

# The Book of Revelation - Notes

## Introduction

### Goals

- Perform an inductive study of Revelation
- Learn proper methods of interpretation
- Consider valid applications for today

### Introduction

- Author: John, the apostle
- Audience: The bond-servants of Jesus Christ
- Date: c.a. 95 A.D.
- Genre: apocalyptic prophecy, letter/narrative
- Outline
- Major Themes
- Principles of Interpretation

### Genre

- Apocalyptic literature reveals hidden secrets through heavenly beings using esoteric symbols (e.g., Isaiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Daniel)
- The focus of prophecy is revealing God's will for people rather than revealing the future
- Revelation is a prophetic letter and a story of the battle between good and evil

### Outline

- Introduction (1:1-20)
- The Seven Churches (2:1-3:22)
- The Seven Seals (4:1-8:5)
- The Seven Trumpets (8:6-11:19)
- The Woman & Dragon (12:1-17)
- The Two Beasts (13:1-18)
- The Great Harvest (14:1-20)
- The Seven Bowls (15:1-16:21)
- Babylon & The Beast (17:1-19:5)
- The Millennium (19:6-20:15)
- The New Jerusalem (21:1-22:5)
- Conclusion (22:6-22:21)

### Major Themes

- The sovereignty of God Almighty
  - The futility of Satan's rebellion
  - The need to repent and obey God
- Dr. Grant R. Osborne, Revelation Verse by Verse

### Four methods of interpretation

- Historicist: Covers the first century to the 2nd Coming
- Preterist: Fulfilled during the Roman Empire
- Idealist: Symbolic depiction of spiritual warfare, not literal
- Futurist: Mainly describes future events, the 2nd Coming

- Historicist: Covers the first century to the 2nd Coming

Pros: Revelation begins with a letter to first century churches and ends with the Second Coming

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Cons: There is no way to connect the letter to the seven churches with Church history

- Preterist: Fulfilled during the Roman Empire

Pros: Revelation begins with a letter specifically addressed to seven churches in the first century

Cons: Revelation ends with the Second Coming, which has not yet happened

- Idealist: Symbolic depiction of spiritual warfare, not literal

Pros: This approach is more devotional & practical, rather than wasting time on wild speculation

Cons: The letter to the seven churches deals with real people, practical matters & historical events; Jesus told John about “the things which must soon take place” (Rev 1:1 NASB)

- Futurist: Mainly describes future events, the 2nd Coming

Pros: Revelation predicts global catastrophes and the Second Coming, which have not yet happened

Cons: The letter to seven churches appears to be symbolic; there were more than seven churches at the time, the number seven is highly symbolic, and the letter appears to progress to the end time

### Conclusion

Each method is useful, but Futurist seems best. The letter to the seven churches has timeless truths for all ages, but it may also be sequential eras of Church history

### Principles of Interpretation

Prediction addiction is a spiritual pathology where people set specific dates for certain events based on questionable interpretations of prophecy

The purpose of Revelation is to encourage Christians to remain faithful, not to give us a specific a time table for end time events

### Principles of Interpretation

God gives understanding to those who obey Him

Ps 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever.

Dan 12:10 Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand.

### Principles of Interpretation

Commentaries are a blessing and a curse; carefully separate the wheat from the chaff  
Scripture is the best commentary on Scripture, so let the Bible interpret the Bible whenever possible

Revelation contains up to 700 allusions to the Old Testament; understanding the Old Testament is the key to interpreting Revelation correctly

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### Principles of Interpretation

The Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha are not inspired, and they should not be used to interpret inspired Scripture

They only provide Jewish speculation from the intertestamental period about Old Testament prophecies and end time events

### Principles of Interpretation

Daniel provides the five key time periods:

Dan 9:24 - 70 heptads to finish God's plan, one left

Dan 9:27 - 7 year covenant, broken in the middle

Dan 12:7 - 1260 days of Beast authority, tribulation

Dan 12:11 - 1290 days abomination of desolation

Dan 12:12 - 1335 days consummation blessing

### Principles of Interpretation

Revelation uses literal & figurative language; visions are not always accurate descriptions of reality

Literal (adj) adhering to fact or the primary meaning of a term or expression ([www.Merriam-Webster.com](http://www.Merriam-Webster.com))

Figurative (adj) something that is not interpreted literally, but instead uses a symbol or a likeness ([www.yourdictionary.com](http://www.yourdictionary.com))

### The Book of Revelation

"When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise."

—Dr. David L. Cooper (1886-1965),  
founder of The Biblical Research Society

The shorter and more famous version of this saying is: "When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense, lest it result in nonsense."

### Principles of Interpretation

There are several detours in narrative of Revelation, visions that do not follow the sequential, chronological order of the rest of the book:

- Rev 7:1-17
- Rev 10:1 - 11:14
- Rev 12:1 - 14:20
- Rev 17-18

## Chapter 1

Rev 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, 2 who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. 3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

### 1. This is the revelation (singular) of Jesus Christ

It is the Book of Revelation, not Revelations. It is a unified message from the Father, through Jesus Christ, to an angelic messenger, to the apostle John, and finally to God's servants (all Christians in all ages)

Amos 3:7 Surely the Lord GOD does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel To His servants the prophets.

### 2. This concerned "things which must soon take place" (1:1)

The letter to the seven congregations (in Rev 2-3) addressed current problems and warned about impending judgment and tribulation; the other events were going to take much longer... This delay in fulfillment is typical of many Old Testament prophecies (e.g., Mal 3:1)

2Pet 3:8 But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.

### 3. The Book of Revelation is Scripture

Rev 1:1-2 says "all that John saw" = the word of God = the testimony of Jesus Christ  
God inspired the apostles to write and canonize the New Testament; they knew that they were writing authoritative Scripture (cf. Luke 10:7, 1Tim 5:18, 1Th 2:13, 2Pet 3:15-16). By 100 AD, most church leaders generally knew which books were genuine and authoritative, and they quoted from them extensively; they had an early canon by ~180 AD.

### 4. There is a blessing for those who read and heed (1:3)

This is the first of seven blessings within the Book of Revelation (14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6-7, 22:14). God will judge everyone according to their deeds (Rev 20:12) because faith without works is dead (James 2:17). John urges his readers to act "for the time is near" (1:3). Life is unpredictable and short compared to eternity; everyone will eventually face Judgment Day, so now is the time to act.

Rev 1:4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood— 6 and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

## The Book of Revelation - Notes

### 1. God is eternal

The greeting “from Him who is and who was and who is to come” describes God’s eternity – present, past and future. The Holman Christian Standard Bible renders this more literally as “the One who is, who was, and who is coming.” Revelation 21-22 ends with the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven and a voice saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them...”

### 2. Jesus is “the firstborn of the dead” (1:5)

God raised a few people back to mortal, physical life prior to the resurrection of Jesus; they grew old and eventually died again, but Jesus is the first human being to be raised from the dead with an eternal, spiritual body making Him the firstborn of many brethren who will also become like Him (cf. Rom 8:29, 1Cor 15). A firstborn son was the head of the clan under a patriarch; Jesus is our elder brother, the clan leader of God’s people

### 3. Christians will be “a kingdom, priests to His God”

Christians will inherit an eternal kingdom (1Cor 15:50-53)

Dan 7:17 ‘These great beasts, which are four in number, are four kings who will arise from the earth. 18 ‘But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come.’

The job of a priest is to represent God to the people; the resurrected saints will rule over physical people during the Millennial kingdom of Jesus Christ (20:4)

Rev 1:7 BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen. 8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

### 1. His “coming with the clouds” is an OT allusion

Dan 7:13 “I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. 14 “And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

Acts 1:9 And after He [Jesus] had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. 11 They also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”

## The Book of Revelation - Notes

### 2. The Second Coming will be personal, visible

Some claim that Jesus came secretly, invisibly in 1914, but John said that every eye will see Him

Luke 17:22 Then He said to the disciples, "The time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. 23 People will tell you, 'Look, there He is!' or 'Look, here He is!' Do not go out or chase after them. 24 For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other, so will be the Son of Man in His day.

### 3. The Lord God is Alpha and the Omega

These are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet

This means there is only one God, no other

Isa 44:6 Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me.'

This connection is important later...

Rev 1:9 I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, 11 saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

#### 1. John also suffered persecution

According to early church history, Emperor Domitian exiled John to the island of Patmos near the end of his reign. All Christians, even apostles, will suffer persecution

Jesus had said, "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33)

#### 2. John was "in the Spirit on the Lord's day"

There are two possible interpretations:

- He saw the Day of the Lord by the Holy Spirit (16:14)
- He fell into a trance on the Sabbath day

The first option is grammatically possible, however, the opening chapters of Revelation dealt with the current state of the seven congregations in Asia Minor, not the Day of the Lord

Prophets would often fall into a trace when the Holy Spirit gave them a vision (cf. Num 24:4, Dan 8:18, Act 11:4-5)

The Sabbath is the only day that Scripture identifies as God's special day (e.g., Lev 23:1-3)

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Apostate Christians in Rome changed the Sabbath to Sunday around 135 AD and started calling Sunday “the Lord’s Day” after John wrote Revelation. It isn’t valid to use later sources to define John’s meaning.

3. John is told to write a “book” (papyrus scroll)

He is to send this message to seven specific congregations in Asia Minor, modern Turkey  
The order of the seven congregations matches the route that a messenger would deliver the message; this is sequential, not random. Patmos is close to Ephesus, the first city on the list; tradition says John ministered in Ephesus after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Rev 1:12 Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; 13 and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. 14 His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. 15 His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. 16 In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

1. John saw a heavenly being with a human form

Dan 10:5 I lifted up my eyes, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. 6 His body was like beryl, his face like the brilliance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of polished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude.

Ezekiel saw a similar vision of God (cf. Ezek 1:26-28)

2. John also saw several symbols

- Seven golden lampstands
- Seven stars in His right hand
- A sword came out of His mouth

Rev 1:17 When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, 18 and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. 19 “Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things. 20 “As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

1. This heavenly being is the Lord God

He said, “I am the first and the last” (1:17)

Isa 44:6 Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me.'

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Rev 1:8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God...

2. This heavenly being is also the glorified Jesus  
He said, "I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore" (1:18)

Jesus Christ was the God of the Old Testament, not the Father

John 6:46 Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father.

John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

Rev 1:12-18 confirms the doctrine of the Trinity

3. The seven stars are seven "angels"  
Rev 1:20 "the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches"

Angel (Greek, *angelos*) = messenger, human or spirit.

In Revelation, a star usually symbolizes a spirit, but not always (cf. 12:1, Gen 37:9)

Gen 37:9 Now he [Joseph] had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, "Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.

4. The seven lampstands are the seven congregations  
Rev 1:20 "the seven lampstands are the seven churches"

Church (Greek, *ekklesia*) = an assembly, congregation.

The seven lampstands may or may not be part of a menorah

The term is not specific, so no one should be dogmatic, but it is a legitimate possibility

4. The seven lampstands are the seven congregations  
Matt 5:14 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.



## Chapter 2

Rev 2:1 “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this: 2 ‘I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; 3 and you have perseverance and have endured for My name’s sake, and have not grown weary.

Rev 2:4 ‘But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 ‘Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent. 6 ‘Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. 7 ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.’

1. The “angel” is a human messenger  
John is told, “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write”

This same phrase appears in the next six messages

The term “angel” simply means a messenger

Jesus could easily give a message to a spiritual being without telling John to write it down, therefore, this message was more likely intended for a human being, who will read it to the congregation on behalf of Jesus and John

2. Jesus gave Ephesus a mixed review

Jesus commended Ephesus for their faithful service and dedication to the truth; they clearly loved God. He rebuked them for leaving their first love and threatened to remove their congregation from His presence (serious!). They had faithful hands and heads, but not hearts.

Evidently, they had stopped loving one another.

Jesus had predicted a loss of love in the last days

Matt 24:12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold (NKJV).

By the late first century, John had to urge Christians in Asia Minor to love one another (cf. 1John 3:10-24, 4:7-21, 2John 5)

1John 3:10 By this the children of God are distinguished from the children of the devil: Anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is anyone who does not love his brother.

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### 3. Ephesus hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans

“There has been much speculation concerning the identity of the Nicolaitans, but the Scriptures do not specify who they were. They apparently were a sect wrong in practice and in doctrine” Bible Knowledge Commentary, s.v. Rev 2:5-6.

Epistles from this period and this region strongly condemn the false doctrines and practices of Proto-Gnosticism (cf. Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, 1Tim 6:20-21, 1John, 2John and Jude) This was an evil mixture of neo-Platonism and the Bible

### 4. The Holy Spirit concludes with an exhortation

Each message ends with the same exhortation: ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches...’

While each congregation received a unique message intended specifically for them, everyone should pay attention to these seven messages (i.e., the lessons are universal, timeless).

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit communicated this revelation equally; this reflects a Trinitarian mindset

### 5. Everyone who overcomes receives a promise

John explained “...I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one... and this is the victory that has overcome the world-- our faith” (1John 2:13, 5:4)

The first promise: “I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God” (2:7)

The tree of life symbolizes the gift of eternal life.

God drove Adam and Eve out of Eden lest they “take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever” (Gen 3:22)

Rev 2:8 “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this: 9 ‘I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 10 ‘Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. 11 ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.’

### 1. Jesus gave Smyrna a positive review

He commended Smyrna for their faithfulness, warned them of coming persecution and encouraged them to stay strong.

Although they were physically poor, they had treasure in heaven, so they were spiritually rich (Matt 6:19-21).

## 2. The synagogue of Satan persecuted Smyrna

Many in the first century were Jews in name only; they rejected Jesus and His message

Paul explained, "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. 29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God" (Rom 2:28-29)

Jesus told the Pharisees, "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father..." (John 8:44).

He also said, "You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?" (Matt 23:33).

Many synagogues split because of the gospel, and unbelieving Jews brought intense persecution on the church.

## 3. Those who overcome receive a second promise

The second promise: "He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death" (2:11)

This refers to the destruction of the wicked in the lake of fire described in Revelation 20

Rev 2:12 "And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this: 13 'I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. 14 'But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality.

Rev 2:15 'So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. 16 'Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth. 17 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.'

### 1. Pergamum was an evil place

Jesus described Pergamum as Satan's throne, the place where Satan dwells

It was a major center for the worship of Athena, Asclepius, Dionysus, and Zeus

"Asclepius was a god of medicine in ancient Greek religion and mythology... The rod of Asclepius, a snake-entwined staff, remains a symbol of medicine today."

Wikipedia s.v. Asclepius

## 2. Jesus gave Pergamum a mixed review

Jesus commended them for faithfulness during persecution. But, He rebuked them for tolerating those “who eat things sacrificed to idols and commit acts of immorality.”

In the Roman world, cities had trade guilds that worshipped a patron deity (cf. Acts 19:21ff); Christians who refused to join this system might be unable to buy or sell in the market place.

There would have been a strong temptation to compromise or tolerate the evil culture around them.

## 3. Jesus doesn't tolerate sin

He sternly warned Pergamum to “repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth” (2:16). This sword symbolizes divine punishment (cf. Rev 19:15); the next message (to Thyatira) illustrates this power

## 4. Those who overcome receive a third promise

The third promise: “To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it” (2:17). John described Jesus as the bread of life, the true manna that came down out of heaven (John 6). In the biblical world, naming someone or something is an assertion of lordship; God renamed Abram and Jacob to give them a new identity.

Rev 2:18 “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this: 19 ‘I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first. 20 ‘But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. 21 ‘I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality.

Rev 2:22 ‘Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds. 23 ‘And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds. 24 ‘But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them—I place no other burden on you. 25 ‘Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come.

Rev 2:26 ‘He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; 27 AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received authority from My Father; 28 and I will give him the morning star. 29 ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

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### 1. The phrase "Son of God" is a title of divinity

There are many places where the phrase "son of God" is NOT a title of divinity (e.g., Gen 6:2, Job 38:7, Ps 82:6, Luke 3:38), but there are a few, like this one, where it is (based on the context).

John 3:18 He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Matt 28:18 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit

### 2. Jesus gave Thyatira a mixed review

He is aware of their deeds, love, faith, service & perseverance; He has been watching them (2:19). Ephesus tested false apostles, but Thyatira tolerated a false prophetess who taught them to commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.

God expects His people to test those who claim to have direct revelation from Him (cf. Deut 13, 18, Isa 8:20, 1John 4:1) and to expel those who fail to have: (1) holy character, (2) sound doctrine, and (3) authentication by miraculous signs

### 3. Jesus threatened to punish them

Because of her immorality and idolatry, He promised to throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent; He would also kill her children (disciples?) with pestilence. Jesus never tolerates sin among His people

1Cor 11:27 Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord... 30 For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep (i.e., they died)

### 4. Those who overcome receive a fourth promise

The fourth promise: He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; 27 AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES (cf. Ps 2:9)

From the time of Adam & Eve, God has allowed humans to do as they please, but during the millennial kingdom, Jesus will not overlook any disobedience or rebellion

How do we exercise authority in the church or family today?

### Chapter 3

Rev 3:1 To the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this: 'I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. 2 'Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God. 3 'So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.

Rev 3:4 'But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. 5 'He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. 6 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

#### 1. Jesus has the seven Spirits of God

There is only one Holy Spirit of God

Eph 4:4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all....

But, Jesus displays the seven attributes of the Holy Spirit

Isa 11:2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

#### 2. Jesus gave Sardis a negative review

Sardis is alive in name only; they are comatose, terminal

They have forgotten what they heard, deeds are incomplete

Many have soiled garments, unrighteous deeds (cf. Rev 19:8)

They are in spiritual decline, but they can wake up

The remedy: remember, obey and repent

#### 3. Those who overcome receive a fifth promise

The fifth promise: He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels (3:5)

White garments represent the righteous deeds of Christians (19:8)

The one who doesn't overcome will have his name erased from the book of life; Christians can lose salvation (Heb 6:4-6)

Matt 10:33 But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father in heaven.

## The Book of Revelation - Notes

Rev 3:7 “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this: 8 ‘I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name. 9 ‘Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and make them know that I have loved you.

Rev 3:10 ‘Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. 11 ‘I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown. 12 ‘He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name. 13 ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

### 1. Jesus possesses the key of David

Jesus is a descendant of King David, heir to his throne

“The key of David” seems to refer to Isaiah 22:22, where the key of the house of David was given to Eliakim who then had access to all the wealth of the king.... The reference here, however, seems to be to spiritual treasures.

- Bible Knowledge Commentary, s.v. Revelation 3:7

A key unlocks a door; Jesus opens a door for Philadelphia because they have little power, can't do it themselves

### 2. Jesus gave Philadelphia a positive review

He knows their deeds; they are faithful, loyal

They have little power; He opens a door for them

He loves them; they have persevered

Because they are faithful, He will deliver them from “the hour of testing” that is coming on every habitation (global?)

This is similar to other promises (Ps 5:12, 34:19, 1Cor 10:13)

Is it possible to escape the Great Tribulation? Yes!

### 3. Those who overcome receive a sixth promise

The sixth promise: I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, and My new name.

## The Book of Revelation - Notes

1Pet 2:5 you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Writing a name on someone or something denotes ownership or dedication, which corresponds with receiving the mark of the Beast (cf. Is 44:5; Rev 13:17; 14:1)

Rev 3:14 “To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: 15 ‘I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. 16 ‘So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. 17 ‘Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked

Rev 3:18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. 19 ‘Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent. 20 ‘Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me. 21 ‘He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. 22 ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’”

### 1. Jesus is the archē of the creation of God

Rev 3:14 Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ ἐκκλησίας γράψον·  
Τάδε λέγει ὁ Ἀμήν, ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστὸς καὶ ἀληθινός, ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς  
κτίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ·

The Greek term archē is hard to translate:

- NIV: the ruler of God's creation
- HCSB: the Originator of God's creation

The Holy Spirit may have intended both meanings since Jesus created (John 1:3) and rules all things (cf. Rev 1:5, 3:14)

### 2. Jesus gave Laodicea a negative review

Laodicea was tepid, neither cold nor hot (i.e., worthless)

Jesus promised to spit them out (reject them)

Laodicea was self-satisfied and self-righteous

Jesus rebuked them and demanded zealous repentance

Gold refined by fire = faith refined by trial (1Pet 1:6-7)

White garments = righteous deeds of the saints (Rev 19:8)

Eye salve for spiritual blindness = repentance, faith (Eph 4:18)



## The Book of Revelation - Notes

### 3. Those who overcome receive a seventh promise

The seventh promise: He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne (3:21).

Jesus overcame the temptations of the world, the flesh and the Devil; He calls on His people to do likewise

Those who do will share His authority over the nations (cf. 2:26)

Most of these congregations were failures; salvation isn't guaranteed (Matt 7:13)

- Ephesus: Negative review, needed love
- Smyrna: Positive review
- Pergamum: Negative review, needed truth
- Thyatira: Negative review, needed faithfulness
- Sardis: Negative review, needed zeal
- Philadelphia: Positive review
- Laodicea: Negative review, needed repentance

Is there chronological sequence here?

- Ephesus: Jesus threatened to remove their lampstand (ended?)
- Smyrna: He urged them to be faithful unto death (died out?)
- Pergamum: He would wage war against them (ended?)
- Thyatira: They must hold on until He comes (very long wait?)
- Sardis: He will come upon them like a thief (long wait?)
- Philadelphia: He will come quickly, keep them from global tribulation
- Laodicea: He is knocking at the door, need gold refined in fire

## Chapter 4

Rev 4:1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things." 2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. 3 And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.

### 1. John now sees a completely new vision

Like other prophets, John saw a series of different visions over a period of time each with unique symbols and meanings.

The first vision addressed the state of the seven churches.

Here, John sees a depiction of God's throne in heaven.

We can't assume that this is an accurate depiction of reality!

### 2. The visions appear to be sequential

John heard a voice say, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things." This implies that the visions are in a chronological sequence.

Why would God discuss the state of only seven churches in the first century and then jump forward 2000 years to the Second Coming without discussing events in between?

Do the seven churches represent seven sequential ages?

### 3. John's vision is similar other OT visions

Isaiah 6:1 God is seated on His throne (4:2)

Ezek 1:4 Flashes of lightning from the throne (4:5)

Ezek 1:28 A rainbow around the throne (4:3)

Rev 4:4 Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads. 5 Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;

### 1. John sees 24 elders around the throne

The text does not identify these "elders" (a term of dignity)

They sit on thrones near God = they have great authority

They are clothed in white = righteous deeds (19:8)

They have golden crowns (Greek, stephanos)

"The crowns were similar to those given victors in Greek games (stephanos), in contrast with the crown of a sovereign ruler (diadēma, "diadem")." Bible Knowledge Commentary s.v. Rev 4:4

## The Book of Revelation - Notes

### 2. John sees the seven Spirits of God

Rev 4:5b And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God

This is a symbol of the sevenfold Holy Spirit (cf. 1:4, 3:1, 5:6)

This is similar to the seven branched menorah in the Temple

This is also similar to the tongues of fire that appeared on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4)

Christians are able to be a light to the world by indwelling of the Holy Spirit (cf. 1:20)

Rev 4:6 and before the throne there was something like a sea of glass, like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. 7 The first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle. 8 And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY is THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME."

Rev 4:9 And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."

### 1. John sees four living creatures

This is also similar to earlier Old Testament visions

Ezek 1:5 Four living creatures around the throne (4:6)

Ezek 1:10 Faces like a man, lion, ox and eagle (4:5)

Isaiah 6:2 Seraphim covered with six wings (4:8)

Isaiah 1:3 Crying, "Holy, holy holy is the Lord" (4:8)

They are covered with eyes = they see everything

### 2. This vision reveals God's attributes

He is worthy of glory and honor and thanks (4:9)

He is eternal; He lives forever and ever (4:9)

He is worthy of worship (4:10)

He is worthy of glory and honor and power (4:11)

He has created all things because of His will (4:11)

Conclusion: God has the authority to rule His Creation and judge all people as revealed here

## The Book of Revelation - Notes

### Chapter 5

A voice told John to write the following things in a book:

The things you have seen (1:19)

Revelation 1: Vision of the seven lampstands

The things that are (1:19)

Revelation 2: Message to the first four churches

Revelation 3: Message to the last three churches

The things that will happen after this (1:19)

Revelation 4: John sees God's throne in heaven

Revelation 5: John sees a scroll with seven seals

Revelation 4-5 is a transition from John's time to the future, from the earthly to the heavenly. It introduces the main theme of the book, God's plan for the future written on a sealed scroll.

Rev 5:1 I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?" 3 And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it. 4 Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it; 5 and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals."

#### 1. John sees a book with seven seals

This is a papyrus or parchment scroll, not a modern book with bound pages and hard covers.

It is the message from God to Jesus then to John (1:1).

It is sealed with seven seals, symbolizing the full revelation of God's message (1:1-3).

They also represent 7 judgments.

#### 2. Only one Person can open the book

He is the Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David (5:5).

Both descriptions refer to Jesus Christ.

A lion is strong and powerful, the king of the beasts (royalty).

The pre-incarnate Jesus created Adam, so He is the source or root of David's family (Col 1:16).

Jesus is also a descendent of David through His human mother (cf. Isa 11:1, 10, Rev 22:16).

Rev 5:6 And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. 7 And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. 8 When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

## The Book of Revelation - Notes

### 1. John sees a strange, symbolic Lamb

The Lamb appears to be slain but is standing; Jesus is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29); Jesus was dead but has come to life again (2:8)

The Lamb has seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth (5:6)

The number seven is associated with completion and perfection; animals use their horns as weapons, so horns became a symbol of strength and power in ancient Israel (1Kgs 22:11)  
So, Jesus has complete strength, perfect power

The seven eyes are the seven Spirits of God (5:6)

Jesus has the seven attributes of the Spirit (Isa 11:2)

Seven eyes imply that Jesus is all-seeing (cf. Zech. 3:9; 4:10)

2Chr 16:9 For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His...

1Cor 2:10b The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God

### 2. John sees a representation of the Trinity

God the Father is on the throne of heaven (4:10-11)

God the Son appears as the slain Lamb (5:5)

God the Holy Spirit appears as seven burning lamps (4:5)

John's salutation is also very Trinitarian:

Rev 1:4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness....

### 3. Incense represents the prayers of the saints

The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders hold golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints (5:8)

The prayers of righteous people ascend to God like a cloud of fragrant incense (cf. 8:3)

Ps 141:2 May my prayer be counted as incense before You; the lifting up of my hands as the evening offering.

Rev 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. 10 "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

## The Book of Revelation - Notes

### 1. Christians will be kings and priests

Rev 5:10a You have made them [Christians] to be a kingdom and priests to our God

Christians are citizens of God's kingdom now (Php 3:20)

Christians offer sacrifices of praise, intercessory prayers

Resurrected Christians will inherit an eternal kingdom, the Kingdom of God (cf. Dan 7:18, 1Cor 15:50-53)

A priest is God's representative to the people; resurrected Christians will show humanity what God is like

### 2. Christians will rule on the earth

Rev 5:10b and they [Christians] will reign upon the earth

Matt 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matt 5:5 Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

Heaven is not the reward of the saved

The Earth is where the action is, focus of God's plan

Rev 5:11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." 13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." 14 And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped.

### 1. There are lots of angels

Rev 5:11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them [i.e., the angels] was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands

The Bible doesn't give us an exact number of all these heavenly servants, but myriads of myriads would imply tens or possibly hundreds of millions

The Bible calls God the Lord of hosts, which is a large army

### 2. The Kingdom of God is not a democracy

Every created thing cries out, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever" (5:13)

There is one supreme power in the universe

Do we give God praise, honor, glory and obedience today?

## Chapter 6

Revelation 6 covers six of the seven seals

- The First Seal = the White Horse
- The Second Seal = the Red Horse
- The Third Seal = the Black Horse
- The Fourth Seal = the Pale Horse
- The Fifth Seal = Martyrdom
- The Sixth Seal = Supernatural Signs

Revelation 6 deals with the signs of the Second Coming

It matches the Olivet Prophecy of Matt 24, Mark 13 & Luke 21

Rev 6:1 Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, "Come." 2 I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

### 1. The First Seal = the White Horse, a Counterfeit Savior

This rider sits on a white horse; he has a bow and a crown (Greek, *stephanos*), and he goes forth conquering. Many people confuse this counterfeit savior with Jesus because he comes on a white horse and conquers. But, in Revelation 19:11-16, Jesus has a sword and many diadems (Greek, *diadéma*) on His head. The former is a crown of victory; the latter is a royal crown. This counterfeit messiah is victorious in a religious crusade

This is consistent with first sign in the Olivet Prophecy

Matt 24:3 As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" 4 And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. 5 For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many.

1Thes 2:7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. 8 Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; 9 that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.

Dan 9:27 And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.

A European leader will establish a 7 year treaty with many people (the final heptad of the 70 Weeks prophecy) then break it after ~3.5 years, ending Jewish sacrifices (cf. Dan 9:26)

## The Book of Revelation - Notes

Rev 6:3 When He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come." 4 And another, a red horse, went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men would slay one another; and a great sword was given to him.

### 2. The Second Seal = the Red Horse, War

Red is the color of blood; this rider has a great sword, and he causes men to slay one another

This is the second sign listed in the Olivet Prophecy

Matt 24:6 You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom...

Dan 11:40 "At the end time the king of the South will collide with him, and the king of the North will storm against him with chariots, with horsemen and with many ships; and he will enter countries, overflow them and pass through.

Earlier in Daniel 11, the king of the South was the Ptolemaic dynasty located in Egypt; the king of the North was the Seleucid dynasty that ruled over Syria until the Roman Empire defeated and replaced this kingdom in 64 BC

Dan 11:41 "He will also enter the Beautiful Land, and many countries will fall; but these will be rescued out of his hand: Edom, Moab and the foremost of the sons of Ammon.

The Beautiful Land is a reference to Israel, the Holy Land  
The ancient territory of Edom, Moab and Ammon is Jordan

Dan 11:42 "Then he will stretch out his hand against other countries, and the land of Egypt will not escape. 43 "But he will gain control over the hidden treasures of gold and silver and over all the precious things of Egypt; and Libyans and Ethiopians [Cushites] will follow at his heels. Egypt, Libya and Sudan have large deposits of oil and natural gas; Egypt and Ethiopia control the Red Sea shipping lanes that pass through the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aden

Rev 6:5 When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, "Come." I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. 6 And I heard something like a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not damage the oil and the wine."

### 3. The Third Seal = the Black Horse, Famine

This rider has a pair of scales to measure out small quantities of food in exchange for a denarius, the wage for a day of work. He is not to "damage" (act unjustly with) the oil & the wine (perhaps, cheating customers by diluting these).

This is the next sign in the Olivet Prophecy

Matt 24:7b ...and in various places there will be famines....



Rev 6:7 When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come." 8 I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth.

#### 4. The Fourth Seal = the Pale Horse, Death

NIV, ESV translate the Greek term *hippos chlōros* as a pale horse, while the NET, NLT call this a pale green horse; this is the zombie horse of the apocalypse. The rider is Death personified; Hades is a Greek term for the grave. They kill a quarter of the earth at one time with war (red horse), famine (black horse), pestilence (pale green horse) and wild beasts.

God sends these 4 horsemen as judgments on a sinful world

Rev 6:9 When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; 10 and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" 11 And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.

#### 5. The Fifth Seal = Martyrdom

This seal is also the next event predicted in the Olivet Prophecy

Matt 24:9 Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. 10 At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another.

Clearly, Jesus will NOT remove these Christians from the earth in a secret Rapture prior to the Tribulation; they will suffer hatred, persecution and martyrdom

This is a vision; the images are symbolic, not literal. An altar is a symbol of sacrifice; the ashes and bones of animal sacrifices accumulated at the bottom, underneath the grating. The souls of those who died for the truth are under the altar to show that they are currently in the grave. Symbolically, they cry out for justice just as Abel's blood cried out for justice after Cain killed his brother (cf. Gen 4:10).

The Bible clearly says that the dead are unconscious in grave

Eccl 9:5a The living at least know they will die, but the dead know nothing. (NLT)

Eccl 9:10 Whatever you do, do well. For when you go to the grave, there will be no work or planning or knowledge or wisdom. (NLT)

Ps 115:17 The dead do not praise the LORD, Nor do any who go down into silence

## The Book of Revelation - Notes

The Bible compares death to sleep or rest (Dan 12:2, 1Thes 4:15)

The martyrs are told to rest a little while longer (6:11)

Dan 12:13 But as for you [Daniel], go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age.

Rev 14:13 And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."

Dan 7:23 Thus he said: 'The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it. 24 As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. 25 He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.

Rev 6:12 I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; 13 and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. 14 The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

Rev 6:15 Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; 16 and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; 17 for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

### 6. The Sixth Seal = Supernatural Signs

Jesus also predicted these events in the Olivet Prophecy

Matt 24:7b ...and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.

Luke 21:10 Then He continued by saying to them, "Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, 11 and there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.

The world will know that Jesus is coming but refuse to repent

## Chapter 7

Key End Time events listed in Daniel and Revelation:

- 10 kings arise in Europe, then a counterfeit messiah
- He makes a 7 year treaty, Jewish sacrifices resume
- The king of the South attacks him; he counter-attacks
- He occupies Israel, conquers 3 kings - Egypt, Libya, Sudan
- War, famine & plague kill 25% of humanity
- He ends Jewish sacrifices after three and a half years
- He persecutes God's people for three and a half years
- God sends supernatural signs that the end is near

Revelation 6 describes the first six seals in rapid succession

Revelation 7 slows down the action to provide some details

Revelation 6 ends with the people of the earth, the mighty and the weak alike, hiding in caves because of the supernatural signs, crying out to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" (6:12-16)

Revelation 7 answers the question: "Who is able to stand?"

Rev 7:1 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree. 2 And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, 3 saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads."

1. John sees four powerful angels

They are standing at the four main compass points

They have power to harm the earth, the sea & trees

They are restraining the forces of powerful storms

They are waiting for the sealing of God's servants

2. Another angel comes with a seal

He marks the foreheads of God's servants with the name of the Lamb and name of His Father (cf. 14:1). This denotes God's ownership and protection just as He saved the firstborn in Egypt by the blood of the Passover lamb or Rahab and her family by the scarlet cord in the window when the walls of Jericho collapsed.

This is similar to the mark given to God's people in Ezekiel 9

## The Book of Revelation - Notes

Ezek 9:1 Then He cried out in my hearing with a loud voice saying, "Draw near, O executioners of the city, each with his destroying weapon in his hand." 2 Behold, six men came from the direction of the upper gate which faces north, each with his shattering weapon in his hand; and among them was a certain man clothed in linen with a writing case at his loins. And they went in and stood beside the bronze altar. 3 Then the glory of the God of Israel went up from the cherub on which it had been, to the threshold of the temple. And He called to the man clothed in linen at whose loins was the writing case.

Ezek 9:4 The LORD said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, even through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed in its midst." 5 But to the others He said in my hearing, "Go through the city after him and strike; do not let your eye have pity and do not spare."

God spared His servants from His punishment of Jerusalem  
Do we mourn over sin, cry out for God's kingdom to come?

Rev 7:4 And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel: 5 from the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand, from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand, 6 from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand, 7 from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand, from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand, 8 from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand, from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, from the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand were sealed.

1. The angel seals 144,000 Israelites

The angel seals 12,000 from 12 tribes of Israel. In verse 8, the tribe of Joseph refers to Joseph's chief son Ephraim in addition to the tribe of Manasseh in verse 6 (cf. Num 1:10)

They are sealed to protect them from God's wrath; they are on the earth where the four angels are destroying

This passage is speaking of literal Israelites; there is no basis to claim that this is a symbolic reference to the Church

2. The tribe of Dan is missing

For some reason, God decided not to include Dan  
God fore-ordained this outcome by His sovereignty

The Patriarch Jacob gave this prophecy about Dan:

Gen 49:17 Dan shall be a serpent in the way, A horned snake in the path, That bites the horse's heels, So that his rider falls backward. 18 For Your salvation I wait, O LORD.

Dan is listed among the tribes during the Millennium in Ezek 48:6

## The Book of Revelation - Notes

### 3. This represents a major turning point

Rom 11:25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; 26 and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, “THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.”

At this point, the fullness of the Gentiles is complete, and the salvation of all Israel during the Millennium is at hand. The 144,000 are the first fruits of this End Time harvest.

Rev 7:9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; 10 and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” 11 And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying, “Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.”

1. John sees a great multitude of Gentile Christians  
They represent every nation, tribe and language group  
They are clothed in white symbolizing righteousness  
They worship God and the Lamb; they are believers

They appear to represent the fullness of the Gentiles that Paul predicted in Rom 11:25

They illustrate how many people will be saved during the Great Tribulation: 144,000 Israelites and a great multitude of Gentiles

2. They are holding palm branches in their hands  
God commanded the Israelites to use palm branches during the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles

Lev 23:40 Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the foliage of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days.

Israelites wave palm branches during the festival as a symbol of rejoicing just as Americans wave flags on July 4th

That is why people waved palm branches when Jesus rode into Jerusalem before His crucifixion; they expected a messianic king

John 12:13 So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!” (ESV)

## The Book of Revelation - Notes

Rev 7:13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?" 14 I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 "For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them. 16 "They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; 17 for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes."

1. This vision is associated with the Feast of Tabernacles

God told Israel to gather palm branches and live in tabernacles for 7 days during the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev 23:39-44)

God will require Gentile nations to keep the Feast of Tabernacles after the Great Tribulation (Zech 14:16-17)

The great multitude are Gentile Christians standing before God's throne with palm branches in their hands (7:9)

God will spread His tabernacle (Gk skene) over them (7:15)

2. The great multitude are probably sealed

John doesn't explicitly say that the angel also seals the great multitude, but the context seems to imply it (7:3)

They are clearly Christians because they have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb (a metaphor of redemption)

If there are Israelite Christians on the earth at the end of the Great Tribulation, there should also be some Gentile Christians, and if the angel sealed the former, he should seal the latter

They would both need protection from the coming wrath of God

3. The great multitude are not martyrs

Some scholars suggest that the great multitude are martyrs who died during the great tribulation, but John saw the martyrs under the altar, not standing before the throne (6:9-11)

The elder also told John that "these are the ones who come out of the great tribulation" (7:14) using a Greek present middle participle, which implies that they survived the great tribulation and are coming out of it; the text doesn't say that they have died (past perfect) or that they were killed (past passive).

4. The great multitude are not dead saints in heaven

Some claim that the great multitude must have died earlier and gone to heaven because they are standing before God's throne, but this is based on the unbiblical Immortal Soul doctrine. Jesus clearly said, "No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man" (John 3:13)

Acts 2:34 "For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, 35 UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET.'"

5. The great multitude are not post-Rapture saints

Others claim that the great multitude are Christians who go to heaven in a Pre-Tribulation or Mid-Tribulation Rapture

But, this can't be a Pre-Tribulation Rapture because the great multitude are coming out of the great tribulation

They haven't avoided it; they have gone through it

This can't be a Mid-Tribulation Rapture because the fifth and sixth seals are already past; the seventh seal deals with the end of the Great Tribulation when Jesus destroys the Anti-Christ

The Book of Revelation does favor a Post-Tribulation Rapture

But, there is no evidence so far in Revelation 1-7 that the last trumpet has blown and first resurrection has occurred; there is no mention of graves being opened or the dead rising to meet the Lord in the air (cf. 1Th 4:16-17, 1Cor 15:50-53)

Those events come later in the Book of Revelation after the opening of the seventh seal

6. The vision may be metaphoric or proleptic

It is possible that the great multitude are standing before the throne of God in a metaphoric or proleptic sense

Heb 4:16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Eph 2:6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus (NIV)

Washing their robes in the blood of the Lamb is metaphoric (7:14)

The vision of the great multitude is very similar to the description of the new heaven and the new earth at the end of Revelation

## The Book of Revelation - Notes

They are before God's throne and serve Him in His temple (7:15)

Rev 22:3b The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city (New Jerusalem), and his servants will serve him (NIV)

God will spread His tabernacle (Gk skene) over them (7:15b)

Rev 21:3a A great voice says: "Behold, the tabernacle (skene) of God is with men, and He will tabernacle with them" (BLB)

They will no longer suffer from hunger, thirst or heat (7:16)

Rev 21:4b there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.

The Lamb will guide them to springs of the water of life (7:17)

Rev 21:6b I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost

God will wipe every tear from their eyes (7:17)

Rev 21:4a and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes

The vision of the great multitude may be a preview of the new heaven and the new earth that isn't in chronological order

The Book of Revelation is arranged in a very sequential order: seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven bowls

But, there are very few references to time; some scholars believe that many of these events overlap in time

Many biblical prophecies appeared to be chronological but were fulfilled in a very different order (e.g., Daniel's 70 Weeks)

### Conclusion

The great multitude are probably Gentile Christians who survive the Great Tribulation and are sealed to protect them from the wrath of God and the Lamb

Revelation 6 ends with people crying out to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" (6:12-16)

Rev 7 gives the answer: the 144,000 and the great multitude



## Chapter 8

Rev 8:1 When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. 3 Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. 5 Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

### 1. The Lamb opens the seventh and last seal

Although the number seven usually symbolizes completion, the story doesn't end; instead, this seal leads to a new phase. The half hour of silence adds tension and drama to the narrative as the reader senses the calm before the coming storm. This pause might indicate that God is giving people a chance to avoid further punishment by repenting of their sins.

Seven angels receive seven trumpets, which are the next phase of judgment and punishment.

### 2. Another angel offers incense

In Rev 5:8, the incense in the golden bowls of the 24 elders symbolized the prayers of the saints. Here, incense is mixed with prayers of the saints like a blend of fragrant spices and frankincense (cf. Ex 34:34-36). The smoke of this incense goes up before God, symbolizing that the prayers of godly people reach God like a pleasant smell. This scene reminds us that evil has not prevailed; although some may not repent, there are others who fear and worship God.

### 3. This vision is connected with the Day of Atonement

One day each year, on Yom Kippur, the High Priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies under a cloud of incense

Lev 16:12 He [Aaron] shall take a firepan full of coals of fire from upon the altar before the LORD and two handfuls of finely ground sweet incense, and bring it inside the veil. 13 He shall put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the ark of the testimony, otherwise he will die.

### 4. The angel casts fire to the earth

The angel filled his censer with hot coals from the altar and threw them to the "earth" (Gk, *gein*). The Greek term could refer to the floor under the altar or (more likely) to this planet and the sinners on it. In literature, this is called foreshadowing; it is an omen of things to come when the first trumpet blows.

Rev 8:6 And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them. 7 The first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

## The Book of Revelation - Notes

### 1. Trumpets are an important biblical symbol

In ancient times, Israelites used trumpets made of metal or animal horns for different events (Num 10:1-10, 2Kgs 9:13)

- To call the people to an assembly (The Rapture)
- To announce the start of a battle (Armageddon)
- To announce the start of holy days (Rosh Hashanah)
- To announce the coming of the king (Jesus Christ)

In Revelation, each of these has an End Time connotation

Israel marched around Jericho once a day for six days

Jesus broke six seals as He unrolled the scroll

Israel marched around Jericho 7 times on the last day

Jesus broke the 7th seal to reveal 7 trumpet plagues

The 7 priests blew their 7 trumpets to destroy Jericho

Seven angels blow 7 trumpets to destroy Satan's kingdom

Joshua established God's kingdom over Canaan

Yeshua (Jesus) will establish God's kingdom over the earth

### 2. The first trumpet burns up a third of the earth

This is similar to the plague of hail on Egypt

Ex 9:23 Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire [lightening] ran down to the earth. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt.

Instead of bringing rain, this trumpet plague burns up a third of the earth, which sounds more like a massive meteor shower. This would be consistent with image of the angel casting hot coals from the altar to the earth (8:5)

Rev 8:8 The second angel sounded, and something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood, 9 and a third of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed.

#### 1. The second trumpet destroys a third of the sea

John sees something like a great mountain burning with fire being thrown into the sea. The passive verb indicates God's hand in this event.

This could be a large meteor entering the atmosphere; a meteor one kilometer wide would hit the earth with the force of 60,000 megatons of TNT (equal to a 9.4 magnitude earthquake) and produce an impact crater 20 kilometers wide (12 miles)

Three quarters of the earth's surface is covered with water. A large meteor impact would likely hit an ocean. This would destroy marine life on massive scale and produce tidal waves that would sink many ships. The atmosphere would be filled with smoke and falling debris as the sea boiled and churned.

2. This is similar to the plague of blood on Egypt

The Egyptians murdered the infant sons of the Israelites by casting them into the Nile. God punished the Egyptians for their sin by turning the Nile into blood so there was no water to drink. The Egyptians worshipped the Nile as a god, but the God of Israel proved His power over nature by cursing the Nile. The second trumpet plague also displays the power of the God of Israel over nature and the false gods of this world.

Rev 8:10 The third angel sounded, and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of waters. 11 The name of the star is called Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter.

1. The third trumpet poisons a third of the fresh water

John sees a star fall from heaven like a burning torch. The text isn't clear if this "star" is a natural or supernatural object (i.e., an angel). This sounds like a comet, meteor or man-made object entering the atmosphere. Many people die from the contaminated water

2. The star is called Wormwood

"Wormwood is a bitter desert plant mentioned only here in the New Testament. It is mentioned seven times in the Old Testament where it represents sorrow and bitter judgment (Deut. 29:18; Prov. 5:4; Jer. 9:15; 23:15; Lam. 3:15, 19; Amos 5:7)"

Bible Knowledge Commentary, s.v. Rev 8:10-11

Wormwood is potentially poisonous (thujone). Missiles and satellites contain toxic compounds

Rev 8:12 The fourth angel sounded, and a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were struck, so that a third of them would be darkened and the day would not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way. 13 Then I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in mid-heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

1. The fourth trumpet darkens a third of the heavens

God is systematically eliminating one third of the environment. This darkness may be caused by a massive amount of dust, soot and gas ejected into the lower atmosphere. A thick haze would obscure the horizon. This will have a devastating impact on plants and plankton at the bottom of the food chain. Temperatures would drop until CO2 levels rise. This plague is similar to the Exodus plague.

2. The last three trumpet plagues will be worse

Eagles don't speak, so this is either supernatural or symbolic. The next three plagues are so bad, they are called woes. The threefold repetition is a literary technique for emphasis. God is pleading with the world, trying to get people to listen. What would God need to do to get our attention?

## Chapter 9

Rev 9:1 Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him. 2 He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit. 3 Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

Rev 9:4 They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man. 6 And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them.

### 1. John sees a mysterious star with a key

This “star” had fallen (Greek perfect active participle) from heaven to the earth and he was given (past passive) the key of the pit of the Abyss. The term “star” is clearly symbolic for a supernatural being; the text implies that this is a demon or Satan (he had fallen). The passive voice of “was given” shows that he isn’t in control; someone is giving him the ability to open the pit (i.e., God). The key (definite) implies there is only one key to open the pit.

The “Abyss” (abussos) is the home of demons (cf. Luke 8:31; Rev. 9:11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3; in Rom. 10:7 it is translated “deep”), Bible Knowledge Commentary, s.v. Rev 9:1-6.

2Pet 2:4 For if God didn't spare angels when they sinned, but cast them down to Tartarus, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved for judgment (WEB)

In Greek mythology, Tartarus was a place of punishment under the earth to which the Titans were sent (HELPS Word-studies)

### 2. The fifth trumpet brings demonic torment

The language appears to be highly symbolic, supernatural. The star opens the Abyss releasing smoke and “locusts.” Locusts usually devour plants; these sting like scorpions. Power “was given” to sting; they don’t control the action. They aren’t allowed to harm any plants or trees, which by now are recovering from the earlier fires of Revelation 8.

They are only allowed to sting those who aren’t sealed, which means God’s servants are protected (7:3). The “locusts” aren’t allowed to kill anyone; God is giving people a chance to avoid eternal damnation. They have power to torment people for five months; this implies that the 1260 days of the Great Tribulation are nearly over. Five months is the lifespan of a locust and the duration of the harvest from April – August (Osborne, Revelation, pg. 161-2).

The sting is like that of a scorpion, very painful but not lethal. A scorpion sting is several times as powerful as a wasp (Ibid).

The victims will long to die, but death will elude them (9:6). They may be temporarily paralyzed, unable to use their arms or legs to commit suicide while they suffer. Evidently, they recover before they starve to death only to be stung again and again during the 5 months.

Rev 9:7 The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads appeared to be crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. 8 They had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like the teeth of lions. 9 They had breastplates like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle. 10 They have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months. 11 They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon. 12 The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things.

### 1. Locusts have a strong connection with the Old Testament

Ex 10:12 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up on the land of Egypt and eat every plant of the land, even all that the hail has left."

In Joel 1-2, a horde of locusts with teeth like lions strip the land; they look like war horses and sound like many chariots

Amos 4:9 "I struck your farms and vineyards with blight and mildew. Locusts devoured all your fig and olive trees. But still you would not return to me," says the LORD. (NLT)

### 2. The locusts from the Abyss have a hideous appearance

The 4 living creatures around the throne of God all possess a powerful yet majestic appearance (man, eagle, ox and lion). The locusts from the Abyss serve the powers of darkness and have a corresponding hideous, demonic appearance. They have the golden *stephanos* crown of victory, human faces, long hair (1Cor 11:14), lion teeth, iron breastplates and tails like scorpions. They are supernatural creatures, not modern weaponry.

### 3. The locusts from the Abyss have a king

John says that his Hebrew name is Abaddon and his Greek name is Apollyon; both mean the Destroyer. This may be a synonym for Satan or it may refer to a subordinate. John's use of Hebrew and Greek show that Jewish Christians still make up a large portion of the early church. It is also internal literary evidence that the Apostle John wrote the Book of Revelation.

Rev 9:13 Then the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14 one saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." 15 And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released, so that they would kill a third of mankind. 16 The number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.

## The Book of Revelation - Notes

### 1. The sixth trumpet plague releases four angels

John hears a voice from the four horns of the golden altar; this is a literary clue that the vision is symbolic, NOT literal.

The voice tells the sixth angel to “release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates” (9:14). Based on what happens next, the four angels (messengers) are probably supernatural beings; the fact that they are bound implies that they are demonic spirits located in the area of the ancient kingdom of Babylon.

### 2. The sixth trumpet plague also unleashes a huge army

The four angels were released (passive); God is in control. They had been prepared (passive) for this specific hour, day, month and year; God planned this thousands of years ago. They use armies (plural) numbering 200 million “horsemen.”

The four horsemen killed a quarter of humanity (6:8); the four angels will kill a third of those who remain. At least 50% of humanity will die within seven years.

Rev 9:17 And this is how I saw in the vision the horses and those who sat on them: the riders had breastplates the color of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses are like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone. 18 A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which proceeded out of their mouths. 19 For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents and have heads, and with them they do harm.

### 1. John attempted to describe the horsemen

The riders have red, blue and yellow breastplates. The horses have heads like lions and tails like snakes; they have power in their mouths and tails to harm people, and they spew fire, smoke and brimstone from their mouths.

The text isn't clear if John was accurately describing a symbolic vision or if he was using figurative language to describe a literal army, so it would be foolish to waste time speculating about it. The main point of the vision is the impact it has on humanity.

### 2. The sixth trumpet plague kills many people

The sixth trumpet plague doesn't just torment people with pain; the fire, smoke and brimstone coming from the mouths of the “horses” kills a third of mankind (9:18).

God uses this plague to kill those who refuse to submit to His authority; He will not allow rebels to exist in His kingdom. Time is running out for people to repent.

Heb 3:15 As it is said, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion” (ESV).

## The Book of Revelation - Notes

Rev 9:20 The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; 21 and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.

### 1. People still refuse to repent

Even though God sends overwhelming proof of His existence and the truth of His message, most people don't want salvation. This excludes the 144,000 and the innumerable multitude, who have already been sealed to protect them.

Matt 7:13 Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. 14 For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

### 2. God lists their sins

Idolatry and false religion, which is demon worship

1Cor 10:19 What do I mean then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons.

2Cor 11:13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

Most of Christianity today is recycled paganism, Satan worship

#### Murder

Over the past 100 years, the death rate from war and murder have been declining with one notable exception - abortion

#### Sorceries

This includes Satanism, witchcraft, astrology, good luck charms, amulets, séances, Ouija boards, channeling, New Age crystals, Feng shui, transcendental meditation, Kabbalah, etc.

#### Sexual Immorality

This includes adultery, fornication, prostitution, pornography, voyeurism, incest and perversion (cf. Lev 18, Gal 5:19-21)

#### Theft

This would include outright stealing, but also, embezzlement, swindling, fraud, bribery, kickbacks, kidnapping, human trafficking, extortion, blackmail, computer hacking, economic espionage, military invasion and international exploitation

## The Book of Revelation - Notes

### Chapter 10

#### Outline of Revelation

- Message to the Seven Churches (Rev 1-3)
  - > Bridge: God's Throne, Sealed Scroll (Rev 4-5)
- The Lamb Opens Six Seals (Rev 6) – Tension Peaks
  - > Bridge: 144,000 & Innumerable Multitude (Rev 7)
- Seventh Seal, Six Trumpets (Rev 8-9) – Tension Peaks
  - > Bridge: Little Scroll,... (Rev 10)

Rev 10:1 I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire; 2 and he had in his hand a little book which was open. He placed his right foot on the sea and his left on the land; 3 and he cried out with a loud voice, as when a lion roars; and when he had cried out, the seven peals of thunder uttered their voices. 4 When the seven peals of thunder had spoken, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken and do not write them."

#### 1. John sees a another powerful angel

This supernatural being has divine qualities

- Covered by a cloud (Ezek 1:4)
- Rainbow overhead (Ezek 1:28, Rev 4:3)
- Face like the sun (Rev 1:16)
- Feet like pillars of fire (Ezek 1:27, Rev 1:15)

John saw Jesus depicted this way in Rev 1, but he didn't identify this angel as Jesus

John also saw a small scroll open in his hand. Some think this is the sealed scroll, now open, but John says it is a small scroll (*biblaridion*) and he doesn't mention any broken seals.

The angel had his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land; the symbolism of this action becomes clear in verse 6

#### 2. John also heard seven thunders speaking

The number seven again suggests completion, finality; but, John wasn't allowed to write down what he heard

Years earlier, Paul had also seen a heavenly vision and heard words that he wasn't allowed to disclose (2Cor 12:1-4); Jesus also refused to discuss the End Times (Acts 1:7).

And, Daniel had to seal his vision until the End Time (Dan 12:9)

This would have revealed too much information too early



## The Book of Revelation - Notes

Rev 10:5 Then the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to heaven, 6 and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, WHO CREATED HEAVEN AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE EARTH AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE SEA AND THE THINGS IN IT, that there will be delay no longer, 7 but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as He preached to His servants the prophets.

### 1. The angel swears a solemn oath

He “swore by Him who lives forever and ever, ‘WHO CREATED HEAVEN AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE EARTH AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE SEA AND THE THINGS IN IT’” (10:6)

This is an Old Testament allusion

Neh 9:6 "You alone are the LORD. You have made the heavens, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to all of them and the heavenly host bows down before You.

The act of placing one foot on the earth, the other on the sea, and his right hand in the air toward heaven matches the three realms that God created: heaven, earth & sea

In a court trial, witnesses place their left hand on the Bible and raise their right hand to heaven to swear by the Maker of both that they will tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth

Jesus also commented on this custom

Matt 5:33 “Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, ‘YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FALSE VOWS, BUT SHALL FULFILL YOUR VOWS TO THE LORD.’ 34 “But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING.

### 2. The seventh trumpet will finish the mystery of God

The angel promised John that (1) there will no more delay

The angel also promised that (2) when the seventh angel blows his trumpet, “the mystery of God is finished, as He preached to His servants the prophets” (10:7)

Everything that God has predicted through His prophets about the end of this age and the coming of the kingdom of God will come to pass when the seventh trumpet sounds

This is an important clue about the time of the Rapture

## The Book of Revelation - Notes

Rev 10:8 Then the voice which I heard from heaven, I heard again speaking with me, and saying, "Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the land." 9 So I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book. And he said to me, "Take it and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey."

10 I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and in my mouth it was sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter. 11 And they said to me, "You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings."

### 1. A voice tells John to take the little scroll

"The scroll seems to symbolize the Word of God and divine revelation in general, for John was told to deliver the Word faithfully" Bible Knowledge Commentary, s.v. Rev 10:8-11.

The act of taking the scroll from the angel means that God is commissioning John with a prophetic message to deliver to "many peoples and nations and tongues and kings"

### 2. The angel tells John to eat the little scroll

This is another Old Testament allusion

Ezek 3:1 Then He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel." 2 So I opened my mouth, and He fed me this scroll. 3 He said to me, "Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your body with this scroll which I am giving you." Then I ate it, and it was sweet as honey in my mouth.

By eating the scroll, John is to internalize God's message

Jer 15:16 Your words were found and I ate them, And Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; For I have been called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.

Ps 119:103 How sweet are Your words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

The Word of God is sweet to His people, but delivering His message to the world brings persecution and loss

### Outline of Revelation

- Message to the Seven Churches (Rev 1-3)
  - > Bridge: God's Throne, Sealed Scroll (Rev 4-5)
- The Lamb Opens Six Seals (Rev 6) – Tension Peaks
  - > Bridge: 144,000 & Innumerable Multitude (Rev 7)
- Seventh Seal, Six Trumpets (Rev 8-9) – Tension Peaks
  - > Bridge: Little Scroll,... (Rev 10)

Revelation 11 will complete the bridge to the seventh trumpet

## Chapter 11

### Outline of Revelation

- Message to the Seven Churches (Rev 1-3)
- > Bridge: God's Throne, Sealed Scroll (Rev 4-5)
- The Lamb Opens Six Seals (Rev 6) – Tension Peaks
- > Bridge: 144,000 & Innumerable Multitude (Rev 7)
- Seventh Seal, Six Trumpets (Rev 8-9) – Tension Peaks
- > Bridge: Little Scroll, Two Witnesses (Rev 10, 11:1-14)
- Seventh Trumpet (Rev 11:15-19)

Rev 11:1 Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it. 2 "Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months. 3 "And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

#### 1. John must measure the temple and the worshippers

Rome destroyed Herod's Temple in 70 AD; but another will exist during the Great Tribulation, which the Antichrist will defile with the abomination of desolation (cf. Dan 9:27; 12:11)

1Th 2:3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it [the coming of our Lord] will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

#### 2. The nations will control Jerusalem for 42 months

Jesus called this period "the times of the Gentiles" (Lk 21:24)

- Dan 9:27 The Antichrist will make a 7 year treaty with many, break it after 3.5 years, stop the sacrifices and establish the abomination of desolation
- Dan 11:40-41 At the end time, the armies of the king of the North will occupy Israel (the beautiful land)
- Dan 7:25 The 4th beast (Rome) will persecute God's people for 3.5 years, then the saints will receive an eternal kingdom

#### 3. God will send two witnesses

Deut 19:15 You must not convict anyone of a crime on the testimony of only one witness. The facts of the case must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses (NLT)

They are clothed in sackcloth, which is a symbol of repentance; they will prophesy for 1260 days, which overlaps the 42 months that Jerusalem is oppressed by the Gentiles (cf. Dan 12:11-12)

## The Book of Revelation - Notes

Rev 11:4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. 5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way. 6 These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.

### 1. The two witnesses enlighten the world

John calls them “the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth” (11:4); this is another Old Testament allusion to Zech 4.

Zech 4:14 Then he said, “These are the two anointed ones who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth.”

In these 2 visions, the olive trees provide the oil that fuels the lamps; the lamps provide light to a dark world (Matt 5:16)

### 2. The two witnesses have great power

They can kill people with fire like Elijah (2Kgs 1:9)

They can cause severe drought like Elijah (1 Kgs 17:1)

They can turn water into blood like Moses (Ex 7:20)

They can send any plague as often they desire

They could also use this power to protect any nation or group of people on earth from any military attack

Rev 11:7 When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. 9 Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. 10 And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

### 1. The beast makes his debut

This is the first mention of “the beast,” who quickly becomes the main antagonist in the rest of the book (cf. 13:1; 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2; 17:3, 13; 19:20; 20:10);

Most importantly, John identifies his point of origin; the beast “comes up out of the abyss” (i.e., he is a demon).

The text doesn’t say when he emerges from the abyss; clearly, not all demons are in the abyss (Luke 8:30-31); it will soon become clear that the beast is an ancient foe

## 2. The beast will kill the two witnesses

This will occur at the end of their ministry, after the 1260 days. This will occur in the city where “their Lord was crucified,” which implies that they are Christians in Jerusalem. John compares Jerusalem to Sodom and Egypt, which is another Old Testament allusion (cf. Jer 23:14, Ezek 20:6-8). The text doesn’t say where the two witnesses start their ministry or where they go during the 1260 days; they have the power to go anywhere and speak to anyone they want

## 3. The world celebrates the death of the two witnesses

The world refuses to repent and surrender to God (9:20-21). This also proves that the two witnesses are very active in using their power on those who refused to repent. Throughout the Great Tribulation, the forces of Good and Evil proclaim two different messages to the world. Like the death of Jesus, the death of the two witnesses isn’t a defeat; God uses this event to demonstrate His superiority

Rev 11:11 But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them. 12 And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them. 13 And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. 14 The second woe is past; behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

## 1. God resurrects the two witnesses

They minister for 3.5 years, then they lay dead in the street for 3.5 days (a day for a year, as a witness). Next, God displays His power over death by resurrecting them. The text isn’t clear if this is the Rapture or if God merely restores their physical bodies like Lazarus and Dorcas (John 11, Act 9). The text says that they ascend into a cloud, nothing more. Given the proximity of this event with the seventh trumpet, it is highly likely that this is the first general resurrection.

## 2. There is a great earthquake

It will destroy a tenth of Jerusalem and kill 7,000 people  
This is consistent with the timeline of Second Coming

Zech 14:3 Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. 4 In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.

Rev 11:15 Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.” 16 And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 saying, “We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign.

## The Book of Revelation - Notes

### 1. The seventh angel sounds his trumpet

This is the last trumpet listed in Revelation, which announces first general resurrection and the Second Coming

1Cor 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming

1Cor 15:51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

This is the last trumpet listed in Revelation, which announces first general resurrection and the Second Coming

1Th 4:16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will be the first to rise. 17 After that, we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord.

Remember that the two witnesses ascended into a cloud

Some wrongly claim that the seventh trumpet in Rev 11:15 can't be the first resurrection because an angel blows it, and 1Th 4:16 says that the resurrection occurs "with the trumpet of God." But, the Greek phrase "*en salpingi Theou*" is a Possessive Genitive, not an Agency Genitive; it denotes the owner or origin of the trumpet, not the musician blowing it. Also, God doesn't blow a trumpet anywhere in Revelation, so there is no support for this interpretation of 1Th 4:16

### 2. The seventh trumpet announces the kingdom of God

Loud voices declare, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ" (11:15). "The kingdom" is singular; there is one ruler over the world. The seventh trumpet marks the end of Satan's reign over the earth and the arrival of Jesus Christ to rule forever. This is further proof that the seventh trumpet signals the first general resurrection because the kingdom of God has begun, and these two events are linked together (1Cor 15:22-23).

Rev 11:18 "And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth." 19 And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

## The Book of Revelation - Notes

### 1. The nations were enraged

Most people will reject Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior; God response is clear: “and Your wrath came” (11:18). In the parable of the minas, Jesus predicted that some people would reject Him as their king (Luke 19:11-27). Jesus finished the parable saying, “But these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence.”

### 2. The time of judgment and reward has arrived

The time came for the dead to be judged, which requires two resurrections (at the start and the end of the Millennium). It is also “the time to reward Your bond-servants” by inheriting the kingdom of God in resurrection bodies (1Cor15:50-53). The seventh trumpet announces the Second Coming and the first general resurrection. God will also “destroy those who destroy the earth” because humanity was supposed to cultivate and maintain this planet.

### 3. The temple of God in heaven was opened

John sees the temple of God in heaven open up to reveal the ark of covenant within the Holy of Holies

Heb 8:1 Here is the main point: We have a High Priest who sat down in the place of honor beside the throne of the majestic God in heaven. 2 There he ministers in the heavenly Tabernacle, the true place of worship that was built by the Lord and not by human hands. 3 And since every high priest is required to offer gifts and sacrifices, our High Priest must make an offering, too.

Heb 8:4 If he were here on earth, he would not even be a priest, since there already are priests who offer the gifts required by the law. 5 They serve in a system of worship that is only a copy, a shadow of the real one in heaven. For when Moses was getting ready to build the Tabernacle, God gave him this warning: “Be sure that you make everything according to the pattern I have shown you here on the mountain.” (NLT)

### 4. The key End Time events are now clear

The final heptad of Daniel’s 70 Weeks prophecy lasts 7 years. It starts when the Antichrist makes a 7 year treaty; 10 kings rule over Roman Europe and Temple sacrifices occur in Jerusalem; this pre-Tribulation period lasts for about 3.5 years.

The 1260, 1290 & 1335 days start when the Antichrist defiles the Temple (1260+30 days & 1290+45 days)

During the 1260 days, the Antichrist becomes the sole ruler of Europe, takes control of Israel and Egypt, and persecutes God’s people; the two witnesses oppose him

After the 1260 days, the two witnesses die, the seventh trumpet sounds, the first resurrection occurs, Jesus Christ returns and stands on the Mount of Olives

## Chapter 12

### Transition: The Woman and the Dragon (Rev 12)

Rev 12:1 A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; 2 and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth. 3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems. 4 And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.

Rev 12:5 And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne. 6 Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

#### 1. This vision is figurative, not literal

It contains many biblical symbols and must be interpreted accordingly; context is key

Basic Principle: Let the Bible interpret the Bible

- The greatest weight goes to clues within the vision of Rev 12
- Next in priority are clues given within the Book of Revelation
- Then, clues or similarities found in other biblical passages
- Personal opinions have no value (2Pet 1:20-21)

#### 2. This vision contains two main characters

In this narrative, the celestial woman is the protagonist, and the red dragon is the antagonist; both are archetypes. The celestial woman is clothed with the sun, standing on the moon, and wearing a crown of 12 stars (i.e., heavenly). The 12 stars likely represent the 12 tribes of Israel (cf. 21:12). But, this vision is very different than Joseph's dream about the sun, moon and 11 stars, so Joseph's interpretation can't be used to identify the celestial woman (cf. Gen 37:9-11).

#### 3. The male child is Jesus Christ

The celestial woman gives birth to a male child destined to rule all nations with a rod of iron (Isa 9:6-7, Ps 2:9, Rev 19:15). The dragon tries to destroy the male child at His birth; Herod tried to kill Jesus by murdering the babies in Bethlehem. The male child is caught up to God's throne; Jesus ascended to heaven 40 days after His resurrection.

#### 4. Time is compressed in this vision

The birth and ascension of Jesus took place in the first century. The celestial woman flees to a wilderness and is nourished for 1260 days, which is during the Great Tribulation. This vision is a flashback leading up to the Great Tribulation.



Rev 12:7 And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, 8 and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Rev 12:10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. 11 "And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. 12 "For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time."

### 1. The red dragon is Satan, the Devil

Satan was "the serpent of old" in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3). It was Satan who tried to destroy Jesus when He was born. The red dragon is the same color as the blood red horse of the second seal, which symbolizes war and killing (6:1-8). The 7 heads and 10 horns mimic the symbolic pattern of Gentile empires (cf. Dan 7, Rev 13:1-8); Satan is the real power behind the rulers of this world (cf. Eph 2:1-2). Satan deceives the entire world (cf. 2Cor 4:4, 11:13-15).

### 2. Satan gets kicked out of heaven

Satan has angelic followers who are now called demons. Since the dragon swept up a third of the stars of heaven with his tail, perhaps a third of the angels rebelled with him (12:4). Michel is an archangel who watches over Israel and leads an army of God's loyal angels (Dan 12:1, Jude 9). Michael and his angels wage war with Satan and his army and kick them out of heaven forever; God isn't a pacifist. Revelation is all about segregating good and evil forever.

Rev 12:13 And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. 14 But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. 15 And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood.

Rev 12:16 But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth. 17 So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

### 1. The war in heaven occurs at the End Time

The war in heaven probably occurs shortly before the start of the Great Tribulation. After Satan is cast out of heaven, he is filled with wrath because he knows that his time is short (12:12).

He persecutes the celestial woman, who flees to the wilderness during the 3.5 years of the Great Tribulation.

## 2. The woman flees to an earthly refuge

She receives “the two wings of a great eagle,” which is a symbol of rapid travel (cf. Ex 19:4, Dan 7:4, 6). This isn’t the Rapture; she is nourished and protected on the earth during the 3.5 years of the Great Tribulation. This is very similar to Elijah, who inflicted a drought on Israel for 3.5 years, but God protected and nourished him with food and water during the famine (Jms 5:17, 1Kgs 17:1-16). It is also like God giving manna to Israel in the wilderness.

## 3. Satan tries to stop her

The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth in order to stop the woman from reaching safety. Revelation uses water as a symbol for many people (17:15). The dragon pouring water from his mouth may be a figurative way of saying that he commands an army to stop the woman. The earth helps the woman by swallowing the flood, which is similar to the Red Sea swallowing Pharaoh’s army or the earth swallowing Korah, Dathan and Abiram (Ex 14, Num 16:23-33).

## 4. The celestial woman has other children

When Satan sees that he can’t harm the woman, he goes after “the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.” Her children are Christians, which reveals her identity; the devil also has children who take after their father (cf. John 8:44). Clearly, God is going to protect some of His people on the earth during the Great Tribulation but not others.

## 5. The celestial woman is spiritual Israel, the Church

The woman isn’t Mary, the mother of Jesus, because

- The vision is symbolic, not literal – spanning many centuries
- Mary isn’t protected from a future, earthly Tribulation

The woman isn’t Israel because

- Israel doesn’t hold to the testimony of Jesus
- Israel won’t be protected from the Tribulation (Dan 11:41)

The text gives several clues that identify the woman

- She gives birth to a male child who will rule the world (Jesus)
- She escapes to the wilderness, protected for 1260 days
- She has other children who are faithful Christians
- The dragon will martyr these Christians (cf. Dan 7, Rev 6)

Two other symbolic women appear in Revelation: Babylon the Great and the Bride of the Lamb; both represent a group of people associated with a capital city

## The Book of Revelation - Notes

The Bible often uses a woman as a symbol to represent a group of people associated with a capital city

- Paul's analogy of Hagar, Sarah with Jerusalem (Gal 4:25-26)
- Paul betrothed Christians to Jesus, the Bridegroom (2Cor 11:2)
- Isaiah 47 describes Babylon as the daughter of Chaldea
- Ezekiel 16, 23 picture Jerusalem & Samaria as adulteresses
- Many passages refer to Jerusalem as the daughter of Zion

Paul said that Christians are children of Jerusalem above, an allegorical reference to the new covenant (Gal 4:21-26)

Rom 2:28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. 29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

Jesus warned His followers to flee to the mountains when they see the abomination of desolation (Matt 24:15-16).

Jesus promised Philadelphia that He would deliver them from the trial coming on the whole world (3:10). But, He will discipline Laodicea and advised them to buy gold refined by fire (i.e., character refined by trials). The 144,000 and the great multitude are sealed to protect them only from God's wrath, not the Great Tribulation (7:3, 14).

Based on the evidence, the best explanation is that the celestial woman is spiritual Israel, the Church