ten kings would be known to the readers of his book. Since there is a large consensus that this may refer to Roman emperors it would be wise to consider who they were and the time in which they ruled the Roman Empire:

- (1) Julius Caesar (49-44 BC)
- (2) Triumverate: Marc Anthony/Octavian or Augustus/Lepidus (44-31 BC)
- (3) Augustus (31 BC-14 AD)
- (4) Tiberius (14-37 AD)
- (5) Caligula (37-41 AD)
- (6) Claudius (41-54 AD)
- (7) Nero (54-68 AD)
- (8) Galba (68-69 AD)
- (9) Otho (69 AD)
- (10) Vitellius (69 AD)
- (11) Vespasian (69-79 AD)
- (12) Titus (79-81 AD)
- (13) Domitian (81-96 AD)

**THINGS GIVEN TO THE BEAST:** John describes some things that are temporarily given to the beast (**Revelation 13**). Those things include:

- (1) A mouth speaking great things and blasphemies (**Revelation 13:5**).
- (2) Authority to continue for forty-two months (**Revelation 13:5**).
- (3) Authority to make war with the saints and to overcome them (**Revelation 13:7**).
- (4) Authority over every tribe, tongue, and nation (**Revelation 13:7**).

**THE SONG OF THE SAVED:** The prophet hears a great new song from heaven that sounds like rushing water (**Revelation 14**). Who are these saints? Consider these thoughts:

- (1) At the destruction of Jerusalem, the Jews were not just overcome, they were either slain or sold into slavery.
- (2) How can it be possible that the captivity of the Jews would be ended by a judgment of God and their kingdom restored, as related in Daniel?
- (3) No one who rejects the gospel of Christ can be rightly classified as a saint.
- (4) We, individually, are accepted by our Creator, not on the basis of our nationality, but by obedience to His commands.

**THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE SAINTS:** What do we know about these saints? Consider these facts concerning the characteristics of the saints:

- (1) They have been purchased out of the earth, purchased from among the earth-dwellers, purchased by the blood of the Lamb (**Revelation 5:9, 14:3**).
- (2) The 144,000 are described as not having been defiled with women, but are virgins (**Revelation 14:4**).
- (3) They follow the Lamb of God wherever He goes (**Revelation 14:4**).
- (4) They were purchased from among men, to be the first-fruits to God and to the Lamb (**Revelation 14:4**).
- (5) There was no religious falsehood in their mouth and they had not subscribed to nor taught anything untrue (**Revelation 14:5**).

**THE SEVEN ANGELS POURS OUT THE SEVEN BOWLS:** When the trumpets have sounded it is time for the last troubles to fall upon earth. Here is a summary of the seven bowls that were poured out:

- (1) First Bowl: A "foul and loathsome sore" afflicts the followers of the beast (**16:1-2**)
- (2) Second Bowl: The sea turns to blood and everything within it dies (**16:3**)
- (3) Third Bowl: All fresh water turns to blood (**16:4-7**)
- (4) Fourth Bowl: The sun scorches the Earth with intense heat (**16:8-9**)
- (5) Fifth Bowl: There is total darkness and great pain in the Beast's kingdom (**16:10-11**)
- (6) Sixth Bowl: Preparations are made for the battle between good and evil (**16:12-16**)
- (7) Seventh Bowl: A great earthquake takes place (**16:17-21**)

**THE SEVEN TRUMPETS & THE SEVEN BOWLS COMPARED:** It is interesting that there are so many parallels between the bowls and the trumpets. The introduction of each are almost identical. Then, when you take into account that the contents of each are closely related and they both end with a scene of judgment it grabs our attention. The bowls, of course, are poured out on men that have the mark of the beast, but the forces of evil are described exactly as they are in chapters 12 and 13. Therefore, let's compare them:

	<b>The Seven Trumpets</b>	<b>The Seven Bowls</b>
First	<i>Hail fire mixed with blood hurled to earth, 1/3 of the earth, trees and grass burn up</i>	<i>Ugly and painful sores on those who had the mark of the beast and worship his image</i>
Second	<i>1/3 of sea turned to blood, third of living creatures in sea died, third of ships destroyed.</i>	<i>Sea turned to blood, everything in the sea died</i>
Third	<i>1/3 of waters turned bitter, many people died</i>	<i>Rivers and springs became blood</i>
Fourth	<i>1/3 the day and 1/3 of the night was without light</i>	<i>Sun scorches people with fire</i>
Fifth	<i>Locusts out of the Abyss torture mankind for five months</i>	<i>Kingdom plunged into darkness, men gnawed their tongues in agony</i>
Sixth	<i>1/3 of mankind killed by fire, smoke and sulfur (war)</i>	<i>Three evil spirits gather kings of the earth for battle on the great day of God Almighty.</i>
Seventh	<i>End of the age, time of the judgment, lightning, thunder, earthquake, hailstorm.</i>	<i>The end of the age, flashes of lightning, thunder, a great earthquake and plague of hail</i>

**THE SEVENTH BOWL & THE HAIL FROM HEAVEN:** When the seventh bowl is poured out into the air, a voice declares, "It is done" (**Revelation 16:17**). The work of the plagues had concluded. Just like we have seen previously (**Revelation 6:12, 11:13**), the lightening, voices, thunders, and earthquakes show God's judgment. However, because of blasphemy against God, the seventh bowl is accompanied by the plague of hail. What do we know about this hail from heaven:

- (1) It was obviously something that fell upon men from heaven.
- (2) It was something that happened unexpectedly.
- (3) It is called "hail" (the OT describes it as a destructive plague - **Ezekiel 38:22**).
- (4) It is compared to the hail "stones" seen in other epic Biblical events (**Exodus 9**).
- (5) It fell from the sky, as ordained by God, but not necessarily done by God.
- (6) The weight of the hail is mentioned, and this proves that it must have been very heavy (It is estimated that this hail was between 108 and 130 lbs., the weight of a talent).
- (7) These objects created a great amount of suffering to men, so much that they blasphemed God.
- (8) The most logical explanation is that this great hail describes warfare (some scholars suggest the possibility of the use of catapults or something similar to cannon fire).

#### **DESCRIPTIONS OF JESUS IN REVELATION CHAPTERS 12-16:**

- 12:4** Jesus was pursued by the dragon (Satan) before and after His birth
- 12:5** Jesus was born of a woman (Israel)
- 12:6** Jesus was to rule the nations with a rod of iron
- 12:6** Jesus was taken up to the throne of God (**Acts 1:6-11**)
- 12:10** Jesus was given authority after Satan was cast from heaven (**Genesis 1-3**)
- 12:11** Jesus was killed but His blood became powerful
- 12:17** Jesus was defended by His children who hold His testimony (**I Peter 5:8-9**)
- 12:17** Jesus was preached by His children who obey His commands (**Mark 16:15-16**)
- 13:8** Jesus holds the Book of Life and knows the names inside it
- 13:8** Jesus is the Lamb that was killed
- 14:1** Jesus, the Lamb, is standing on Mount Zion
- 14:1** Jesus is standing with 144,000 people
- 14:4** Jesus is followed by the 144,000 people
- 14:4** Jesus receives the 144,000 as an offering along with the Father
- 14:10** Jesus, the Lamb, will punish those who worship the beast and the dragon
- 14:12** Jesus requires us to obey God's commands and have faith in Him
- 14:14** Jesus is the One who looked like the Son of Man
- 14:15** Jesus has a gold crown on his head and a sharp sickle in His hand
- 14:15** Jesus is told by the angel to begin the harvest of souls (Judgment)
- 14:16** Jesus swings the sickle over the earth and begins the harvest (mankind)
- 14:17** Jesus is joined by another angel seeking on the grapes to be trampled (Jews)
- 15:3** Jesus is praised as the victorious people sang the song of "Moses and the Lamb"
- 16:5** Jesus is the Holy One, who is and who was

# **A SURVEY OF REVELATION**

## **TWO WOMEN, TWO CITIES, & SOME FINAL VISIONS**

**THE ENEMIES OF CHRIST & HIS CHURCH:** The book reveals that in life, death, and after His resurrection there are those who are enemies of the Lamb of God. In an effort to understand the spiritual battles of Revelation it would be wise to consider the enemies we have considered so far and those that will be mentioned throughout the rest of the book and their fate:

(1) The Dragon/Serpent	<b>Revelation 12</b>	<b>Revelation 20</b>
(2) The Beast of the Sea	<b>Revelation 13</b>	<b>Revelation 19</b>
(3) The Beast of the Earth aka The False Prophet	<b>Revelation 13</b>	<b>Revelation 19</b>
(4) The Harlot aka Babylon	<b>Revelation 14</b>	<b>Revelation 18</b>

**BABYLON THE GREAT:** When we read the book of Revelation we begin to wonder about the word pictures and the symbols. We will probably never understand all of them perfectly. However, when it comes to the city of Babylon (**Revelation 17-18**) some people believe that it is Rome. It does have some striking similarities:

- (1) Both persecuted the people of God, overpowered them, captured them, and killed some of them (**Jeremiah 25:9-11, Revelation 13:11**).
- (2) Both sat upon, were supported by, and protected by many waters. The first was actual, but the second symbolizes people (**Jeremiah 51:12-13, Revelation 17:1-15**).
- (3) Both nations caused other nations to be drunken with wine and led the people of God to sin (**Jeremiah 51:7, Revelation 17:2**).
- (4) Both had been golden cups in God's hand and used to punish the erring people of God (**Jeremiah 51:7, Revelation 17:4**).
- (5) Both were made desolate by fire. The first was actual, but the second symbolizes the spread of God's Word (**Isaiah 34:9, Revelation 16:8-9, 17:16, 18:8-18**).
- (6) God's people were told to come out of both of these wicked cities, repent, and turn to God (**Isaiah 48:20, 52:7-12, Jeremiah 50:8, Revelation 18:4**).
- (7) Holy items of worship were taken from God's people and abused to the benefit of the enemy (**Ezra 1:7-11, Revelation 13**).

**THE TYPES OF GOVERNMENTS:** When John lived it was clear that governments held a considerable amount of power. There were at least seven types of government that he was familiar with at this time. Five of them had already fallen, but two stood:

- (1) Consuls (509 BC)
- (2) Tribunes (494 BC)
- (3) Decemvirs (451 BC)
- (4) Triumvirate (59 BC)
- (5) Dictator (48 BC)
- (6) Emperor (27 BC)
- (7) The Church (33 AD)

**THE ATTACKS OF SATAN:** The apostle Paul warned us to be prepared for spiritual warfare (**Ephesians 6:10-20**). Revelation shows us some of Satan's approaches to deceive:

- (1) Brute Force
- (2) Political Atmosphere
- (3) False Religion
- (4) The World of Lust

**PROPHECIES OF FAMOUS FALLS:** In chapters seventeen and eighteen of Revelation, John predicts the fall of a great city. There are many times in the Bible that such prophecies are found. Here are a handful of them:

- (1) Babylon (**Isaiah 13, 21, 47**)
- (2) Ninevah (**Nahum 3**)
- (3) Edom (**Isaiah 34**)
- (4) Tyre (**Ezekiel 26-27**)
- (5) Jerusalem (**Matthew 24**)
- (6) Rome???(**Revelation 18**)

**DESCRIPTIVE TITLES OF THIS GREAT CITY:** In chapters seventeen and eighteen of Revelation, John uses many descriptive terms to describe this great city that would fall:

- (1) The Great Harlot or Prostitute (**Revelation 17:1,4,7**)
- (2) Mystery, Babylon The Great (**Revelation 17:5**)
- (3) Mother of Harlots (**Revelation 17:5**)
- (4) Mother of Abominations of the Earth (**Revelation 17:5**)
- (5) The Woman, The Great City (**Revelation 17:5-6,18**)
- (6) The Beast (**Revelation 17:11,16,17**)
- (7) The Harlot (**Revelation 17:15**)
- (8) Babylon (**Revelation 18:2**)
- (9) The Great City Babylon (**Revelation 18:10,18**)

**THE MERCHANTS CRY OUT:** When the great city falls the merchants begin to cry out for help. Notice the objects of their search:

- (1) Precious Metals = Gold, Silver, Precious Stones, Pearls
- (2) Beautiful Cloth = Fine Linen, Purple, Silk, Scarlet
- (3) Ornamental Vessels = Citron Wood, Ivory, Precious Wood, Bronze, Iron, Marble
- (4) Aromatic Spices = Cinnamon, Incense, Fragrant Oil, Frankincense
- (5) Items For Nourishment = Wine, Oil, Fine Flour, Wheat
- (6) Property = Cattle, Sheep, Horses, Chariots, Slaves
- (7) Choice Fruits = The First-Fruits, Expensive Fruits

**THE SEA CAPTAINS, PASSENGERS, & SAILORS:** The fall of Babylon is witnessed by those on the sea that cry out, "There was never a city like this great city!" In their sadness they weep over the following thoughts:

- (1) The Greatness of the City
- (2) The Wealth Accumulated Because of the City
- (3) The Quick Fall of the City (One Hour)
- (4) The Fact That God's People, Apostles, & Prophets Would Rejoice

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SILENCE AND INACTIVITY:** A powerful angel picks up a stone and throws it into the sea. Then he describes the fall of the great city as a time when the people are without words and silence overtakes the city. There are thoughts that can be gleaned from this event:

- (1) The Sound of Musical Instruments (**Revelation 18:22**)  
Instruments were the symbol of joy (**Luke 15:25**).  
Instruments were the symbol of revelry (**Amos 6:5-7**).  
Instruments were the symbol of worship (**II Chronicles 29:25**).  
Instruments were the symbol of voices (**I Corinthians 14:7**).
- (2) The Sound of Craftsmen (**Revelation 18:22**)  
All businesses would vanish.  
No whirr of the loom, ring of the anvil, or echo of the hammer.  
No shouts of the animal drivers, slave drivers, or hawkers.
- (3) The Sound of a Millstone (**Revelation 18:22**)  
Grain was one of the elements that sustained life.  
No grain in the mill meant no bread for the citizens.
- (4) The Light of a Lamp (**Revelation 18:23**)  
The streets were no longer lit at night.  
The homes were no longer lit.
- (5) The Joy of a Wedding Festival (**Revelation 18:23**)  
Weddings would bring music, songs, and torches of light.  
Instead of joy and light there is mourning and darkness.

**SINGING HALLELUJAH:** As Christ wins the victory there is a great chorus of praise erupting in heaven. The people begin to praise God:

- (1) The Redeemed in Heaven (**Revelation 19:1-3**)
- (2) The Living Creatures & The Elders (**Revelation 19:4-5**)
- (3) The Saints on the Earth (**Revelation 19:6-8**)

**ANGEL WORSHIP:** Several of the churches of Asia, including a handful mentioned in the book of Revelation, worshipped angels. John gets overwhelmed with emotion and falls at the feet of angels in Revelation:

- (1) The angel reminds him that they are both servants of God, they both carry the message of Jesus, and that God alone deserves worship (**Revelation 19:10**).
- (2) The angel reminds him that they are both servants of God, the words of this book must be obeyed, and that God alone deserves worship (**Revelation 22:8-9**).

**THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST:** When you read commentators on Revelation you will find that one of the most disputed interpretations is the millennial reign of Jesus. There are at least three viewpoints (excerpts from Logos Library System):

*The Postmillennial View*

The Millennium, a term meaning “thousand,” refers to the thousand-year reign of Christ (**20:1–6**). Some Christians believe the Millennium will be an age of blessedness on the earth. Some believe the Millennium is the present church age—a period of indefinite length, or that the Millennium is a way of referring to the eternal state. The Bible’s only specific mention of the Millennium is in the book of Revelation (ch. 20). Interpreters differ greatly in their understanding of the Millennium and how it will occur. Postmillennialists expect Christ’s visible return after the Millennium. They look for God to use the church’s teaching and preaching to usher in a lengthy period (some interpret the thousand years literally, others symbolically) of peace and righteousness before Christ’s return. Postmillennialists usually adopt either the “Historical” or “Preterist” view of Revelation as a whole.

*The Premillennial View*

Premillennialists believe that Christ will return before the Millennium. Interpreting **Revelation 20** literally, they hold that Christ will reign on earth for a literal thousand years. Within this basic area of agreement, there are, nevertheless, a number of variant views—the most prevalent of which are the Premillennial-pretribulational and the Premillennial-posttribulational views.

*The Premillennial/Pretribulational View (Modern)*

Premillennial-pretribulational scholars argue that there are two different peoples of God—Israel and the church—with two different prophetic programs. According to this view, the church will be “raptured” prior to a seven-year Great Tribulation. Following the tribulation, Christ will return to establish a thousand-year millennial kingdom centered in Jerusalem and involving the reinstatement of the Old Testament sacrificial system. The millennial kingdom will end with a futile rebellion by the forces of evil, after which will come the final judgment and beginning of the eternal reign.

*The Premillennial/Posttribulational View (Historic)*

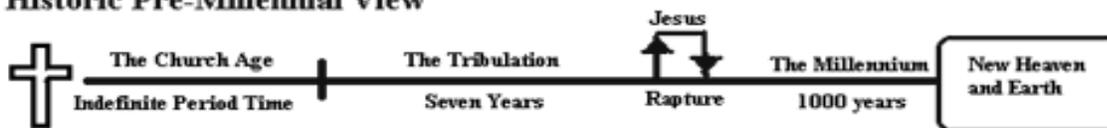
Premillennial/posttribulational scholars assert that Christ will return at the end of a seven-year Great Tribulation to establish a millennial kingdom. This kingdom will end with a rebellion by the forces of evil and the final judgment. This view often interprets prophecy in a non-literal way and does not usually view Israel and the church as the objects of completely different divine historical plans. Rather, Israel and the church ultimately form one people of God. Premillennialists of both types adopt the “Futurist” approach to the book of Revelation.

## The Amillennial View

Amillennialists interpret Christ's millennial reign in an ideal or spiritual sense. While believing in the Second Coming, they reject the idea of a literal thousand-year reign on earth. Some see Christ's reign as having begun during His earthly ministry or at the time of His resurrection. They cite Peter's declaration that Christ now rules from the right hand of God (**Acts 2:33-36**). Israel and the church are viewed as forming one people of God, and the kingdom promises to Israel are seen as applying to the church age, or to the eternal existence in the new heavens and the new earth. The Amillennial approach usually involves an "Idealist" view of Revelation as a whole.

## END TIME VIEWPOINTS

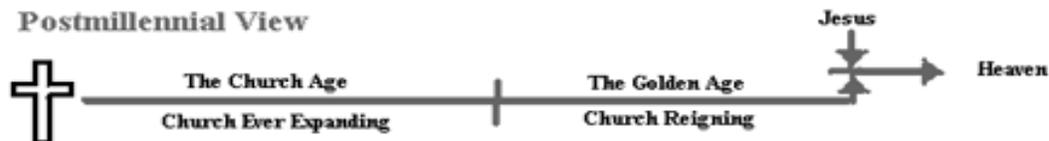
### Historic Pre-Millennial View



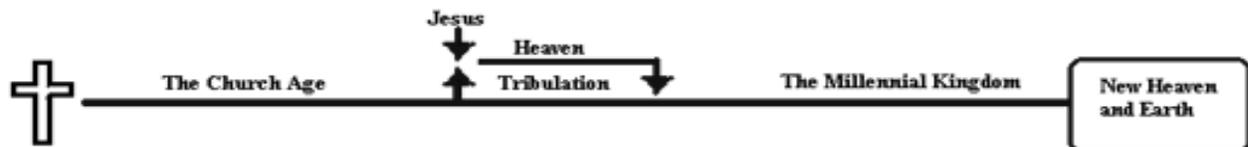
### Amillennial View



### Postmillennial View



### Modern Premillennial View



**THE IMPOSSIBILITIES OF PRE-MILLENNIALISM:** When one accepts a pre-millennial view of Revelation, you must accept some impossibilities that contradict other texts of the Bible:

- (1) Jesus is NOT on the throne (**Revelation 3:21, 4-5, Acts 7:56**).
- (2) The kingdom is NOT established (**Revelation 1:9, 11:15, Colossians 1:13**).
- (3) The righteous MUST NOT raise before the wicked (**Revelation 20:5, John 5:28-29**).
- (4) The end CANNOT come unless Jesus reigns personally on earth (**John 4:21, 18:36**).
- (5) The end CANNOT come unless Jesus reigns personally with the saints on the earth (**John 14:1-4, I Thessalonians 4:17**).
- (6) Jesus MUST give everyone on earth a second chance (**Matthew 25:31-46**).

**SATAN WILL BE BOUND:** The Bible clearly shows the limited power of our enemy, Satan. **Revelation 20** puts into perspective things already revealed in the earlier parts of the book:

- (1) The deceiver will be cast down after a "short" reign (**Revelation 12:9**).
- (2) The dragon gave the beast limited power and authority (**Revelation 13:2, 7**).
- (3) The devil sought after worship by those on the earth (**Revelation 13:8**).
- (4) The false prophet had to convince the earth to worship him (**Revelation 13:12**).
- (5) The deceptions of the evil one had to include signs and idols (**Revelation 13:14**).

**SATAN IS BOUND BY THE GOSPEL:** In chapter twenty, the accuser will be cast down as it was predicted (**Revelation 12:10-11**). The Bible reveals that the kingdom of God will not be overpowered by Satan (**Matthew 16:18-19**). The Scriptures also confirm that the power of the gospel can never be quenched by Satan:

- (1) The seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent (**Genesis 3:15**).
- (2) The serpent would be trampled under the feet of men and angels (**Psalms 91:13**).
- (3) The strong man must be bound to spoil his goods (**Matthew 12:28-29**).
- (4) The devil fell from heaven like a flash of lightning (**Luke 10:18**).
- (5) The prince of this world will be cast down (**John 12:31-32**).
- (6) The power of Satan blinds people who must turn to God (**Acts 26:18**).
- (7) The Lord will triumph over all (**Colossians 2:15**).
- (8) The Lord destroyed the power of death and the devil (**Hebrews 2:14**).
- (9) The works of the devil will be destroyed (**I John 3:8-9, 5:18**).

**1,000 YEARS IN SCRIPTURE:** The number "1,000" is used in a figurative way throughout the Bible. Just because 1,000 years is used does not mean it is a literal 1,000 years:

- (1) God will show kindness to "1,000's" who love Him (**Exodus 20:6**).
- (2) No one out of "1,000" people could argue with God (**Job 9:3**).
- (3) God owns the cattle on "1,000" hills (**Psalms 50:10**).
- (4) To God "1,000" years is like day and vice versa (**Psalms 90:4, II Peter 3:8**).
- (5) The Lord will keep His Word for "1,000" generations (**Psalms 105:8**).

**THE JUDGMENT(S) OF GOD:** The number of judgments seem to be an issue for those seeking to interpret the book of Revelation. Dispensationalists believe in four:

- (1) The judgment of believers
- (2) The judgment of Israel
- (3) The judgment of the living nations (when Christ comes to set up His millennial reign)
- (4) The judgment at the great white throne

**THE THRONES OF REVELATION:** The picture of the great white throne judgment is amazing. There are several places where thrones are mentioned in the book of Revelation:

- (1) God's Throne (**Acts 7:49, Revelation 4:2**)
- (2) Christ's Throne (**Hebrews 1:8, Revelation 3:21**)
- (3) The Throne of David on Which Christ Sits (**Luke 1:32, Acts 2:30**)
- (4) Thrones of Judgment Occupied By The Apostles (**Matthew 19:29, Luke 22:30**)
- (5) The Thrones of the Elders (**Revelation 4:4, 11:16**)
- (6) The Throne of Judgment (**Revelation 20:11**)
- (7) The Throne of Grace (**Hebrews 4:16**)
- (8) Satan's Throne, The Seat of Paganism (**Revelation 2:13**)
- (9) The Throne of the Dragon (**Revelation 13:2**)
- (10) The Throne Satan Gave to the Beast, His Throne (**Revelation 13:2, 16:10**)
- (11) The Throne of Princes or Rulers (**Luke 1:52**)
- (12) The Thrones of Authority for the Judges (**Revelation 20:4**)

**GOD'S THRONE IS A PLACE OF HONOR:** The reader should notice the honor given to the One who sits upon the throne. Notice what happens in **Revelation 20**:

- (1) The earth and sky run away and hide.
- (2) The dead stand up in amazement to witness the throne.
- (3) The Book of Life is opened.
- (4) The sea gives up all the dead.

**THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE WALL:** When the new Jerusalem is finally revealed to John, the holy city is beautiful. John is given an opportunity to look at the walls (stones) and the gates (pearls). He shares with the reader a description of the foundations of the walls:

- (1) Jasper is thought to be the diamond, the most precious of all.
- (2) Sapphire was a stone of various shades of blue.
- (3) Chalcedony was a green carbonate of copper.
- (4) Emerald was probably like the one of our day, a green stone.
- (5) Sardonyx was white layered with red or brown colors.
- (6) Sardius was yellowish brown and transparent red.
- (7) Chrysolite was yellow beryl or gold colored jasper.
- (8) Beryl was a sea green color and similar to the emerald.
- (9) Topaz was yellow with green tints.
- (10) Chrysoprase was similar to the beryl but a paler color.
- (11) Jacinth was a transparent blue color, similar to the sapphire.
- (12) Amethyst was a purplish red colored stone.

**THE THEME OF THE BOOK:** Various interpreters might give their opinions to the theme of the book of Revelation. However, one is prominent and must be considered: JESUS IS COMING SOON! Several times John says that these things will "shortly come to pass" or happen "quickly," but Jesus Himself has given the seven churches this assurance:

- (1) He promised to come quickly to remove the candlestick from the church at Ephesus (**Revelation 2:5**).
- (2) He promised to come quickly to fight against the wicked of the church at Pergamos (**Revelation 2:16**).
- (3) He promised to come quickly to aid the weak members of the church at Philadelphia (**Revelation 3:11**).
- (4) He promised to come quickly to encourage the righteous Christians who were reading this book (**Revelation 22:7**).
- (5) He promised to come quickly to give a reward to those who had done good works (**Revelation 22:12**).
- (6) He promised to come quickly to John's readers (**Revelation 22:20**).

**THE BEAUTY OF HEAVEN:** As we close out this series on Revelation it would be good to notice the contrasts and comparisons of the earth and heaven:

EARTH	VS.	HEAVEN
Turmoil		Order
Worries		Calm
Anxiety		Reassurance
Suspicion		Trust
Fear		Strength
Noise		Quiet
Unrest		Comfort
Confusion		Stability
Timidity		Bravery
Dread		Confidence
Terror		Security
Misunderstanding		Understanding
Chaos		Organization
Death		Life

**DESCRIPTIONS OF JESUS IN REVELATION CHAPTERS 17-22:**

- 17:6** Jesus had followers that were martyrs of Great Babylon (mother of prostitutes)
- 17:14** Jesus engages in war against the ten kings
- 17:14** Jesus is the Lord of lords and the King of kings
- 17:14** Jesus will defeat His enemies with the called, chosen, and faithful followers
- 18:20** Jesus will see to it that God's holy people, apostles, and prophets are vindicated
- 19:7** Jesus will be wed by His bride, the church (**Ephesians 5:23, 27**)
- 19:8** Jesus will have a bride that is pure, clean, and white
- 19:9** Jesus will invite people to this wedding feast
- 19:10** Jesus is more worthy of praise and worship than the angels
- 19:10** Jesus, and His testimony, is the spirit of prophesy
- 19:11** Jesus rides the horse called "Faithful and True"
- 19:11** Jesus judges and makes war in righteousness
- 19:12** Jesus has eyes that are a flame of fire
- 19:12** Jesus has many diadems (crowns) upon His head
- 19:12** Jesus has a name written which no one else knows, but Him
- 19:13** Jesus is wearing a robe dipped in blood
- 19:13** Jesus called by the name "Word of God" (**John 1:1**)
- 19:14** Jesus is followed by the armies of heaven
- 19:15** Jesus had a sharp sword in his mouth to defeat the nations
- 19:15** Jesus rules the nations with a rod of iron
- 19:15** Jesus treads out the winepress of God's wrath
- 19:16** Jesus wears a robe that says, "King of kings and Lord of lords"
- 19:19** Jesus was provoked into battle by the kings of the earth and the beast
- 19:20** Jesus, and His army, captured the beast and the false prophet
- 19:21** Jesus had them cast into the lake of fire (**Mark 9:44, 46, 48**)
- 19:21** Jesus killed the armies of the earth with the sword in His mouth
- 20:4** Jesus rules with the faithful martyrs for 1,000 years
- 20:11** Jesus is sitting on the great white throne
- 20:12** Jesus allows the Book of Life to be opened
- 20:15** Jesus reward the faithful who had their names written in the Book of Life

## **DESCRIPTIONS OF JESUS IN REVELATION CHAPTERS 17-22 CONT.:**

- 21:2** Jesus is presented with a new holy city as a bride
- 21:5** Jesus is sitting on the great white throne and wants to be recognized
- 21:6** Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega (Beginning and the End)
- 21:6** Jesus will give free water from the spring of the water of life to all the thirsty
- 21:7** Jesus will be the God of the victorious
- 21:7** Jesus will call the faithful, His children
- 21:8** Jesus will punish the wicked, non-believers, and idolatrous people
- 21:9** Jesus is presented with His bride, the wife of the Lamb
- 21:14** Jesus receives the city with 12 foundations
- 21:14** Jesus receives the city with the names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb
- 21:22** Jesus, and the Father, are the temple of the city
- 21:23** Jesus provides the only lamp for the city
- 21:24** Jesus lights the way for the people to walk
- 21:27** Jesus will only receive those who have their names written in His Book of Life
- 22:1** Jesus has the river of the water of life flowing from His throne
- 22:3** Jesus is sitting on His throne where He is to be worshipped
- 22:7** Jesus speaks to John, and the seven churches, warning them to be prepared
- 22:12** Jesus warns the readers that He is coming soon
- 22:12** Jesus will bring His reward with Him
- 22:12** Jesus will repay each of the faithful for their works
- 22:13** Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega
- 22:13** Jesus is the First and the Last
- 22:13** Jesus is the Beginning and the End
- 22:16** Jesus sent His angel to speak the message
- 22:16** Jesus is the descendant from the family of David
- 22:16** Jesus is the Bright Morning Star
- 22:17** Jesus allows the Holy Spirit and the bride (the church) to plead for Him
- 22:20** Jesus is the One that says, "Yes, I am coming soon."

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