



Investigating Revelation

**A Young Christian's Guide to the
Different Views of the Apocalypse**

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Thanks for downloading *Investigating Revelation: A Young Christian's Guide to the Different Views of the Apocalypse* from Katie the Sunday School Lady. Created using the WEB translation (because it's free Public Domain), this study contains the entire book of Revelation along with guided highlights for parts of the passage that may be hard to understand and application sections to apply the truth to a young or new Christian's life. It also points out people of the Bible, cross references, and cultural nuances that a new Bible reader may not know.

The deepest desire of my heart is to get people to dive into the Word of God, and I pray this resource helps on that journey!

Thanks for downloading!

Katelin Chew, July 2025

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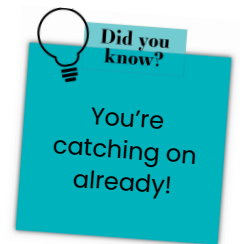
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Using This Guide

Hey There!

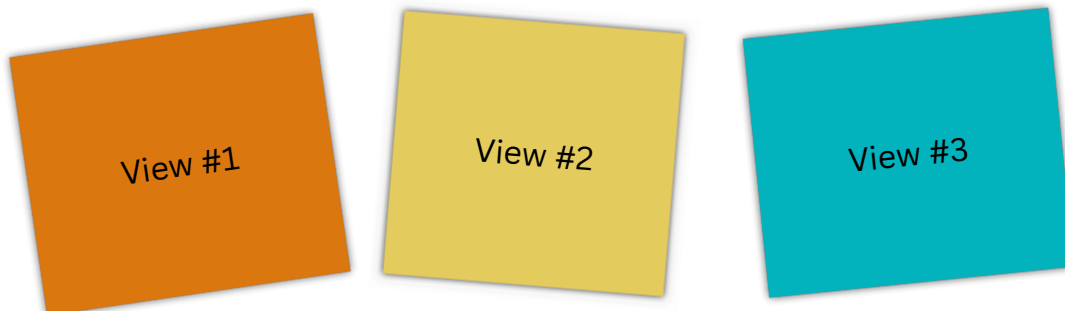
Thank you so much for downloading this guide to Revelation! I pray that it helps you in your study of God's Word.

If you've never used one of my resources before, here are a few tips. In this guide there are several sticky notes. Each sticky note will correspond to a word from the text of the Bible, and it will be underlined and highlighted in the color of the coordinating note, so you know where to look. There are also sections to help apply what you're reading to your own life and walk.



I've done quite a bit of research, and all of my sources are cited with footnotes. This may be a little confusing because the verse numbers are contained in the Biblical text, but those are subscript, while my notes are outside of the Biblical text are superscript.

New to this resource will be notes boxed in at the beginning of some chapters as seen below. Because Revelation has several different interpretations, I will do my best to address three main views, offering viewpoint boxes like these below whenever a part of the text has differing interpretations.



Also new to this guide will be brief one-pagers meant to give you a basic understanding of the words, phrases, and ideas you'll see throughout the book. That way, when you come across them in the text, you'll have a point of reference to work from! These will begin after this brief Using This Guide section.

As you read this difficult book, please try to keep in mind that many strong Christians take different views on their interpretations of this book. I myself am no great scholar, my goal is to research and present what I've learned in a condensed manner for the newest and youngest Christians to understand. After my research, I have come to my own conclusions of what I believe and an interpretation of Revelation that I agree most with. I align most with a *futurist* approach (the views will be discussed in the introduction), but I will do my best to present all approaches without bias so you can make your own informed decisions about what you believe.

There are several different ways you can use this guide. If you have downloaded this for your kids and they are old enough, you can simply have them read and work through it on their own. With Revelation, I would only suggest this if you're kids are older. This is a hard book. I first read it alone as a middle schooler and found myself scared because I had no one to explain it to me. Use your own judgement when it comes to your kids but never underestimate the beauty of reading the Bible together and the discussions that will ensue. If you think it would be more helpful to read in a translation you're familiar with, you can simply keep this guide open and use the notes and application.

When it comes to breaking up the readings, it is a bit difficult with the WEB translation. There are no stops or breaks because those weren't in the original text. Simply consider stopping at a paragraph break or sticky note.

When in doubt, my personal recommendation is to keep lessons short. It's always music to my ears when kids beg to hear what happens next in the Bible rather than ask if it's done yet. And please, always feel free to color, highlight, and interact with the text!

At the end of the day, I pray this encourages young Christians and/or kids to read the Bible. It is incredible what God can do with people committed to his Kingdom, his cause, and his Word. May this be a small help on your journey. And may he pour out his wisdom upon you as you seek him.

Blessings,
-Katie

What is Prophecy?

This is an important question to start with because you are about to read an entire book of [prophecy](#). Prophets of the Bible times and now are considered to be either forthtelling, foretelling, or a bit of both. So what does that mean?

To understand the difference, let's look at examples provided by the Bible. In 2 Samuel 12, Nathan approached David to expose his sin for his adultery with Bathsheba and his plotted murder of Uriah the Hittite. In this exchange, Nathan confronted David of his sin. Through God, he was forthtelling.

Meanwhile, the prophet Isaiah predicted the coming of the Messiah 700 years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem and also foretold the kind of death he would die, along with various other predictions that came true. He pointed to a future hundreds of years³ from the time he lived. Through God, he was [foretelling](#).

Is this starting to make sense? I think the beauty of [Biblical](#) prophecy is that it regularly reminds us that [God](#) knows past, present, and future. He is beyond time and certainly beyond our understanding, and we can take great comfort in the realization that the God we serve is fully in control and never caught off guard.

You'll notice by my examples that prophecy abounded in the Old Testament. God sent prophets to his people to turn them back to him again and again, and also to warn of events that even today haven't come to pass (like the Day of the Lord prophesied about in Joel, Amos, Zechariah, and Ezekiel). When considering the New Testament, we can find prophecy in the Gospels (Jesus spoke extensively on the future⁵), in snippets of Paul's letters, and in the book you're about to read: Revelation.

The intuitive question to ask next is: If prophecy can be foretelling or forthtelling, which one is Revelation? This is a question where prophecy scholars and students disagree. But before we get to the disagreements, let's take a look at the important truths that all Christians agree on.

Say What!?
Prophecy
A message from God either revealing the future or his divine will.¹

Did you know?
The Bible contains approximately 2,500 predictions of future events at the time of writing. 2,000 have been fulfilled so far.²

27% of the Bible is prophecy.⁴

There are false prophets as well. These prophets do not speak on behalf of God.

Where Christians Agree

If you've been around the church long, you've likely discovered that Christians can disagree on quite a bit. After the Protestant Reformation, churches divided over different beliefs and practices. However, there are several things that all Christians agree on related to the future, and I think it's important that we remember these before we read a book that has Christians taking varying viewpoints.

In regard to the future all Christians believe that:

- 1.Christ will return.
- 2.Humans will stand before God to give an account of their lives.
- 3.Humans were created to live forever.
- 4.The bodies of human beings will raise from the dead.
- 5.An eternity in heaven is given for those who have placed their faith in Jesus, while an eternal separation in hell is the lot of those who have refused him.
- 6.Several events are yet to be fulfilled in the future of God's plan. The disagreements come in interpreting how and when those events will occur. ¹

Can you think of any more? It is encouraging to remember that we can all agree on certain aspects of the future. On the matters where we differ with others, I pray that we can remain humble and kind in our conversations and dissensions, remembering that we don't always see the big picture and we don't know everything, especially as it pertains to the future.

Check for Understanding:

What is Biblical prophecy? _____

List a few beliefs about the end times that Christians agree on.



Three Views

Christians often fall into one of three viewpoints on their interpretation of Revelation. While some may mix and match, many have a prevailing view. In the simplest terms, check out these three viewpoints and see where you think you fall. After reading through the entire book of Revelation and guide, check back and see. Did your view change or was it strengthened? I can't help but reiterate once more that there are many strong Christians on each of these sides. Let us walk in humility towards others as we seek to understand God's Word.

View #1: The Past

Some Christians read Revelation through a view of the past. Within this view, there are two main interpretations. After this description, both past views will be group together as the historicist view has largely faded.

Past View A:

Christians called Historicists explain Revelation through a lens of symbolism in church history in which each "day" is a year. This view is rare today, but was held by leaders of the reformation, many of whom believed the Pope was the antichrist. Well known advocates of this view are Luther, Wesley, Edwards, Whitefield, and Spurgeon. Seventh-Day Adventists still hold to this viewpoint.

Strengths of this view: Some events of history line up readily with the trumpets and seals of Revelation: i.e. the fifth trumpet indicating the rise of Islam.

Weaknesses: Within the advocates of this view, few agree together on which historical events were represented after their fulfillment, and most see the fulfillment of Revelation culminating in their lifetime. If correct, this view also would make little sense to write to the churches in Asia.¹

Past View B:

Known as Preterists, these Christians view Revelation as a prophecy which was fulfilled when Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD (though some adherents to this view believe the first half of Revelation was fulfilled in 70 AD, the second half presents the fall of Rome, and the final chapters describe the second coming of Christ).

Strengths of this View: John was told literally that his prophecy would soon come to pass (Rev. 1:1). This would directly affect the readers of John's time. Many believe it agrees with Jesus' Olivet discourse found in Mark 13, Matthew 24, and Luke 17, 21.

Weaknesses: This relies heavily on an early date of writing. For it to be prophecy fulfilled, the book would have to have been written before 70 AD. Some also believe this view came from a Jesuit in response to the Reformers framing of the historicist view.²

View #2: Continual

Often called the idealist view, this is the belief that Revelation is symbolism that shows spiritual lessons and themes like good triumphing over evil, Christ over Satan, etc. throughout history without referring to specific events being fulfilled.

Strengths of this view: There is no need to try to line up specific historical events to make sense of Revelation, allowing for the book to be edifying throughout all ages of the church.

Weaknesses: The Book of Revelation itself states that it is predicting events that will soon come to pass (Rev. 1:1). Because of this, many who hold this view also combine it with other views for it to make sense.³

View #3: Future

Called futurists, this view is most common in Evangelical Protestantism today. This view takes the belief that all of Revelation after chapter 3 will occur in a future time of Tribulation.

Strengths of this view: John was told to write in Rev 1:19 of things he had seen, things that are, and things that will happen hereafter, aligning with chapters 1, 2 and 3, and 4-22. This view alone also allows for a literal approach to Revelation as the seas have never turned to blood and other events of 4-22 have never literally been fulfilled.

Weaknesses: When considered literally, Revelation still is full of symbols, causing adherents of this view to choose which is symbolic and which is literal. This would also render 90% of the book irrelevant to the original readers and all of church history. Finally, it cannot be disproved as it can always be stated that it hasn't happened yet.⁴

Events to Understand:

The Tribulation

The word tribulation is used in the Bible to express times of trouble that all Christians will endure as their worldview clashes with the views of this fallen world. However, many Christians also believe there is a specific time of great distress that will come upon the world by the hand of God based on Jesus' words in Matthew 24, Daniel's vision in Daniel 9, and chapters 4-18 of Revelation. The different views of Revelation often disagree on the timing and scope of this event. This is what Daniel has to say in Daniel 9:24-27:

²⁴ "Seventy weeks are decreed on your people and on your holy city, to finish disobedience, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.

²⁵ "Know therefore and discern that from the going out of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem to the Anointed One, the prince, will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. It will be built again, with street and moat, even in troubled times. ²⁶ After the sixty-two weeks the Anointed One will be cut off, and will have nothing. The people of the prince who come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end will be with a flood, and war will be even to the end. Desolations are determined. ²⁷ He will make a firm covenant with many for one week. In the middle of the week he will cause the sacrifice and the offering to cease. On the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate; and even to the decreed full end, wrath will be poured out on the desolate."

View #1: Past

Typically, Historicists see the Tribulation as occurring during the church age. The seven seals typically represent the time period of the reign of Domitian to the decline of the Roman empire.¹

The trumpets represent a series of invasions against the Roman empire. The 1260 days mentioned in Rev. 11 refer to 1260 years of the Papacy in Rome. ² Those who hold to this today believe it is still unfolding.

Preterists see the Tribulation as an event that occurred 40 years after the death of Jesus- the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. Then, the Romans invaded and brought weaponry into the Temple with blasphemous insignia- an abomination to God.

The "coming" of the Son of Man referred to his coming judgement on the people of Israel for the unbelief and that resulted in the destruction of the Temple.³

View #2: Continual

Idealists see the Tribulation as representative of the themes of the ongoing battle between good and evil throughout history, ⁴ not a specific time period.

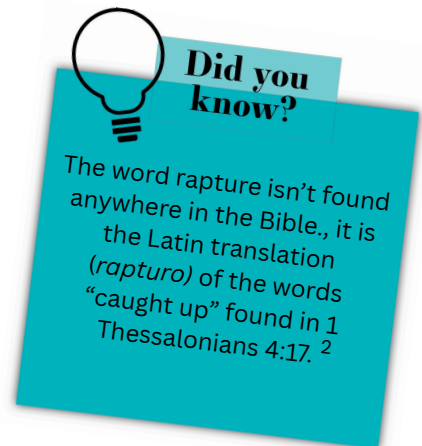
View #3: Future

Futurists hold that all the events of the Tribulation described in Revelation 4-18 represent a literal time period of 7 years (called weeks). The first 3 ½ years will be marked by famine, war, and disaster. The Antichrist will rise to power in this time. At the 3 ½ year mark, he will claim to be God and 3 ½ years of greater distress will follow.⁵

Events to Understand:

The Rapture

In the simplest terms, the [rapture](#) is defined as the transporting of a person from one place to another, especially heaven. ¹ Christians generally believe that the people of God will be taken up to meet Jesus in the air. The main point of contention is on the timing of when this will happen in relation to other events. Described in the most detail in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, let's look to Scripture to see what the Bible has to say about the rapture:



¹³ But we don't want you to be ignorant, brothers, concerning those who have fallen asleep, so that you don't grieve like the rest, who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we tell you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will in no way precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with God's trumpet. The dead in Christ will rise first, ¹⁷ then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. So we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Other Scripture References to the rapture:

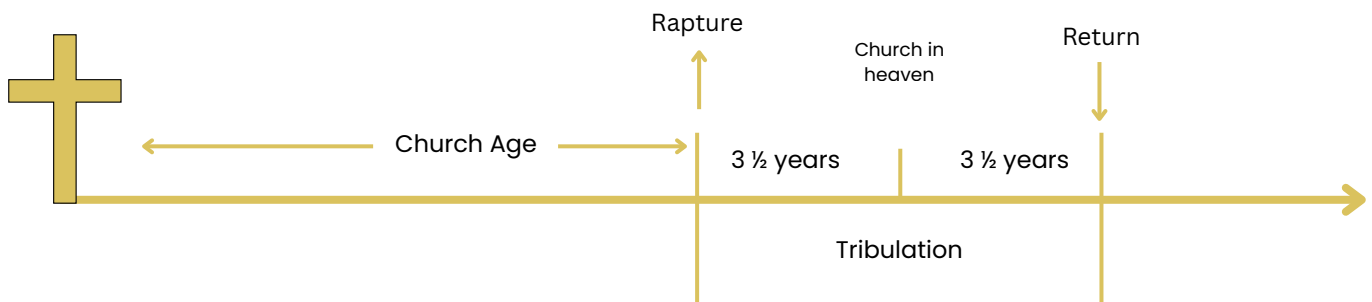
1 Corinthians 15:51-53
Revelation 3:10

There we have the "what" of the rapture, but now we must move to the "when." This is where Christians tend to fall into different views. In this case, however, the views don't necessarily line up with the three views of Revelation. Concerning the rapture, three views place it on a timeline in relationship to the Tribulation. People of varying views argue the rapture will occur either before, during, or after the Tribulation.

Rapture Views

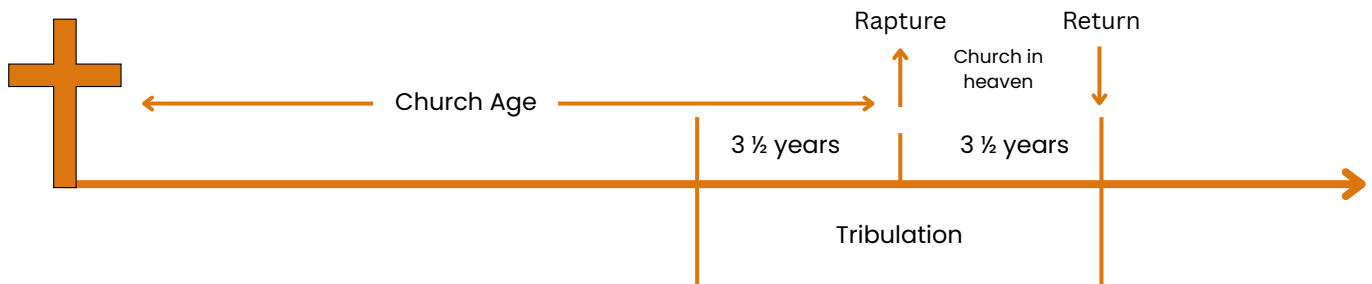
Pre-Tribulation

Some believe that the rapture will occur before the 7-year Tribulation that futurists believe is to come.



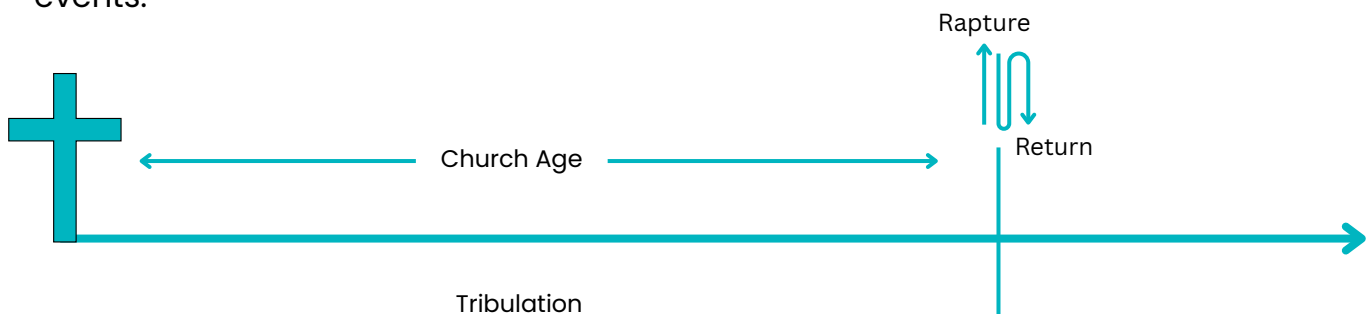
Mid-Tribulation

This view maintains that believers in Christ will be raptured in the middle of a 7-year tribulation.



Post-Tribulation

This is the belief that followers of Christ will endure the entire Tribulation (in whatever view that takes for them) and be raptured immediately before Christ returns in glory. Some argue the rapture and return of Christ are simultaneous events.



Events to Understand:

The Final Battle

Revelation 16 speaks of a final battle. Known as the Battle of Armageddon, this name occurs only once in Scripture in Revelation 16:16. This battle of Armageddon is seen as a culmination of the Tribulation or the judgement of God. As you may already have guessed, most students of prophecy agree there is a battle, they disagree on when it takes place.

View #1: Past

Historicists believe the Battle of Armageddon occurred during the French Revolution, while some see it as a future event that will bring Papal power to an end.

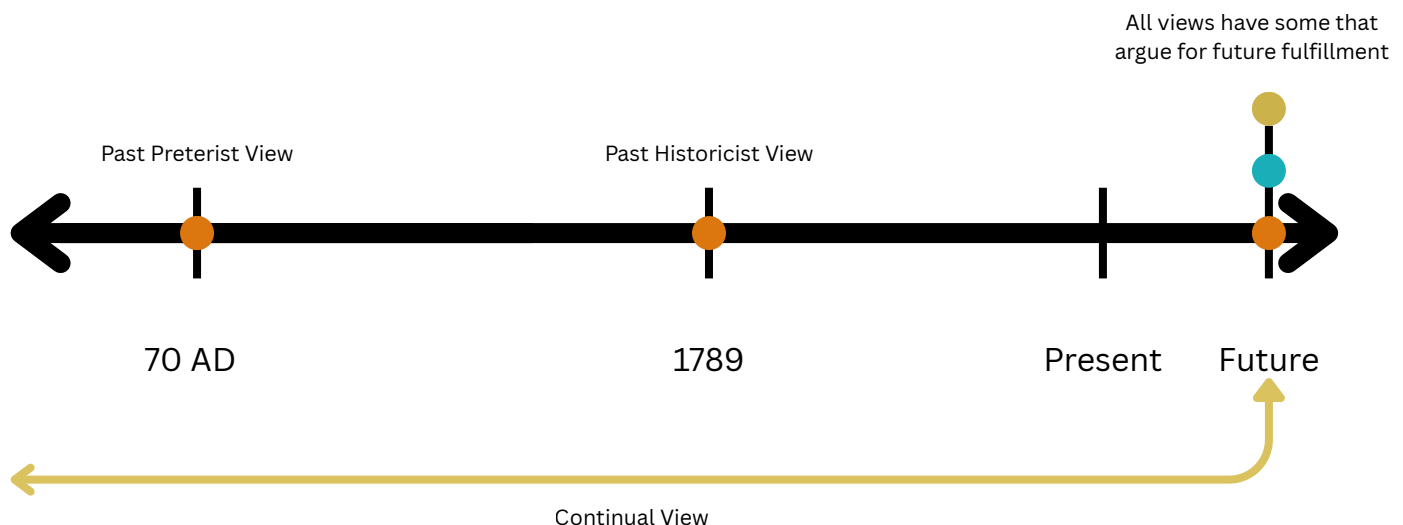
Preterists see the Battle of Armageddon as the downfall of Jerusalem in 70 AD or God's judgement on the Roman Empire.¹

View #2: Continual

Idealists believe the last plagues could happen at the end of time, or this battle could simply symbolize God's "last" stroke of personal judgement in someone's life. Many view this as the continual battle of good vs evil which is finally won by Jesus Christ in the last days.²

View #3: Future

Futurists believe that the Battle of Armageddon is a literal battle that closes out the Tribulation when millions of troops wage war upon Israel. When all looks to be lost, Jesus returns in Triumph and destroys the forces of evil with the breath of his mouth.³



Events to Understand:

The Kingdom

Christians believe that Christ will return and that he will judge the earth. When this happens and how it will all take place is considered one of the greatest causes for disagreement between students of Bible prophecy. Like the views on the rapture, the three views on the Millenium don't necessarily line up with the main interpretations of past, continual, and future. By that I mean that people holding the same view as a futurist to interpret Revelation could have different views on the Millenium. Are you confused yet? Let me try to clear it up. After reading Revelation, you will likely decide if you fall into the Past, Continual, or Futurist camp for what you believe the main context refers to. From there, you will try to decide if you agree more with a pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation, or post-tribulation rapture. Finally, you will add to those viewpoints what you believe about the Kingdom of God.

Again, there are three camps, and they all base their name on the Millenium. The term Millenium comes from Revelation 20:1-7 that states Christ will reign for 1,000 years. The differences come when people try to decide if that number is literal or symbolic, and when it occurs, leading to different views.

Check out the chart on the next page to see what people believe.

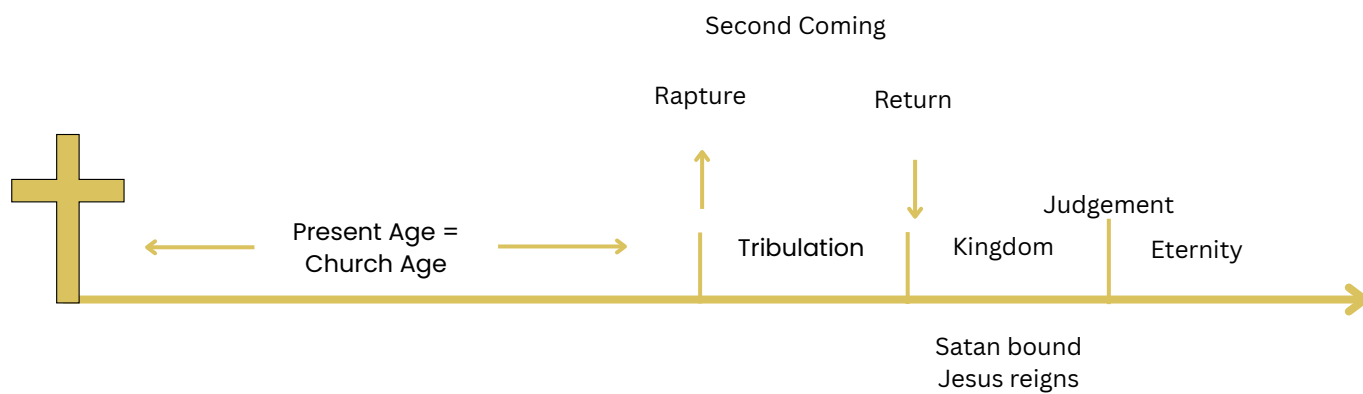
Amillennial

Christians that hold this view do not believe in a 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth. They believe that Christ reigns now in the church on earth. His return will mark the resurrection, judgement, and eternity.⁴



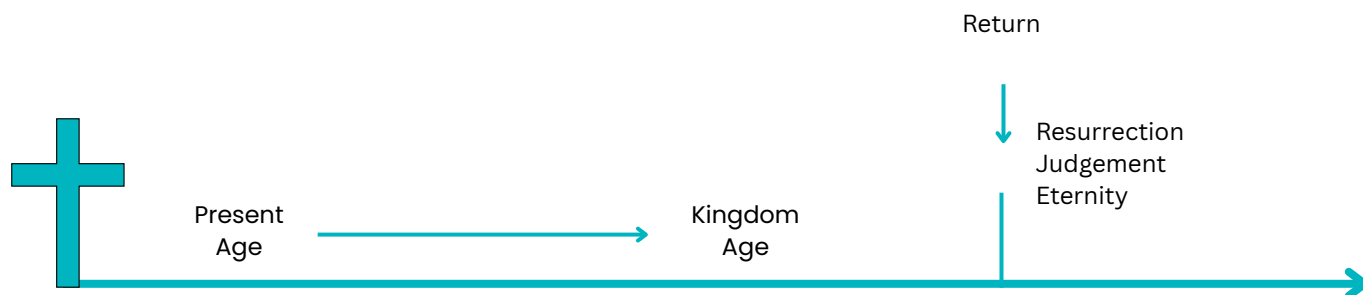
Pre-Millennial

Christians that argue for this view believe that Christ will visibly return before a 1,000-year reign of peace on earth.⁵



Post-Millennial

Christians in the post-millennial camp believe that the present age gradually turns into the kingdom age as the gospel is spread. This will result in a world filled with peace, and after that time, Christ will return.⁶



Events to Understand:

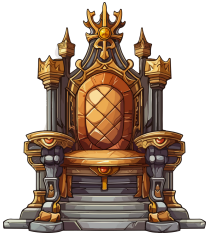
Judgement

Hebrews 9:27-28 states, "Inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once, and after this, judgment, so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him." Christ will return and he will judge the world, but there are a few different judgements we need to talk about to thoroughly understand this.



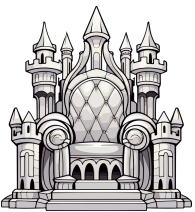
Judgement 1- The Cross

This judgement is already complete- it is the death of Jesus on the cross. The cross sealed the deal for Satan and the power of sin and darkness. When Jesus died, he took the penalty of sin upon himself, paying the price we could not pay so that we who believe might be made right with God. In place of the death we deserve, we receive his grace and forgiveness that covers our sins and places us once more in right standing with God.



Judgement 2- The Judgement Seat of Christ

The judgement seat of Christ is for Christians to be judged by Jesus. Here, there is not a judgement for sins- that was done upon the cross. Instead, believers stand before the Lord for him to examine their work. Works do not save the person, but their work will determine what rewards they receive.



Judgement 3- The Great Throne Judgement

This judgement is the judgement that all unbelievers will face at the end. All that have refused the saving gift of grace offered by Jesus on the cross, those that have rejected the Living Water and refused to acknowledge the King of kings and Lord of lords during their lifetime will be raised to face judgement. Every knee will bow, and tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the father, but those who refused this during their lifetime will face a great separation. The Bible uses imagery of sheep being separated from goats, wheat being separated from weeds, and good fish being separated from bad. The bad are given over to eternal fire (Matthew 25:31-46, 13:24-29, Matthew 13:34-51).

Background

If you survived that introduction, you are ready to tackle Revelation! Here are some important background facts before you start.

Who wrote Revelation:

The Apostle John.¹

A disciple of Jesus, John walked with him through his earthly ministry and continued to spread the good news after Jesus ascended back into heaven.

Who did he write it to?

This answer is a bit trickier. Historicists, Preterists, and Futurists all believe it was written to the churches of Asia. Futurists and historicists argue that it has implications for the church age as well, while Idealists believe it symbolic of all churches.

What is Revelation?

Revelation is from the Greek word *apokalypsis* (where we get the word apocalypse from) and it means “unveiling” or “unwrapping.”² This is a book of Prophecy. It tells of the future. Depending on the view you take, will determine when you believe it was written and how far the prophecy extends.

Where are the churches?

The churches John addresses at the beginning of Revelation are Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea (all in modern-day Turkey). John wrote Revelation while exiled on the island of Patmos.³

Why did John write Revelation?

In simplest terms, because he was told to. All believe it was to tell of future events, but those events will depend on your interpretation.

When was the letter written?

Preterists View: Before AD 70
Later date view: Around AD 95⁴



What do you think? Do you feel a bit overwhelmed already? I'll admit that Revelation can feel daunting. Different views between Christians can feel confusing. And sorting through all this information can make your head spin. If you're there, take a breath. Remember that we serve a God who doesn't try to hide. He is a God who reveals Himself to those who seek Him. We won't get it all right and all figured out before His return, but we can at least apply ourselves to the task of knowing Him, of reading His Word, and of working to understand it to the best of our ability. Dear children, He knows that we are simple compared to His great knowledge and understanding. He knows that His wisdom is well beyond what we could imagine. Yet He speaks. Yet He offers us His Word. Yet He sends us His Holy Spirit to help us understand.

You are not alone as you wrestle with this book. Don't fear, just keep reading, entrusting God will reveal Himself as you seek him. I had a dear pastor who gave me very wise advice. He said, "Katie, there will be times when you read something in the Bible that will be well beyond you. Sometimes, it isn't the right time for you to understand. So put it on a shelf and be ready to take it down and examine it when God chooses to bring that understanding to life." I hope you can do that as you read Revelation, all the while remembering that those who read it will be blessed (Rev. 1:3).

Revelation One

You are ready to begin Revelation! In chapter 1, we'll catch a glimpse of the resurrected Lord and discover the call of John for the writing of this book.

Who's Who?

Jesus

Jesus is fully God and fully man. He left his throne in heaven to walk the earth and make a way to the Father through his death on a cross and his resurrection. God exalted him to the name above every name and someday, every knee will bow, and tongue confess that Jesus is Lord (Philippians 2:5-11). Make no mistake: Revelation is about Jesus. If we miss him and his victory over sin and death- the same victory he offers his followers- we miss the whole point.

This is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things which must happen soon, which he sent and made known by his angel to his servant, John,² who testified to God's word and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, about everything that he saw.

God

Christians serve a Triune God- he is three in one- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We serve one God in three persons; all three persons are equally God, serving different functions, but we do not serve three gods. This is a mystery beyond us. We can see the Trinity active in creation, salvation, and resurrection.¹

Did you know?

Futurists believe soon here refers to the fact that the events of the end will take place in quick succession,² while those who hold to the Past fulfillment view of Revelation argue it was in the past because it was meant to happen soon in time after the writing of this letter.³

Did you know?

There are seven beatitudes (blessings) found in Revelation that revolve around Christ and his second coming and future blessings promised to believers. Here, we see that you are blessed as you read this!⁵

³ Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things that are written in it, for the time is near.

John

The son of Zebedee and a fisherman from Galilee, John was called by Jesus to be an apostle during his earthly ministry. He is also the writer of the Gospel of John, and the letters 1, 2, and 3 John.⁴

⁴ John, to the seven assemblies that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from God, 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 washed us from our sins by his blood— ⁶ and he made us to be a Kingdom, priests to his God and Father—to him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Did you know?

Seven is a number you'll see a lot in Revelation. Throughout the Bible it is often symbolic of completeness or fullness.⁶ The seven spirits could refer to angels of the seven churches, seven other angels, or the fullness of the Holy Spirit.⁷

Say What!?

Assemblies
We would call these churches today.

In the Old Testament, the Jewish people followed the laws given in Leviticus and atoned (made amends) for their sins by offering an animal. The animal paid the death penalty for sin, cleansing the sinner. Jesus is the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29) once and for all. He gave up his life so our sins could be washed away by His blood.

⁷ Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, including those who pierced him. All the tribes of the earth will mourn over him. Even so, 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."

Say What!?

Alpha and Omega
These are letters in the Greek alphabet. Jesus is from A to Z; he is the first and the last. This means he is Almighty over all Creation from beginning to end.⁸

⁹ I John, your brother and partner with you in the oppression, Kingdom, and perseverance in Christ Jesus, was on the isle that is called Patmos because of God's Word and the testimony of Jesus Christ. ¹⁰ I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, like a trumpet ¹¹ saying, "What you see, write in a book and send to the seven assemblies: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

Where in the World?



Patmos

A rocky, barren island in the Aegean Sea,⁹ Patmos was a Roman prison island. John was exiled here. Roman exiles lasted either until the prisoner or until the Emperor who exiled them died.¹⁰



Say What!?

In the Spirit
"A state of prophetic ecstasy where [John] could see and experience visions from God."¹¹



The Seven Churches ¹²

Ephesus

- A major harbor and gateway for trade, this city was the main center of the worship of Artemis (or Diana).

Smyrna

- A wealthy city and important port for commerce. This city also had a large Jewish population.

Pergamum

- A city of learning with the second largest library in the world and a large altar to Zeus. Ephesus, Smyrna and Pergamum competed for prominence.

Thyatira

- This was a city of trade guilds. Many members of guilds worshiped the god or goddess of their trade, likely creating great opposition to Christianity.

Sardis

- A center of commerce and built on a high plain. Once wealthy, an earthquake in AD 17 left lasting damage.

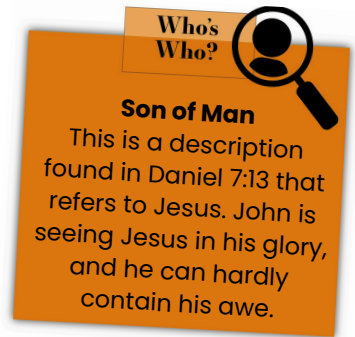
Philadelphia

- Known for many temples and religious festivals. Was also completely destroyed by the earthquake in AD 17.

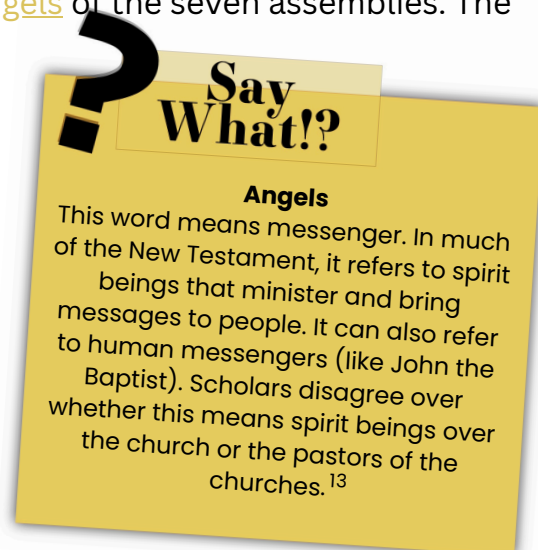
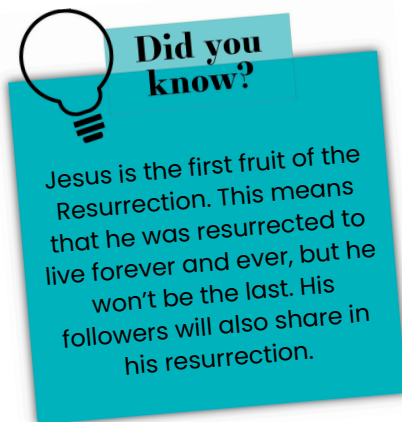
Laodicea

- At the crossroads of two trade routes, this was a wealthy city of commerce and known for banking, textiles, and the development of an eye salve.

¹² I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. Having turned, I saw seven golden lamp stands. ¹³ And among the lamp stands was one like a son of man, clothed with a robe reaching down to his feet, and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴ His head and his hair were white as white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire. ¹⁵ His feet were like burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace. His voice was like the voice of many waters. ¹⁶ He had seven stars in his right hand. Out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining at its brightest. ¹⁷ When I saw him, I fell at his feet like a dead man.



He laid his right hand on me, saying, "Don't be afraid. I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the Living one. I was dead, and behold, I am alive forever and ever. Amen. I have the keys of Death and of Hades. ¹⁹ Write therefore the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will happen hereafter. ²⁰ The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lamp stands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven assemblies. The seven lamp stands are seven assemblies.



Apply This!

Reread the description of Jesus in Revelation 1:12-17. Can you imagine seeing him? The truth is, one day you will. One day we will all come before the Resurrected Lord, and the question we must ask ourselves is, "Are we ready?" One day, all will confess his Lordship, but we have the opportunity to do that here and now. His death on the cross and his blood spilled out offers us forgiveness of sins and the ability to be made right with God. We can accept his sacrifice on our behalf and claim him as Lord of our lives. Then, when we see him face to face, we can fall down in worship to the Great King who granted us eternal life through his death and resurrection. The decision is yours, and you can turn from your wicked ways and claim him as Lord right now. What are you waiting for?

Revelation Two

Revelation 2 and 3 contain the letters to the churches from Jesus. If you have a red-letter Bible, these words will all be in red. Think of it as Jesus dictating a letter to John and him copying it down to be sent to the churches. Each of these letters follows the same pattern:

1. It is addressed to one of the seven churches
2. A description of Christ suited to that church or type of church
3. What they're doing well (in all but the letter to Laodicea)
4. What they're doing wrong (in all but the letters to Smyrna and Philadelphia)
5. Correction for what they're doing wrong
6. A promise to overcomers ¹

Literal View on Chapters 2-3

Because these letters are addressed to the seven literal churches to which they were sent, there is little controversy when it comes to interpreting them, as preterists (those who believe Revelation was fulfilled by AD 70), Idealists (those who see a continual fulfillment throughout all phases of history), and futurists (those who believe chapters 4-22 will be fulfilled literally in the future) all agree these were letters to churches. ²

Literal and Symbolic View on Chapters 2-3

Historicists and some futurists (past and future interpretations) believe each church was a physical church at the time of writing. They also argue, however, that each church represents a specific period of church history. They break those periods down as follows:

- **Ephesus**- The Apostolic Age AD 32-100
- **Smyrna**- Persecution of Rome- AD 100-313
- **Pergamum**- False Doctrine under Constantine- AD 313-500
- **Thyatira**- The Papal church- AD 500-1500
- **Sardis**- The Reformation- AD 1500-1700
- **Philadelphia**- The current church-AD 1700-Now
- **Laodicea**- Lukewarm, liberal churches of modern time- AD 1700-Now³

"To the angel of the assembly in Ephesus write:

"He who holds the seven stars in his right hand, he who walks among the seven golden lamp stands says these things:

² "I know your works, and your toil and perseverance, and that you can't tolerate evil men, and have tested those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and found them false.

³ You have perseverance and have endured for my name's sake, and have not grown weary.



Did you know?

The lampstands represent the seven churches, meaning that Jesus walks among the churches, knowing our works. This is an encouraging thought!



Say What!?

Repent

To changes one's thinking, directly connected to changing behavior.⁴When we repent, we turn from the way we were living to the way God calls us to live.

Who's Who?



Nicolaitans

The names to "conquer the people" but we know very little about this false doctrine and its adherents. It is later referenced with a connection to idolatry and sexual immorality.⁵



Did you know?

Smyrna was not rebuked, but they suffered great persecution.

⁴ But I have this against you, that you left your first love. ⁵ Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the first works; or else I am coming to you swiftly, and will move your lamp stand out of its place, unless you repent. ⁶ But this you have, that you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. ⁷ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of my God.

"To the angel of the assembly in Smyrna write:

"The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life says these things:

⁹ "I know your works, oppression, and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews, and they are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. ¹⁰ Don't be afraid of the things which you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested; and you will have oppression for ten days. Be faithful to 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 assemblies. He who overcomes won't be harmed by the second death.



Say What!?

Crown of Life

The crowns often mentioned for Christians in Revelation are not crowns like a king would wear, but the wreath given to the victor in an athletic contest.

That is the type of crown mentioned here for faithfulness unto death.⁶

Second Death

The second death is an eternal death in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14-15). This is what many Christians mean when they speak of Hell. The believers of Smyrna were being persecuted and even dying for their faith, but the overcomers didn't need to fear because their death would result in eternal life- not the second death.⁷

¹² "To the angel of the assembly in Pergamum write:

"He who has the sharp two-edged sword says these things:

¹³ "I know your works and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. You hold firmly to my name, and didn't deny my faith 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 taught Balak to throw a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. ¹⁵ So also you likewise have some who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

¹⁶ Repent therefore, 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 assemblies. To him who overcomes, to him I will give of the hidden **manna**, and I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows but he who receives it.

¹⁸ "To the angel of the assembly in Thyatira write:

"The Son of God, who has his eyes like a flame of fire, and his feet are like burnished brass, says these things:

Who's Who?

Jezebel

This could have been an actual person in the church, or a reference to someone with character like Jezebel- a wicked queen found in 1 Kings 19 and 2 Kings 9. Jezebel was married to King Ahab of Israel. She killed many prophets and threatened to kill Elijah. She was later thrown from a tower and killed. Then, dogs consumed her flesh as prophesied by Elijah.

Who's Who?

Balaam

An interesting Bible character, Balaam's story is found in Numbers 22-24. He is called upon by the Moabite king Balak to curse Israel. God tells him not to go and he obeys, however, later goes. On the way, his donkey speaks to him to warn him of an angel waiting to kill him. Once he gets to Balak, he pronounces blessings rather than curses on Israel.

Say What!?

Manna

Literally meaning "What is it?" God provided Manna for the Israelites while they wandered in the desert. While waiting to enter the Promised Land, the Israelites complained of a lack of food. God sustained them with quail and manna. (See Exodus 16).

¹⁹ "I know your works, your love, faith, service, patient endurance, and that your last works are more than the first. ²⁰ But I have this against you, that you tolerate your woman **Jezebel**, who calls herself a prophetess. She teaches and seduces my servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat things sacrificed to idols. ²¹ I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality.

²² Behold, I will throw her and those who commit adultery with her into a bed of great oppression, unless they repent of her works. ²³ I will kill her children with Death, and all the assemblies will know that I am he who searches the minds and hearts. I will give to each one of you according to your deeds. ²⁴ But to you I say, to the rest who are in Thyatira—as many as don't have this teaching, who don't know what some call 'the deep things of Satan'—to you I say, I am not putting any other burden on you. ²⁵ Nevertheless, hold that which you have firmly until I come. ²⁶ He who overcomes, and he who keeps my works to the end, to him I will give authority over the nations. ²⁷ He will rule them with a rod of iron, shattering them like clay pots, as I also have received of 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 assemblies.

Apply This!

Each of these four churches mentioned in chapter 2 was a literal church. They had problems and did some things wrong and some things right. Whether or not you believe that these churches represent ages of church history, I think we all can find glimpses of each of these churches' problems and triumphs in our own churches today. Has your church forgotten its first love? Is there false teaching or suffering or a perversion of morals? Be convicted by the words of Jesus to repent and stand firm in the truth and be comforted by his words offered to those that overcome.

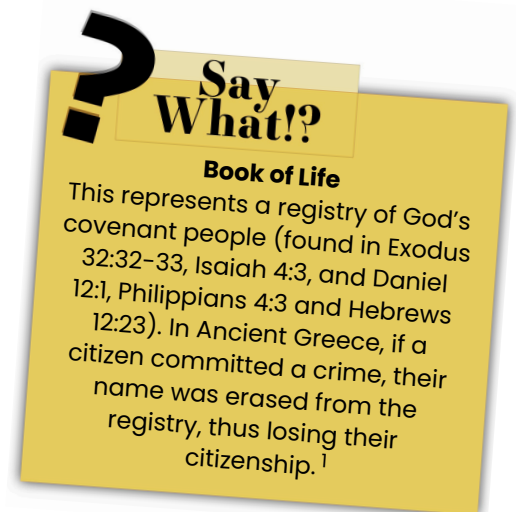
Revelation Three

Revelation 3 finishes the letters to the churches. Here, we'll see what Jesus has to say to the churches of Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

"And to the angel of the assembly in Sardis write:

"He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars says these things:

"I know your works, that you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. ² Wake up and strengthen the things that remain, which you were about to throw away, for I have found no works of yours perfected before my God. ³ Remember therefore how you have received and heard. Keep it and repent. If therefore you won't watch, I will come as a thief, and you won't know what hour I will come upon you. ⁴ Nevertheless you have a few names in Sardis that didn't defile their garments. They will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. ⁵ He who overcomes will be arrayed in white garments, and I will in no way blot his name out of 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 assemblies.



Who's Who?

David

David was the second king of Israel, known for slaying Goliath the giant. His story is found in 1 Samuel 16-30. He also wrote many of the Psalms. A man after God's own heart, God made a covenant that one of his descendants would sit on his throne forever. Jesus comes from the line of David and fulfills this promise. He is King forever and holds the key.

"To the angel of the assembly in Philadelphia write:

"He who is holy, he who is true, he who has the key of David, he who opens and no one can shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says these things:

⁸ “I know your works (behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one can shut), that you have a little power, and kept my word, and didn’t deny my name. ⁹ Behold, I make some of the synagogue of **Satan**, of those who say they are Jews, and they are not, but lie—behold, I will make them to come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. ¹⁰

Because you kept my command to endure, I also will keep you from the hour of testing which is to come on the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹ I am coming quickly! Hold firmly that which you have, so that no one takes your crown.

¹² He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will go out from there no more. 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 own new name. ¹³ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies.

¹⁴ “To the angel of the assembly in Laodicea write:

“The Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of God’s creation, says these things:

¹⁵ “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ So, because you are **lukewarm**, and neither hot nor cold, I will vomit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷ Because you say, ‘I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing,’ and don’t know that you are the wretched one, miserable, poor, blind, and naked; ¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich; and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eye **salve** to anoint your eyes, that you may see. ¹⁹ As many as I love, I reprove and chasten. Be zealous therefore, and repent.

Who’s Who?



Satan

We will discuss Satan a lot more later on in Revelation, but for now, know that he is a fallen angel. Also called Lucifer, Satan longed to be equal or above God and led a rebellion against him. He roams the earth seeking to kill, steal, and destroy. Some of his names are:

- Satan (“adversary”)– 2 Corinthians 11:14
- The evil one– Matthew 13:19
- The liar– John 8:44
- The tempter– 1 Thessalonians 3:5
- The ancient serpent– (Revelation 12:9)
- The destroyer– Revelation 9:11
- The accuser– Revelation 12:10 ²

Did you know?



Laodicea had little water supply within their city. 6 miles north were the hot springs of Hierapolis, while 11 miles east was Colosse, known for its cold waters. Laodicea received their water from aqueducts, and it often arrived lukewarm.³

The Laodiceans created an eye salve. It is ironic, therefore, that a city known for eye treatment is spiritually blind.⁴

²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, then I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with me. ²¹ He who overcomes, I will give 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 assemblies.”

Apply This!

Again, we can look to the churches and ask questions about our own churches and our own spiritual walk. Are we asleep? Are we lukewarm? Notice that to each church, Jesus reminds them he knows their deeds. Good or bad, Jesus knows our deeds as well. Today, I want you to picture Jesus walking along with you. He walked among the seven lampstands of the churches, and he saw their deeds. So picture him walking with you. Does he approve of how you’re living? If not, what needs to change? Ask him for help and the empowerment of his Holy Spirit so you can live how you are called to live.

Revelation Four

Chapters 4-7 show a vision of the throne room of heaven and the opening of six seals (the seventh seal is in chapter 8). A fair warning: these visions can be hard to understand. I will do my best to offer the most common views of the interpretation, but remember, it's okay to not understand everything.

View #1: Past

Historicists typically place Revelation 4-7 and the unsealing of the book at the beginning of the fall of the Roman Empire.

Preterists view the unsealing of the book as God's judgement on Jerusalem (AD 66-70).¹

View #2: Continual

Idealists that believe Revelation represents a continual way God deals with humanity believe that the unsealing of the book represents cycles of wars, martyrdom, and judgement throughout history.²

View #3: Future

Futurists believe the unsealing of the book represents the beginning of the Great Tribulation.³ Some who advocate for a pre-Tribulation rapture believe it occurs in 4:1, represented by John being told to "Come up here," and taken to heaven.⁴

After these things I looked and saw a door opened in heaven; and the first voice that I heard, like a trumpet speaking with me, was one saying, "Come up here, and I will show you the things which must happen after this."

² Immediately I was in the Spirit. Behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and one sitting on the throne ³ that looked like a jasper stone and a sardius. There was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald to look at. ⁴ Around the throne were twenty-four thrones. On the thrones were twenty-four elders sitting, dressed in white garments, with crowns of gold on their heads. ⁵ Out of the throne proceed lightnings, sounds, and thunders. There were seven lamps of fire burning before his throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

Who's Who?

Elders

It is unclear who these elders are. Some argue because of their white clothes and crowns (previous promises to the overcomers), they are leaders or representative of the church in heaven. ⁵

Less commonly, some suggest these are a ruling council of angels. ⁶



Did you know?

Other prophets saw the throne room of heaven, too. Check out Isaiah 6 and Ezekiel 1 to see their visions of the throne.

Who's Who?



Four Living Creatures

These are heavenly beings that proclaim worship to the Almighty God. These are similar to those that Ezekiel saw, or potentially the same ones if you consider John may not have been able to see every side of the creatures' faces.⁷

⁶ Before the **throne** was something like a sea of glass, similar to crystal. In the middle of the throne, and around the throne were **four living creatures** full of eyes before and behind. ⁷ The first creature was like a lion, the second creature like a calf, the third creature had a face like a man, and the fourth was like a flying eagle. ⁸ The four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within. They have no rest day and night, saying, "**Holy**, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come!"



Say What!?

Holy

Worthy of worship. ⁸ These creatures that sit in the presence of God can do nothing but worship him for who he is.

⁹ When the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to him who sits on the throne, to him who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever, and throw their crowns before the throne, saying, ¹¹ "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, the Holy One, to receive the glory, the honor, and the power, for you created all things, and because of your desire they existed and were created!"

Apply This!

God is Holy. He alone is worthy of all of our worship and honor. No number of words of praise could ever do him justice. He is above all, beyond all, and creator of all. Somehow, this incredible God loves us so much that he sent Jesus to save us. Did you notice that it is because of his desire that all things were created. That means he desired to create you. This magnificent God, that is so set apart from us in perfection and holiness, desired to create us. Praise him today, stand in awe of him today. He is worthy. Worthy of your life. Worthy of your time. Worthy of your love. Worthy of all praise.

Revelation Five

Revelation five starts with a problem. Who can open the book? Sadly, no one is found who can. But Jesus. And because Jesus is worthy, heaven and earth erupt in praise.

I saw, in the right hand of him who sat on the throne, a [book](#) written inside and outside, sealed shut with seven seals. ² I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to break its seals?" ³ No one in heaven above, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book or to look in it. ⁴ Then I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look in it. ⁵ One of the elders said to me, "Don't weep. Behold, the [Lion](#) who is of the tribe of Judah, the [Root of David](#), has overcome: he who opens the book and its seven seals."

Who's Who?

Lion

Jacob, the father of the tribe of Israel blessed his son Judah in Genesis 49:9 says he was a lion's cub. Jesus' lineage comes from this tribe and he is the fulfillment of this prophecy. A lion was also imagery used to describe the Messiah (anointed one) and how he would overthrow Rome. ³

Root of David

This was another Messianic title. The Jews waited for the coming Messiah to save them, though he did not come as they expected. The Root of David (or Jesse, David's father) is referred to in Isaiah 11. ⁴

Did you know?

Horns are often a Biblical metaphor for power. ⁵

Did you know?

Some translations say scroll. Because this was written on both sides it was an opisthograph. Double-sided like the scroll Ezekiel saw (Ezekiel 2:9-10), this book is sealed and unable to be read like the scroll in Daniel 12. ¹

Differing views suggest the book contains:

- The goal or end of all history
- The unfolding of human history
- Words of lament and woe
- A "will and testament" ²

⁶ I saw in the middle of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the middle of the elders, a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven [horns](#) and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.

Did you know?

Psalm 141:2 states: "May my prayer be set before you like incense."

? Say What!?

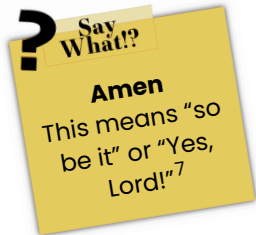
saint

This is the term for the everyday, common Christian in the Bible. ⁶

⁷ Then he came, and he took it out of the right hand of him who sat on the throne. ⁸ Now when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the [prayers](#) of the [saints](#). ⁹ They sang a new song, saying,

“You are worthy to take the book
and to open its seals,
for you were killed,
and bought us for God with your blood
out of every tribe, language, people, and nation,
¹⁰ and made us kings and priests to our God;
and we will reign on the earth.”

¹¹ I looked, and I heard something like a voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders. The number of them was ten thousands of ten thousands, and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who has been killed to receive the power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing!”



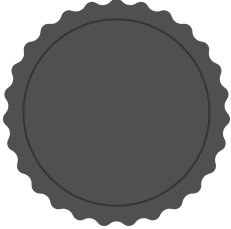
¹³ I heard every created thing which is in heaven, on the earth, under the earth, on the sea, and everything in them, saying, “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be the blessing, the honor, the glory, and the dominion, forever and ever! **Amen!**”

¹⁴ The four living creatures said, “Amen!” Then the elders fell down and worshiped.

Apply This!

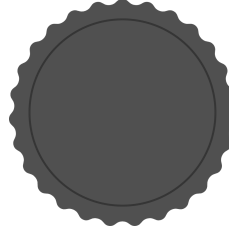
No one on earth is found to be worthy to open the scroll. No one is worthy. No one but the Messiah. The Lamb that was slain, the Root of David and Lion of Judah. He alone has conquered death by the shedding of his blood. He alone has made a way, and because of that, praise rings out in heaven. The creatures and elders fall down proclaiming the truth of the gospel and worth of our Lord. Then the angels join in and finally all creation give praise to the only one who is worthy. Do you have this view of the Lord? He is personal and loving, but make no mistake, he is almighty and powerful. There is nothing casual about him. I wonder if you’ve ever sat in awe of God. Take five minutes today and dwell on his glory, his power, his honor, his might, his victory. He alone is worthy.

The Seals



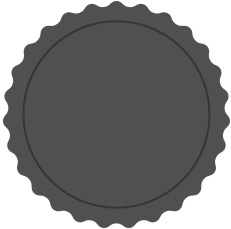
Seal 1:

- A rider on a white horse comes, bent on conquering.



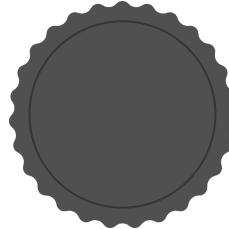
Seal 2:

- A rider on a red horse takes peace from the earth and people begin to kill one another.



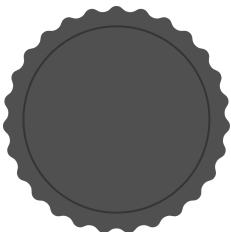
Seal 3:

- A rider on a black horse comes, the prices of bread become outrageous.



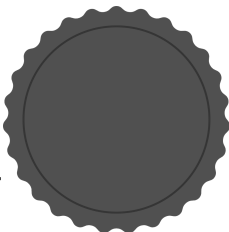
Seal 4:

- A rider on a pale horse kills ¼ of the earth with sword, famine, and death.



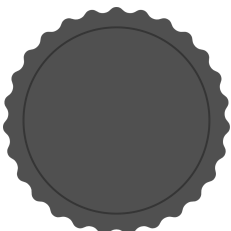
Seal 5:

- Martyrs cry out for vengeance, and they are given a white robe and told to wait until others who would die for the Word to complete their course.



Seal 6:

- An earthquake occurs.
- The sun is blackened.
- The moon turns to blood.
- Stars fall from the sky.
- Severe wind comes.



Seal 7:

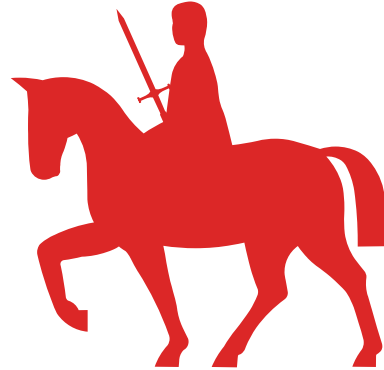
- Silence in heaven for a half an hour.
- 7 Angels are handed 7 trumpets.

The Four Horsemen



White Horse and Rider:

- Given a crown and bow.
- Goes forth to conquer.



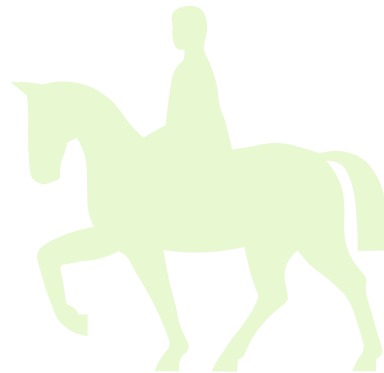
Red Horse and Rider:

- Given a sword.
- Peace is taken from the earth.



Black Horse and Rider:

- Holds a balance.
- Wheat and barley cost a day's wage.



Pale Horse and Rider:

- Rider's name is Death.
- Kills with sword, famine, death (likely pestilence/plague).

Revelation Six

In Revelation 6, we meet the four horsemen of the Apocalypse. As Jesus opens the seals of the book, judgement starts to fall on the earth.

I saw that the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying, as with a voice of thunder, "Come and see!" ² Then a white horse appeared, and he who sat on it had a bow. A crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer.

³ When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come!" ⁴ Another came out, a red horse. To him who sat on it was given power to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another. There was given to him a great sword.



Say What!?

Choenix

This means a quart.

Denarius

A day's wage.

The third horse and rider bring an increase in the cost of food (inflation and famine). A quart of barely would likely cover the average person's daily sustenance, and it will cost their whole day's wage. ²

Who's Who?



He who sat on it (the first rider)

Some interpret this to be Christ, others the Antichrist.

Arguments it is Christ:

- The horse is white.
- He receives a crown and conquers.
- Psalm 45 shows the Messiah will be equipped with weapons of war.

Arguments it is the Antichrist:

- He is pictured as a ruler in Scripture.
- Jesus said the beginning of the Tribulation would be marked by false messiahs.
- No arrow with his bow shows he conquers peacefully in the beginning, and the Antichrist will broker peace agreements. (Daniel 9:27).¹

⁵ When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, "Come and see!" And behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a balance in his hand. ⁶ I heard a voice in the middle of the four living creatures saying, "A choenix of wheat for a denarius, and three choenix of barley for a denarius! Don't damage the oil and the wine!"

⁷ When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see!" ⁸ And behold, a pale horse, and the name of he who sat on it was Death. **Hades** followed with him. Authority over one fourth of the earth, to kill with the sword, with famine, with death, and by the wild animals of the earth was given to him.



Say What!?

Hades

This Greek word means "the place of the unseen." It is not Hell (the word for that in Greek is gehenna), but the invisible world of the dead.³



Did you know?

Many people have died for their faith in Jesus over the years, but God will avenge them at the proper time. Whether or not you will ever die for your faith, all Christians are called to die to deny themselves, pick up their cross and follow Jesus, in effect, dying to themselves and their own desires (Matthew 16:24).

⁹ When he opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been killed for the Word of God, and for the testimony of the Lamb which they had. ¹⁰ They cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, Master, the holy and true, until you judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" ¹¹ A long white robe was given to each of them. They were told that they should rest yet for a while, until their fellow servants and their brothers, who would also be killed even as they were, should complete their course.

¹² I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and there was a great **earthquake**. The sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became as blood. ¹³ The stars of the sky fell to the earth, like a fig tree dropping its unripe figs when it is shaken by a great wind. ¹⁴ The sky was removed like a scroll when it is rolled up. Every mountain and island was moved out of its place. ¹⁵ The kings of the earth, the princes, the commanding officers, the rich, the strong, and every slave and free person, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains. ¹⁶ They told the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, ¹⁷ for the great day of his wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"



Did you know?

Natural disasters have always been associated with the judgement of God. Check out Isaiah 2:19-22, Joel 2, and Matthew 24:29 for just a few references.

Apply This!

I know many people who have a very difficult time reading about the judgement of God. They wonder, "How can a loving God allow this kind of disaster?" It is important to remember that God is loving and just. Because he is just, he must punish evil. Imagine a world where no one got in trouble if they did the wrong thing. It would be cruel and unjust, wouldn't it? For God to be just, evil must be punished.

I think a better question is, "How could God save any of us?" We all deserve death and punishment. We have all sinned and fallen short of his glory, and the penalty of that is death. Praise be to God for his incredible love and mercy! We can turn to him, seek forgiveness for our sins and be saved from the final judgement.

Revelation Seven

Many see chapter seven of Revelation as an interlude- it's a break in the action to help explain some things before the seventh seal is opened.¹ This chapter is a difficult one, and interpretations over the 144,000 sealed vary, but let's take a look and see what we discover.

View #1: Past

Historicists most often place the 144,000 as symbolic of the church in general.²

Preterists see the 144,000 as a symbolic number representing Jewish Christians that escaped Jerusalem, establishing God's remnant that is the church today.³

View #2: Continual

Idealists believe that the church is the true Israel. The number comes from 144 (twelve squared) representing the Old Israel and the New Israel. The 144 is multiplied by 1,000 which is a basic military division.⁴

View #3: Future

Futurists believe that 144,000 Jewish people will be spared and sealed. They argue that these 144,000 will bring Israel to repentance. Though not stated explicitly in Scripture, many wonder if these 144,000 will be involved in evangelism during the Tribulation.⁵

After this, I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth, or on the sea, or on any tree. ² I saw another angel ascend from the sunrise, having the seal of the living God. He cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given to harm the earth and the sea, ³ saying, "Don't harm the earth, the sea, or the trees, until we have sealed the bondservants of our God on their foreheads!" ⁴ I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred forty-four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel:



Did you know?

"Four corners of the earth" was a saying that referred to the four points of a compass. ⁶ Meanwhile the four winds might signify God's judgements.⁷

Who's Who?



Israel

Today, we know of Israel as the name of a country, but first it was the name of a man. In Genesis 32:22-32, God wrestles Jacob. Jacob was the son of Isaac, who was the son of Abraham, and he was to inherit the promises of God. The wrestling match ends with Jacob demanding a blessing and his name being changed to Israel. He had 12 sons, which eventually make up the 12 tribes of Israel.

⁵ of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand were sealed,
 of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand,
 of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand,
⁶ of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand,
 of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand,
 of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand,
⁷ of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand,
 of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand,
 of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand,
⁸ of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand,
 of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, and
 of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand were
 sealed.



Did you know?

This list is unusual in regard to the listing of the tribes. Here's why:

- Judah is rarely first. Some believe he is placed first here to signify the importance of the Messiah coming from him.
- Levi is typically omitted from tribal lists because God was their inheritance.
- Dan and Ephraim are omitted from this list. Some suggest this is due to their idolatry.⁸

⁹ After these things I looked, and behold, a great **multitude**
 which no man could count, out of every nation and of all
 tribes, peoples, and languages, standing before the throne
 and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes, with palm
 branches in their hands. ¹⁰ They cried with a loud voice,
 saying, "Salvation be to our God, who sits on the throne, and
 to the Lamb!"

Who's Who?



Multitude

This is those likely
 martyred during the
 Tribulation (see verse 14).⁹
 Some believe they came
 to Christ through the
 witness of the 144,000.¹⁰

¹¹ All the angels were standing around the throne, the elders, and the four living
 creatures; and they fell on their faces before his throne, and worshiped God, ¹² saying,
 "Amen! Blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor, power, and might, be to our God
 forever and ever! Amen."

¹³ One of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are arrayed in the white
 robes, who are they, and where did they come from?"

¹⁴ I told him, "My lord, you know."

He said to me, "These are those who came out of the great suffering. They
 washed their robes and made them white in the Lamb's blood. ¹⁵ Therefore they
 are before the throne of God, and they serve him day and night in his temple.
 He who sits on the throne will spread his tabernacle over them. ¹⁶ They will never
 be hungry or thirsty any more. The sun won't beat on them, nor any heat; ¹⁷ for
 the Lamb who is in the middle of the throne shepherds them and leads them to
 springs of life-giving waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Apply This!

If you were one who was struggling with the judgments of God last chapter, I hope this chapter gave you great hope. In the face of judgement and destruction, there is also great revival. God will place his special seal on some and great multitudes- greater than can be counted- will come to Christ. You see, God is patient, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to eternal life (2 Peter 3:9). With this hope burning bright in your chest, I wonder who you could reach out to? Perhaps God can use you to start a revival where you live during your lifetime. Pray. Ask him to use you. Ask him to send you to the lost, so they too can share in the hope of the Resurrection.

The Trumpets



Trumpet 1:

- Hail, fire, and blood from the sky.
- $\frac{1}{3}$ of the earth burned up.
- $\frac{1}{3}$ of the trees burned up.
- All grass burned up.



Trumpet 2:

- Something like a burning mountain thrown into the sea.
- $\frac{1}{3}$ of sea becomes blood.
- $\frac{1}{3}$ sea creatures die.
- $\frac{1}{3}$ of ships destroyed.



Trumpet 3:

- A great star falls from the sky into springs and rivers.
- $\frac{1}{3}$ water becomes bitter.
- Many die.



Trumpet 4:

- $\frac{1}{3}$ of the sun struck and darkened.
- $\frac{1}{3}$ of the moon struck.
- $\frac{1}{3}$ of the stars struck.
- An eagle cries "Woe" for the coming trumpet blasts.



Trumpet 5:

- Locusts are released from the abyss. They have the power to torment those without the seal for five months.



Trumpet 6:

- $\frac{1}{3}$ of mankind dies by fire smoke and sulfur from the mouths of four angels.



Trumpet 7:

- Voice in heaven announces: "The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. He will reign forever and ever!"

Revelation Eight

We get back to the action in chapter 8, with the final seal broken. Trumpets are handed out and prepared to be sounded. The different views again see these trumpets in different ways. Check it out:

View #1: Past

Historicists see the trumpets as invasions against the Roman Empire, the sixth being the fall of Constantinople.

Preterists see the first four trumpets as disaster inflicted by the Romans during the Jewish War. The 5th is likely demonic spirits and the 6th refers to Roman armies that destroyed Jerusalem and deported the Jews.¹

View #2: Continual

Idealists argue that these judgements, like the plagues of Egypt, occur throughout history.²

View #3: Future

Futurists think these trumpets represent disaster that will fall literally or symbolically on the earth during the Tribulation.³



Did you know?

Most see this as the calm before the storm.⁴

When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ² I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

³ Another angel came and stood over the altar, having a golden censer. Much incense was given to him, that he should add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. ⁴ The smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. ⁵ The angel took the censer, and he filled it with the fire of the altar, then threw it on the earth. Thunders, sounds, lightnings, and an earthquake followed.

⁶ The seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

⁷ The first sounded, and there followed hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. One third of the earth was burned up, and one third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

⁸ The second angel sounded, and something like a great burning mountain was thrown into the sea. One third of the sea became blood, ⁹ and one third of the living creatures which were in the sea died. One third of the ships were destroyed.



Did you know?

Wormwood is a bitter plant found in the Middle East. Because the water turned bitter, they called the star ⁵Wormwood.



Say What!?

Woe

An expression of grief.⁶

¹⁰ The third angel sounded, and a great star fell from the sky, burning like a torch, and it fell on one third of the rivers, and on the springs of water. ¹¹ The name of the star is "Wormwood." One third of the waters became wormwood. Many people died from the waters, because they were made bitter.

¹² The fourth angel sounded, and one third of the sun was struck, and one third of the moon, and one third of the stars, so that one third of them would be darkened; and the day wouldn't shine for one third of it, and the night in the same way. ¹³ I saw, 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 other blasts of the trumpets of the three angels, who are yet to sound!"

Apply This!

No matter your view on when this takes or has taken place, it is evident that God is Lord of all creation. The earth is his and everything in it (Psalm 24:1). Just look through the gospels and see the power Jesus has over nature when he calms the storm, walks on water, and withers a fig tree. But creation is broken. It, too, has been defiled by sin and death. Soon, God will make all things new, but first, even creation must face his wrath.

Revelation Nine

Nature began to experience the judgement of the Lord with the first four trumpets, and now, in chapter 9, the time has come for the people of the world to begin facing the judgement and wrath of God.

The fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from the sky which had fallen to the earth. The key to the pit of the abyss was given to him. ² He opened the pit of the abyss, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke from a burning furnace. The sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke from the pit. ³ Then out of the smoke came locusts on the earth, and power was given to them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.



Say What!?

Abyss

Bottomless pit.
This is a prison for demons.
In Luke 8:31, demons beg Jesus not to send them there. This is also where the Beast comes from and ² where Satan is imprisoned.



Did you know?

Sometimes “stars” means just that: stars. Here, because the star is given a key, it is assumed this “star” is an angel. Scholars disagree on whether this is a godly angel, an unholy angel (demon), or Satan himself. Here are the views:

Godly: In chapter 20, an angel still holds the key to the abyss, where he binds Satan.

Satan/demon: he unleashes demonic plagues. ¹

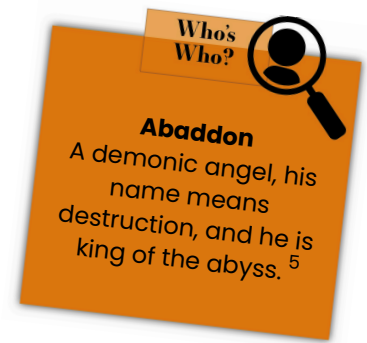
Locusts were often a plague sent to show the judgement of God. Here, many believe these are different, demonic locusts. Others have wondered if these are a description of helicopters, though this seems unlikely as they come from the Abyss. ³

Torment

To torture. This word can also be used to mean a testing by touchstone, which is how the purity of silver ⁴ or gold was tested.

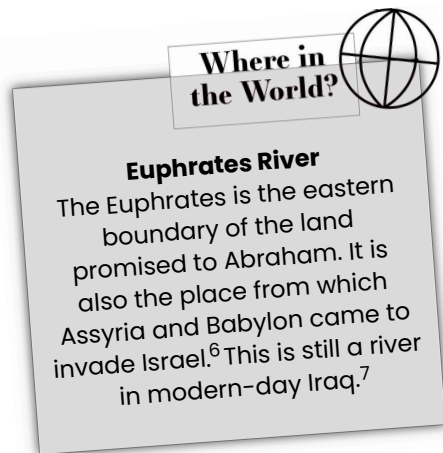
⁴ They were told that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those people who don't have God's seal on their foreheads. ⁵ They were given power, not to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a person. ⁶ In those days people will seek death, and will in no way find it. They will desire to die, and death will flee from them.

⁷ The shapes of the locusts were like horses prepared for war. On their heads were something like golden crowns, and their faces were like people's faces. ⁸ They had hair like women's hair, and their teeth were like those of lions. ⁹ They had breastplates like breastplates of iron. The sound of their wings was like the sound of many chariots and horses rushing to war. ¹⁰ They have tails like those of scorpions, with stingers. In their tails they have power to harm men for five months. ¹¹ They have over them as king the angel of the abyss. His name in Hebrew is "Abaddon", but in Greek, he has the name "Apollyon".



¹² The first woe is past. Behold, there are still two woes coming after this.

¹³ The sixth angel sounded. I heard a voice from the horns of the golden altar which is before God, ¹⁴ saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Free the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates!"



¹⁵ The four angels were freed who had been prepared for that hour and day and month and year, so that they might kill one third of mankind. ¹⁶ The number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million. I heard the number of them. ¹⁷ Thus I saw the horses in the vision and those who sat on them, having breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the horses' heads resembled lions' heads. Out of their mouths proceed fire, smoke, and sulfur. ¹⁸ By these three plagues, one third of mankind was killed: by the fire, the smoke, and the sulfur, 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 harm.

²⁰ The rest of mankind, who were not killed with these plagues, didn't repent of the works of their hands, that they wouldn't worship demons, and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood, which can't see, hear, or walk. ²¹ They didn't repent of their murders, their sorceries, their sexual immorality, or their thefts.

Apply This!

Do you see how God longs for the people to repent? God can use even the greatest trials and destruction to bring about repentance. But the people still alive harden their hearts and refuse to turn from their ways. I wonder the condition of your heart. Is it hardened like these people we see in Revelation? Do you refuse to give up your sinful ways and come into the light and life of the One True God? If he isn't your Lord, I would encourage you to take some time and count the cost of following him. Hebrews 3:7-8 quotes David and says, "Today if you will hear his voice, don't harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion."

Revelation Ten

Chapter ten begins the second interlude of Revelation (the first came in chapter 7). This interlude lasts 6 chapters, explaining things in detail.¹ In chapter ten, we see John encouraged and learn of a “little book.” Before you dig in, find out how the different views interpret the book.

View #1: Past

Historicists see the little book as the Bible. The development of the printing press and the translations of the Bible into common language during the Reformation “opened” the Bible to people.

Preterists believe the book represents the remaining prophecy of Revelation.²

View #2: Continual

Idealists believe the little book is a message for the whole world since the angel had his feet planted on both land and sea.³

View #3: Future

Futurists have a few different views. Some believe it is the prophecy of Revelation, others OT prophecies for the Jewish people, and still others a message to believers.⁴

I saw a mighty angel coming down out of the sky, clothed with a cloud. A rainbow was on his head. His face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire.² He had in his hand a little open book. He set his right foot on the sea, and his left on the land.³ He cried with a loud voice, as a lion roars. When he cried, the seven thunders uttered their voices.⁴ When the seven thunders sounded, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from the sky saying, “Seal up the things which the seven thunders said, and don’t write them.”

⁵ The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to the sky ⁶ and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there will no longer be delay,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 declared to his servants the prophets.

⁸ The voice which I heard from heaven, again speaking with me, said, "Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the land."

⁹ I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book.

He said to me, "Take it and [eat it](#). It will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey."

¹⁰ I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it. It was as sweet as honey in my mouth. When I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter. ¹¹ They told me, "You must prophesy again over many peoples, nations, languages, and kings."



Did you know?

Ezekiel also ate a scroll (Ezekiel 3) that tasted sweet to him. Some suggest that the taste of John's book was sweet because it was from God, but it left his stomach bitter because of the judgement it contained.⁵

Apply This!

I find myself encouraged during the pauses of Revelation. Perhaps I'm reading too much into it, but it seems as though God is acutely aware of the struggle that seeing all this is to John, and so he encourages him to keep going and to prophesy again. I'm reminded of how Daniel was also extremely troubled, feeling that his strength was gone when he saw visions of the end (Daniel 10), and an angel comforted him. I'm reminded of how the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision, encouraging him not to be afraid or keep silent while he lived in Corinth (Acts 18). God sees his people, and he cares deeply for them. No struggle is unnoticed, no problem escapes his eye. This incredible God, whom creatures and angels fall before sees us and cares for us.

If you're going through hard times, take comfort in the knowledge that God sees you and knows you. The hairs on your head are numbered. He knows even when a sparrow falls to the ground, and you are worth more than many sparrows (Matthew 10).

Revelation Eleven

Continuing the interlude, chapter 11 is a chapter that has several different interpretations. Check them out before you read:

View #1: Past

Historicists believe John measures the temple to determine the remnant of the church. The 1260 days represent the years of papal Rome. The two witnesses represent those who stood against the papacy before the Reformation.

Preterists believe the 1260 days were Nero's persecution and the Jewish War and the witnesses are either prophets who foretold the downfall or civil and religious authority in Israel.¹

View #2: Continual

Idealists believe the 1260 days symbolize the church age and the two witnesses are the church during that time.²

View #3: Future

Futurists believe the 1260 days to be literal days that mark out 3.5 years of the Tribulation. Many argue that the two witnesses are Moses and Elijah (some suggest Enoch instead of Moses).³

A reed like a rod was given to me. Someone said, "Rise and measure God's temple, and the altar, and those who worship in it. ² Leave out the court which is outside of the temple, and don't measure it, for it has been given to the nations. They will tread the holy city under foot for forty-two months. ³ I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

⁴ These are the two olive trees and the two lamp stands, standing before the Lord of the earth. ⁵ If anyone desires to harm them, fire proceeds out of their mouth and devours their enemies. If anyone desires to harm them, he must be killed in this way. ⁶ These have the power to shut up the sky, that it may not rain during the days of their prophecy. They have power over the waters, to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.



Did you know?

Ezekiel also measured out the temple at God's command in Ezekiel 40.

Who's Who?



Two Witnesses

Though varying views differ on who the witnesses are as stated above, it is easily seen by all that both witnesses operate in incredible power by the Holy Spirit.⁴



Did you know?

In a vision in the OT book of Zechariah, Joshua and Zerubbabel were olive trees that stood near a gold lampstand. These men were incredible leaders in their day.⁵

Who's
Who?



Beast

Many believe the beast is a human world ruler that Satan empowers. He rises from the abyss.⁶ Not an actual monster, he is called a beast because he is full of evil.

Where in
the World?



Sodom

Lived in by Lot, the nephew of Abraham, Sodom was destroyed in Genesis 19 due to its sexual immorality and general moral degradation.

Egypt

The Israelites were enslaved in Egypt until Moses led them out in the Exodus. Egypt is known in the Bible for its slavery and idolatry.



Did you
know?

Some see this city as Rome because Jesus was crucified under Roman authority, while others see it as Jerusalem, where he was crucified outside the city gates.⁷

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 Their dead bodies will be in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called **Sodom** and **Egypt**, where also their Lord was crucified. ⁹ From among the peoples, tribes, languages, and nations, people will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not allow their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. ¹⁰ Those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, and they will be glad. They will give gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

¹¹ After the three and a half days, the breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood on their feet. Great fear fell on those who saw them. ¹² I heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" They went up into heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. ¹³ In that day 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 comes quickly.

¹⁵ The seventh angel sounded, and great voices in heaven followed, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. He will reign forever and ever!"

¹⁶ The twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God's throne, fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷ saying: "We give you thanks, Lord God, the Almighty, the one who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and reigned. ¹⁸ The nations were angry, and your wrath came, as did the time for the dead to be judged, and to give your bondservants the prophets, their reward, as well as to the saints and those who fear your name, to the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth."

¹⁹ God's temple that is in heaven was opened, and the [ark](#) of the Lord's covenant was seen in his temple. Lightnings, sounds, thunders, an earthquake, and great hail followed.



Did you know?

In Exodus 25, God commanded the Israelites to make the Ark of the Covenant. Inside was placed the stone tablets of the law, Aaron's rod, and manna. The ark symbolized the presence of God.

Apply This!

Whether you believe the two witnesses of chapter 11 are Moses and Elijah, representatives of the church, or those who stood firm against the papacy or Rome, take a moment to think about their witness. Against all evil, these men or symbols of men stood firm. Against darkness, against idolatry, against power, against the whole of culture, they stand. They don't stand in their own power, but only by the power of God.

How are you standing today? Is your foundation sure? Rooted in the power of Christ and his Holy Spirit dwelling within you? Are you standing up for what is right in school or your workplace? Are your actions bringing glory to God or is your focus on yourself?

Our lives are all telling a story. May we reflect today on the story it is telling- the story of the power of God at work within us, or some other story where we are the main character. Lord, help us to repent when we forget that we are called to be witnesses of your power and might. Strengthen us to stand firm for you.

Interpretations of Signs in Revelation 12

Revelation 12 and 13 are full of vivid pictures that symbolize other things. When I read Revelation first in middle school, I didn't realize these were symbols and found myself wondering why anyone would follow a 7-headed monster. When you see words like "dragon" and "beast" think evil. Before moving on to the reading chapter 12, we'll look at each symbol and how these have been interpreted differently by different groups.



The Woman Clothed with the Sun¹

Past

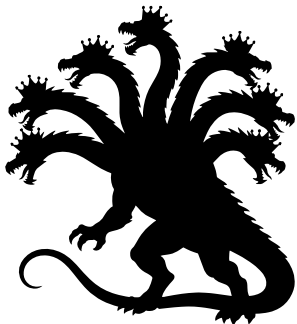
- Historicists believe the woman was the church persecuted by Imperial Rome.
- Preterists believe the woman was Israel.

Continual

- Idealists believe the woman is the church during the church age.

Future

- Futurists believe the woman represents Israel.



The Dragon

All believe the Dragon is Satan as it is explicitly stated in the Bible.

(Note: the pictured dragon is missing horns, which are very important, but my graphic design skills are limited).



The Male Child

Past

- Historicists believe the child is the true church within the woman (the church persecuted by Imperial Rome).
- Preterists believe the child is the church.²

Continual

- Idealists believe the child is Christ.³

Future

- Futurists believe the child is Christ.⁴



The War in the Sky

Past

- Some historicists believe the war occurred when Christianity and paganism were at odds during the reign of Emperor Julian. The casting down of the dragon was the end of the conflict.
- Preterists believe the battle is between Christ and Satan, many arguing it was finished at the resurrection.

Continual

- Idealists argue the battle of good and evil was finished when Christ was born, in a sense, throwing Satan down from heaven.

Future

- Futurists believe this battle occurs during the Tribulation. Some arguing it is in the beginning, but many the middle. At the end, Satan is cast down from⁵ heaven where he accuses, and he then wreaks greater havoc on the earth.



The Rest of Her Offspring

Past

- Historicists argue since the church could not be destroyed, Satan turned his attention to individual Christians.
- Preterists believe the offspring are gentiles (non-Jews) brought into God's family.

Continual

- Idealists believe the offspring of the woman are Christians.

Future

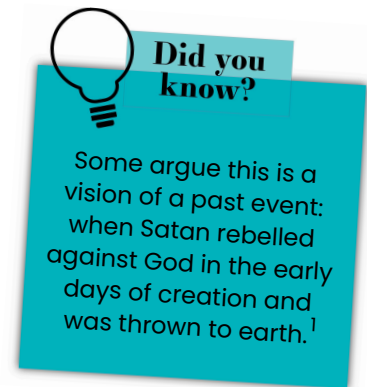
- Futurists believe these are faithful Jews that come to Christ during the Tribulation.⁶

Revelation Twelve

Now that you know the symbols and different interpretations of those signs, let's dig into the text and see what God's Word has to say.

A great sign was seen in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. ² She was with child. She cried out in pain, laboring to give birth.

³ Another sign was seen in heaven. Behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven crowns. ⁴ His tail drew one third of the stars of the sky, and threw them to the earth. The dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child. ⁵ She gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. Her child was caught up to God and to his throne. ⁶ The woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that there they may nourish her one thousand two hundred sixty days.



⁷ There was war in the sky. Michael and his angels made war on the dragon. The dragon and his angels made war. ⁸ They didn't prevail. No place was found for them any more in heaven. ⁹ The great dragon was thrown down, the old serpent, he who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world. He was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

¹⁰ I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, the power, and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ has come; for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night. ¹¹ They overcame him because of the Lamb's blood, and because of the word of their testimony. They didn't love their life, even to death. ¹² Therefore rejoice, heavens, and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and to the sea, because the devil has gone down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has but a short time."

¹³ When the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. ¹⁴ Two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, so that she might be nourished for a time, times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. ¹⁵ The serpent spewed water out of his mouth after the woman like a river, that he might cause her to be carried away by the stream. ¹⁶ The earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the river which the dragon spewed out of his mouth. ¹⁷ The dragon grew angry with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep God's commandments and hold Jesus' testimony.

Apply This!

No matter when you believe this specific battle in Revelation 12 takes place, make no mistake that we are in a spiritual battle even now. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul reminds them and us that "...our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world's rulers of the darkness of this age, and against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12). Thankfully, we are not without armor. Our great God offers us the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, the shoes of the Good News of peace, the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit. The question is: are you armed? You wouldn't walk into a war zone without the proper equipment, and you shouldn't walk through life without the proper Spiritual battle array. Satan and the forces of darkness are real, but they are no match for our Almighty God. Arm yourself in him today and remember who you're fighting.

Interpretations of Signs in Revelation 13

Now we'll take a look at the signs from 13. These two beasts play a big part in the rest of Revelation!



The Beast from the Sea

Past

- Historicists believe both beasts are aspects of the Papacy in Rome.
- Preterists believe beast from the sea is Rome (or specifically, Nero).

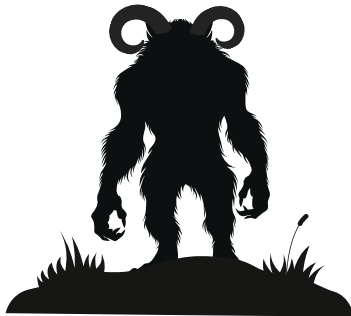
Continual

- Idealists argue this beast is political power that persecutes the church.

Future

- Futurists think this beast is a political world leader.¹

(Note: the pictured beast is missing six of his heads and eight of his horns. These are important, but my graphic design skills are limited.)



The Beast from the Land

Past

- Historicists believe both beasts are different aspects of the Papacy in Rome.
- Preterists believe this beast is either the cult of Emperor worship or false prophets in Israel.

Continual

- Idealists believe this beast is false religion that loves political power.

Future

- Futurists believe the second beast is a religious leader that leads the world in worship of the first beast.²



The Fatal Wound

Past

- Historicists believe the deadly wound came to the Beast when the last pagan emperor (Julian) died. However, the papacy came forth and revived pagan practices during the reign of Charlamange.
- Preterists believe if the wounded head is to be assumed as Nero, the survival of the Roman Empire after him was astonishing. Others see the head as Imperial Rome in general, which should have died at the death of Julius Caesar. Finally, others believe the gospel caused a mortal wound to the Roman Empire, but paganism still survived.

Continual

- Idealists believe the wounded head represents how Pagan empires survive, especially the upheaval of Imperial Rome.

Future

- Futurists believe the mortal wound will possibly be an assassination attempt on the world leader, from which he will rise. Others see it as a revival of the Roman Empire.³

Revelation Thirteen

The signs continue in chapter 14 of Revelation. Here we'll meet two beasts and watch the havoc they wreak on the earth. If you're really getting into prophecy, you can check out Daniel's vision of some of these events in Daniel 7 and 12.

Then I stood on the sand of the sea. I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads. On his horns were ten crowns, and on his heads, blasphemous names. ² The beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. ³ One of his heads looked like it had been wounded fatally. His fatal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled at the beast. ⁴ They worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"



Blasphemy

A contemptuous or profane act, utterance, or writing concerning God. ¹

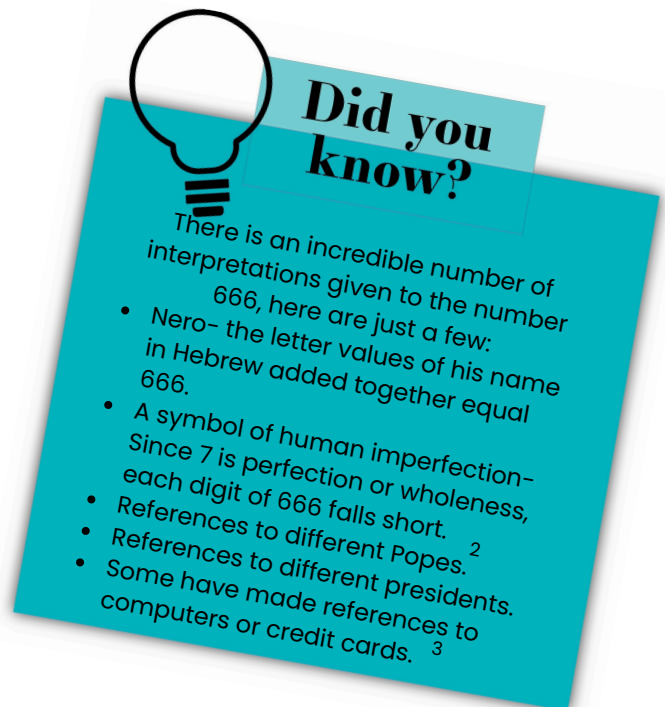
⁵ A mouth speaking great things and blasphemy was given to him. Authority to make war for forty-two months was given to him. ⁶ He opened his mouth for blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, his dwelling, and those who dwell in heaven. ⁷ It was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. Authority over every tribe, people, language, and nation was given to him. ⁸ All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been killed. ⁹ If anyone has an ear, let him hear.

¹⁰ If anyone is to go into captivity, he will go into captivity. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, he must be killed. Here is the endurance and the faith of the saints.

¹¹ I saw another beast coming up out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. ¹² He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. He makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. ¹³ He performs great signs, even making fire come down out of the sky to the earth in the sight of people. ¹⁴ He deceives my own people who dwell on the earth because of the signs he was granted to do in front of the beast, saying to those who dwell on the earth that they should make an image to the beast who had the sword wound and lived. ¹⁵ It was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause as many as wouldn't worship the image of the beast to be killed. ¹⁶ He causes all, the small and the great, the rich and the poor, and the free and the slave, to be given marks on their right hands or on their foreheads; ¹⁷ and that no one would be able to buy or to sell unless he has that mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name. ¹⁸ Here is wisdom. He who has understanding, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. His number is [six hundred sixty-six](#).

Apply This!

Reading Revelation can feel a little scary sometimes. Evil seems to be everywhere, along with death and destruction. In moments when you feel overwhelmed by all the bad, I want to point you back to the very beginning of Revelation. Remember that this book is about Jesus. It is about his victory over sin, death, evil, and wrong. Yes, evil is strong, but our God is so much stronger. He holds the keys. He overcame. He triumphed. Because of his victory, his followers share in his triumph. We are adopted as his sons and daughters into the Kingdom of light. Don't let the darkness scare you—we are more than conquerors through Jesus!



Revelation Fourteen

Our eyes are turned once more to the Lamb in chapter 14. The climax is near, and angels send out a final call to honor God and warnings to those who don't.

Where in the World?



Mount Zion

The hill on which the temple was built in Jerusalem. It also can refer to the heavenly Jerusalem (also called the city of God).¹

Who's Who?



144,000

Most believe these are the same 144,000 mentioned in chapter 7.²

I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him a number, one hundred forty-four thousand, having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads. ² I heard a sound from heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of a great thunder. The sound which I heard was like that of harpists playing on their harps. ³ They sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the one hundred forty-four thousand, those who had been redeemed out of the earth. ⁴ These are those who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are those who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These were redeemed by Jesus from among men, the first fruits to God and to the Lamb. ⁵ In their mouth was found no lie, for they are blameless.

⁶ I saw an angel flying in mid heaven, having an eternal Good News to proclaim to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language, and people. ⁷ He said with a loud voice, “Fear the Lord, and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and the springs of waters!”

⁸ Another, a second angel, followed, saying, “Babylon the great has fallen, which has made all the nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her sexual immorality.”

Where in the World?



Babylon

First mentioned here, Babylon will take center stage in the next few chapters. The literal location of Babylon is modern-day Iraq, but interpreters argue whether or not this is literal. In Bible times, Babylon overtook the Southern Kingdom of Judah and led many off as captives (2 Kings 25:1-21).

⁹ Another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a great voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is prepared unmixed in the cup of his anger. He will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ The smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever. They have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.

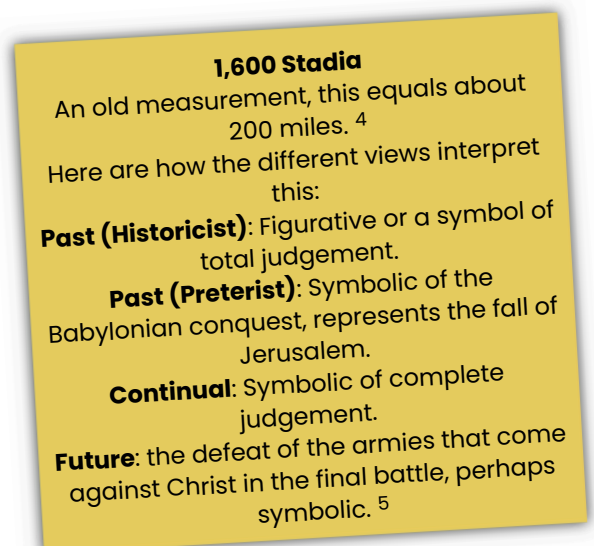
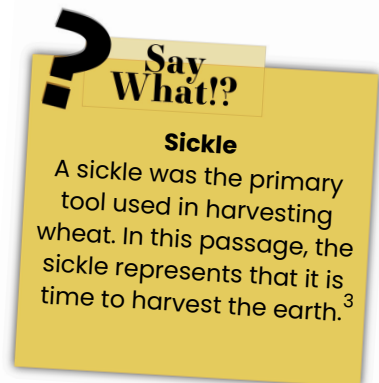
¹² Here is the perseverance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."

¹³ I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'"

"Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their works follow with them."

¹⁴ I looked, and saw a white cloud, and on the cloud one sitting like a son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. ¹⁵ Another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, "Send your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come; for the harvest of the earth is ripe!" ¹⁶ He who sat on the cloud thrust his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

¹⁷ Another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven. He also had a sharp sickle. ¹⁸ Another angel came out from the altar, he who has power over fire, and he called with a great voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Send your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for the earth's grapes are fully ripe!" ¹⁹ The angel thrust his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vintage of the earth and threw it into the great wine press of the wrath of God. ²⁰ The wine press was trodden outside of the city, and blood came out of the wine press, up to the bridles of the horses, as far as one thousand six hundred stadia.



Apply This!

God leaves people without an excuse. The entire world is preached to by angels. They call the people of the earth to fear the Lord and give him glory. They warn the people not to take part in worship of the beast. No one will be able to say, "We had no idea!" The choice is laid before them just as Joshua laid it before the Israelites before he died. He told them:

"Now therefore fear Yahweh, and serve him in sincerity and in truth. Put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, in Egypt; and serve Yahweh. ¹⁵ If it seems evil to you to serve Yahweh, choose today whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve Yahweh."

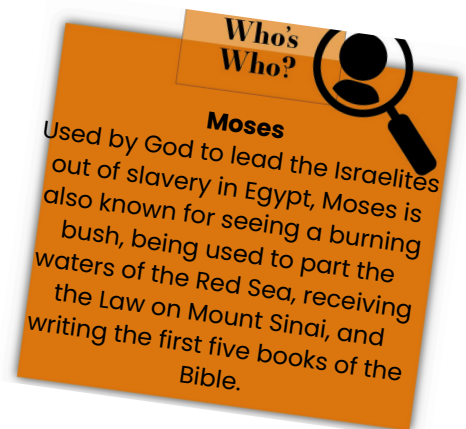
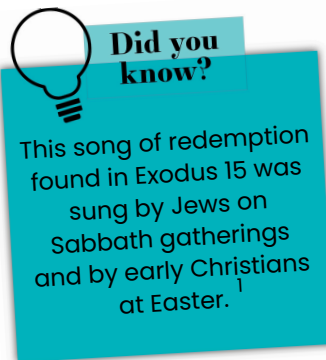
This choice is also laid before you: Who will you serve? Will you fear the Lord and give him glory? Or will you chase after this world and its empty promises? Consider the cost, dear reader. We all have a master; we all serve something or someone. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Revelation Fifteen

In Revelation 15, we are introduced to the final plagues. Remember that Revelation isn't completely written in order. There are pauses for explanations and descriptions. But now, the final judgements are called forth. We've seen seals and trumpets, next come the bowls.

I saw another great and marvelous sign in the sky: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them God's wrath is finished.

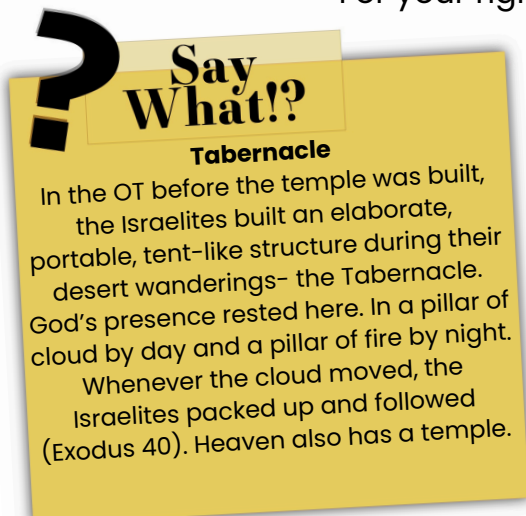
² I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who overcame the beast, his image, and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. ³ They sang the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,



"Great and marvelous are your works, Lord God, the Almighty!
Righteous and true are your ways, you King of the nations.

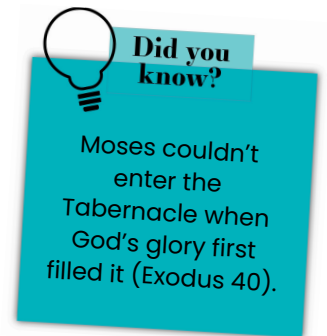
⁴ Who wouldn't fear you, Lord,
and glorify your name?
For you only are holy.

For all the nations will come and worship before you.
For your righteous acts have been revealed."



⁵ After these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. ⁶ The seven angels who had the seven plagues came out, clothed with pure, bright linen, and wearing golden sashes around their chests.

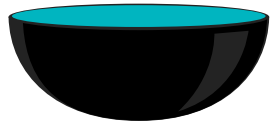
⁷ One of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever. ⁸ The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power. No one was able to [enter](#) into the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels would be finished.



Apply This!

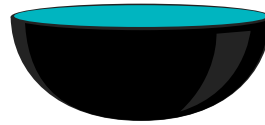
I wonder if we sometimes gloss over the glory of God. He is intimate and personal, but he is also holy, perfect, magnificent, powerful, and completely beyond what we can imagine. The Israelites shook when they heard his voice from Mount Sinai (Exodus 20:18-21). Their fear was so great that they wanted Moses alone to talk to God. Isaiah saw the Lord on his throne and was undone at the uncleanness of his lips (Isaiah 6:1-5). Even John, who walked with Jesus, fell at his feet like a dead man when he saw the resurrected Lord (Revelation 1:17). May we regain an awe of God once more. His power is unimaginable. His might is matchless. His sovereignty is over all the earth. I think if we remembered that better, we would fear a lot less.

The Bowls



Bowl 1:

- A harmful and painful sore for those with the mark of the Beast.



Bowl 2:

- The sea turns to blood and all animals die.



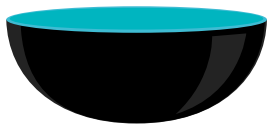
Bowl 3:

- Rivers and springs become blood.



Bowl 4:

- The sun scorches men with fire.



Bowl 5:

- The Beast's kingdom is darkened and people have pain from sores.



Bowl 6:

- The water of the Euphrates dries up.



Bowl 7:

- A great earthquake splits the great city in three. Mountains vanish and giant hailstones fall.

Revelation Sixteen

By this point, you won't be surprised to learn that people view these bowls of wrath differently. Check out the viewpoints and see where you land as you read the chapter.

View #1: Past

Historicists believe the bowls represent judgement on the Papacy. They began to be poured out during the French Revolution and are still being poured out today.

Preterists believe the bowls were against Jerusalem, finding fulfillment in it's fall in 70 AD or the judgement of God on Rome.¹

View #2: Continual

Idealists believe these disasters recur throughout history. They also acknowledge the similarities between the trumpets and the bowls, pointing out that the trumpet judgements are only partial, while the bowls are final.²

View #3: Future

Futurists believe the bowls represent future judgments like nothing seen before, leading up to the final battle- the battle of Armageddon.³

Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go, pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath on the earth."

² The first angel went and poured out his bowl on the land, and ugly, festering sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshiped its image.

³ The second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it turned into blood like that of a dead person, and every living thing in the sea died.

⁴ The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. ⁵ Then I heard the angel in charge of the waters say:

"You are just in these judgments, O Holy One,
you who are and who were;

⁶ for they have shed the blood of your holy people and your prophets,
and you have given them blood to drink as they deserve."

⁷ And I heard the altar respond:

"Yes, Lord God Almighty,
true and just are your judgments."

⁸ The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and the sun was allowed to scorch people with fire. ⁹ They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify him.

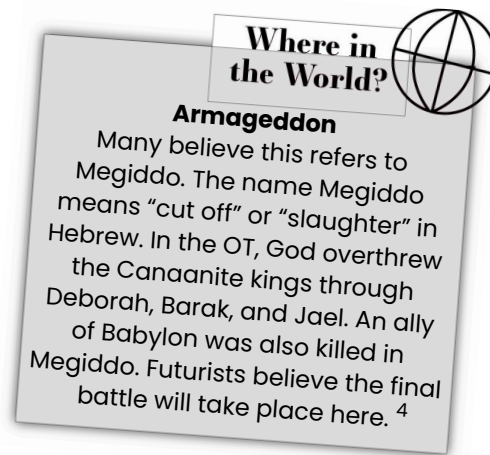
¹⁰ The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in agony ¹¹ and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done.

¹² The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East. ¹³ Then I saw three impure spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴ They are demonic spirits that perform signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.

¹⁵ "Look, I come like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and remains clothed, so as not to go naked and be shamefully exposed."

¹⁶ Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon. ¹⁷ The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, "It is done!" ¹⁸ Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since mankind has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake.

¹⁹ The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath. ²⁰ Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found. ²¹ From the sky huge hailstones, each weighing about a hundred pounds, fell on people. And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible.



Apply This!

As these bowls of wrath are poured out at a rapid rate, did you notice how the people responded? They still refused to repent and give glory to God. In fact, by the end, they curse God. So often trials, disasters, and hardships in our lives can lead us to a crossroads. We can cry out to God, knowing that he alone can save us from the calamity of sin and death, or we can curse him, blame him, and harden our hearts against him. What is your response? Do you trust in times of discipline, trouble, and heartache? Or do you refuse to repent and give him glory? Do you lean into him, or do you curse him? Examine your heart today and ask him to soften the places where you are hard. Ask him to mold you as clay and shape you into who he created you to be- one made in his likeness that glorifies his name.

Interpretations of Signs in Revelation 17-19



The Prostitute

We aren't talking about an actual woman, but a city, as acknowledged at the end of chapter 17. All agree it is a city, but the questions are: is the city literal? If so, which city?

Past

- Historicists believe the prostitute is the papal system of religion and government. She is the apostate church from which other apostate churches have come.
- Preterists believe the prostitute is Rome or Jerusalem.

Continual

- Idealists believe the prostitute represents the symbol of Rome—lust and seduction and immorality.

Future

- Many futurists believe the prostitute is Rome—representing either the Roman Catholic church or an apostate religion.¹



The Rider on the White Horse

Past

- Historicists believe the rider represents the ongoing conquest of Christ through his Word.
- Preterists believe this represents the warfare of the church through the Gospel.

Continual

- Idealists believe this is Christ at his second coming.

Future

- Futurists believe this is Christ at his second coming.²

Revelation Seventeen

We move to another part of the vision in chapters 17 and 18. No longer are we looking at bowls of wrath being poured out, but at the judgement of the prostitute.

One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here. I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who sits on many waters, ² with whom the kings of the earth committed sexual immorality. Those who dwell in the earth were made drunken with the wine of her sexual immorality." ³ He carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness. I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet-colored [beast](#), full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns. ⁴ The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of the sexual immorality of the earth. ⁵ And on her forehead a name was written, "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE PROSTITUTES AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." ⁶ I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. When I saw her, I wondered with great amazement.

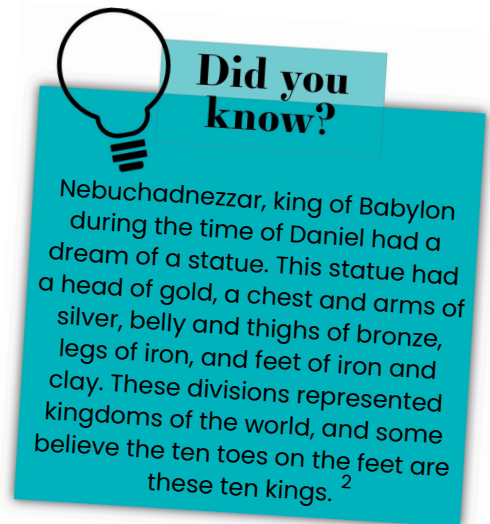
⁷ The angel said to me, "Why do you wonder? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. ⁸ The beast that you saw was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss and to go into destruction. Those who dwell on the earth and whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel when they see that the beast was, and is not, and shall be present.



Did you know?

All interpretations agree this is the same beast that came from the sea, mentioned in chapter 13.¹

⁹ Here is the mind that has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. ¹⁰ They are seven kings. Five have fallen, the one is, and the other has not yet come. When he comes, he must continue a little while. ¹¹ The beast that was, and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven; and he goes to destruction. ¹² The ten horns that you saw are [ten kings](#) who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. ¹³ These have one mind, and they give their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴ These will war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with him are called, chosen, and faithful.” ¹⁵ He said to me, “The waters which you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages. ¹⁶ The ten horns which you saw, they and the beast will hate the prostitute, will make her desolate, will strip her naked, will eat her flesh, and will burn her utterly with fire. ¹⁷ For God has put in their hearts to do what he has in mind, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God should be accomplished. ¹⁸ The woman whom you saw is the great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.”



Apply This!

I find God's sovereignty marvelous in this chapter. A horrible beast with an evil mistress that drinks the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. It sounds like a scene from a horror movie that you never saw coming. But God knows. He sees the beast and the woman but knows their final destination. He recognizes the evil and the power, but what occurs is what he has in mind. His words will be accomplished; his justice will be fulfilled. Even in the midst of great evil, our God is in control. He is still on the throne. He is still faithful.

Revelation Eighteen

The vision of Babylon continues in chapter 18, only here we see her fall. We see evil met with justice and the judgement of God fulfilled.

After these things, I saw another angel coming down out of the sky, having great authority. The earth was illuminated with his glory. ²He cried with a mighty voice, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, and she has become a habitation of demons, a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hated bird! ³For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her sexual immorality, the kings of the earth committed sexual immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from the abundance of her luxury."

⁴I heard another voice from heaven, saying, "Come out of her, my people, that you have no participation in her sins, and that you don't receive of her plagues, ⁵for her sins have reached to the sky, and God has remembered her iniquities. ⁶[Return to her](#) just as she returned, and repay her double as she did, and according to her works. In the cup which she mixed, mix to her double. ⁷However much she glorified herself and grew wanton, so much give her of torment and mourning. For she says in her heart, 'I sit a queen, and am no widow, and will in no way see mourning.' ⁸Therefore in one day her plagues will come: death, mourning, and famine; and she will be utterly burned with fire, for the Lord God who has judged her is strong.

⁹The kings of the earth who committed sexual immorality and lived wantonly with her will weep and wail over her, when they look at the smoke of her burning, ¹⁰standing far away for the fear of her torment, saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For your judgment has come in one hour.'

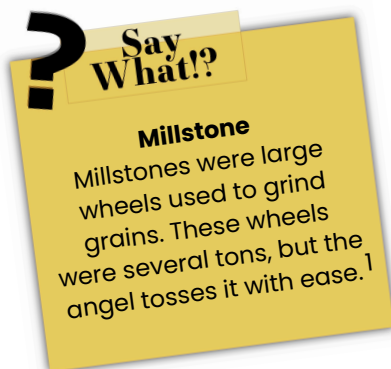


Did you know?

Vengeance belongs to the Lord (Deuteronomy 32:35 and Romans 12:19). It is God who will pay back evil, it is God who will render justice. Sometimes it can be hard to wait and trust when we want to pay back people for the wrongs done to us but, just as God returns to Babylon what is due her, he will one day punish and repay all evil and make all things new.

¹¹ The merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise any more: ¹² merchandise of gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, fine linen, purple, silk, scarlet, all expensive wood, every vessel of ivory, every vessel made of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble; ¹³ and cinnamon, incense, perfume, frankincense, wine, olive oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle, sheep, horses, chariots, and people's bodies and souls. ¹⁴ The fruits which your soul lusted after have been lost to you. All things that were dainty and sumptuous have perished from you, and you will find them no more at all. ¹⁵ The merchants of these things, who were made rich by her, will stand far away for the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, ¹⁶ saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, she who was dressed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls! ¹⁷ For in an hour such great riches are made desolate.' Every ship master, and everyone who sails anywhere, and mariners, and as many as gain their living by sea, stood far away, ¹⁸ and cried out as they looked at the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What is like the great city?' ¹⁹ They cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and mourning, saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had their ships in the sea were made rich by reason of her great wealth!' For she is made desolate in one hour.

²⁰ "Rejoice over her, O heaven, you saints, apostles, and prophets, for God has judged your judgment on her."



²¹ A mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and cast it into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down, and will be found no more at all. ²² The voice of harpists, minstrels, flute players, and trumpeters will be heard no more at all in you. No craftsman of whatever craft will be found any more at all in you. The sound of a mill will be heard no more at all in you. ²³ The light of a lamp will shine no more at all in you. The voice of the bridegroom and of the bride will be heard no more at all in you, for your merchants were the princes of the earth; for with your sorcery all the nations were deceived. ²⁴ In her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on the earth."

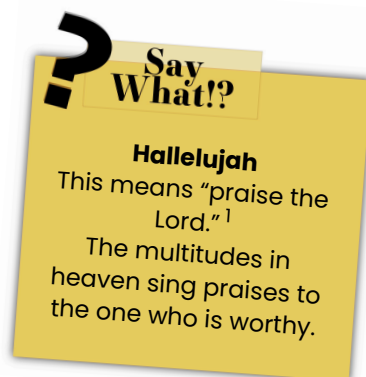
Apply This!

Did you notice the wealth, power, and prestige of Babylon? Did you notice how people wept when her great riches were made desolate in an hour? That's the thing with riches- they do not endure. Solomon recognized this in Ecclesiastes, and Jesus reminded his people of it when he commanded us to lay up treasures in heaven, rather than treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and thieves steal (Matthew 6:19-21). Where is your treasure? Is your trust and joy in your riches, or are you laying up heavenly treasure by the way you live? Wealth will fade and come to nothing. Riches can be made desolate in an hour. But those who follow Jesus gain an inheritance that never spoils or fades. Let us fix our eyes on what is unseen and eternal, everything else is temporary.

Revelation Nineteen

Have no fear, the Rider on the White Horse is here! We see him, Faithful and True, leading the way as the true Conqueror and King.

After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "[Hallelujah](#)! Salvation, power, and glory belong to our God; ² for his judgments are true and righteous. For he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her sexual immorality, and he has avenged the blood of his servants at her hand."



³ A second said, "Hallelujah! Her smoke goes up forever and ever." ⁴ The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne, saying, "Amen! Hallelujah!"

⁵ A voice came from the throne, saying, "Give praise to our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, the small and the great!"



Did you know?

In the OT, Israel was referred to as betrothed (or engaged) to God (Hosea 2:16-22). In the NT, the imagery is also applied to the church. The people of God are his bride. Now, we wait out the engagement period with the hope and knowledge that someday soon, our bridegroom will come for us.²

Jewish marriage customs took place in three parts: the engagement (when a believer puts their faith in Jesus as Lord), when the groom gets the bride and takes her to her father's house for the marriage ceremony (this occurs in heaven), and the bride and groom go noisily to their new home for a feast (the wedding supper).³

⁶ I heard something like the voice of a great multitude, and like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of mighty thunders, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns! ⁷ Let's rejoice and be exceedingly glad, and let's give the glory to him. For the [wedding of the Lamb](#) has come, and his wife has made herself ready." ⁸ It was given to her that she would array herself in bright, pure, fine linen, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

⁹ He said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the [wedding supper](#) of the Lamb.'" He said to me, "These are true words of God."



¹⁰ I fell down before his feet to worship him. He said to me, "Look! Don't do it! I am a fellow bondservant with you and with your brothers who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God, for the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy."

¹¹ I saw the heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it is called Faithful and True. In righteousness he judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes are a flame of fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has names written and a name written which no one knows but he himself. ¹³ He is clothed in a garment sprinkled with blood. His name is called "The Word of God." ¹⁴ The armies which are in heaven, clothed in white, pure, fine linen, followed him on white horses. ¹⁵ Out of his mouth proceeds a sharp, double-edged sword that with it he should strike the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod. He treads the wine press of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty. ¹⁶ He has on his garment and on his thigh a name written, "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

¹⁷ I saw an angel standing in the sun. He cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the sky, "Come! Be gathered together to the great supper of God, ¹⁸ that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, small and great." ¹⁹ I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him who sat on the horse and against his army. ²⁰ The beast was taken, and with him the false prophet who worked the signs in his sight, with which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. ²¹ The rest were killed with the sword of him who sat on the horse, the sword which came out of his mouth. So all the birds were filled with their flesh.



Apply This!

Whether you see this Rider as the gospel or Jesus himself, know that he is a warrior. The many crowns of his head speak of royal, kingly authority. The white horse denotes a conqueror. He strikes down the nations and his victory is sure. Do you feel the hope swell in your chest? Does something inside of you yearn for all that is broken and wrong to be made new? Do you long to see evil punished, and goodness prevail? If you interpret Revelation through the past view, then let your lives bring the good news to a darkened world, wielding the Word to cause good to triumph over evil. If you interpret Revelation in the continual or futurist view, let your hope of the coming King encourage you in the darkest times and spur you on to the good works that God has prepared for you.

Revelation Twenty

If you remember back to the chart on page 15, there are three main views that people have on the millennial Kingdom of God. The views are called amillennial, premillennial, and postmillennial, and they come from their interpretation of verses 2-7 in chapter 20 of Revelation. These views don't necessarily stick to the same groups of interpretations of past, continual, and future. You can agree with the Continual camp in every area, but fall into any three of these views for the millennial kingdom. We'll break down the three views again quickly here but refer back to the chart and timeline if you're still confused.

View #1: Amillennial

To be amillennial means that you do not believe in a literal 1,000-year reign. The binding of Satan seen in this chapter was done when Jesus died on the cross and the 1,000 years are symbolic of the church age. Satan's rebellion at the end is his final attempt to rule before the return of Christ.¹

View #2: Postmillennial

Postmillennials believe that the victories of Christ and the binding of Satan happen gradually over the course of the church age. Over time, the spread of the gospel will create a beautiful world full of harmony that is the kingdom of God. Then Christ will return and put an end to Satan. Once that is complete, Christ will return.²

View #3: Premillennial

Premillennialism argues that the previous chapter of Revelation (19) depicts Christ's second coming. Chapter 20 immediately follows in which he binds Satan and rules with the Saints for 1,000 literal years. After this, Satan is released and rebels once more, ending in his destruction. Once Satan is thrown into the lake of fire, all the nonbelievers are raised and judged.³

I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. ² He seized the dragon, the old serpent, who is the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole inhabited earth, and bound him for a thousand years, ³ and cast him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years were finished. After this, he must be freed for a short time.

⁴ I saw thrones, and **they** sat on them, and **judgment** was given to them. I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and such as didn't worship the beast nor his image, and didn't receive the mark on their forehead and on their hand. They lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ The rest of the dead didn't live until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over these, the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with him one thousand years.

Who's Who?



They

There is a lot of speculation over who the "they" refers to in verses 4-5. Here are the possibilities:

- God, Christ, or angels
- The 24 elders of Rev. 4
- Martyrs who refused to worship the beast.
- All the saints of both the Old and New Testaments ⁴

Did you know?



1 Corinthians 6:2-4 states that saints will judge the world.

Where in the World?



Gog and Magog

Ezekiel 38 and 39 mentions Gog and Magog as nations that will come against Israel. Most believe this occurs during the Tribulation. This reference, therefore, is symbolic of the evil forces persuaded to make a final stand against Christ.⁵

Say What!?



Books

The unbelievers judged before the great white throne have books opened before them. The Book of Life lists those who have put their faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. That alone is where salvation is found. But another set of books record deeds done on earth. These deeds cannot save a person but likely determine the degree of punishment they will receive in eternity.⁶

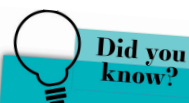
⁷ And after the thousand years, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and he will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, **Gog and Magog**, to gather them together to the war, whose number is as the sand of the sea. ⁹ They went up over the width of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. Fire came down out of heaven from God and devoured them. ¹⁰ The devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet are also. They will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

¹¹ I saw a great white throne and him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. There was found no place for them. ¹² I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and they opened **books**. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead who were in it. Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them. They were judged, each one according to his works.

¹⁴ Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.
¹⁵ If anyone was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.

Apply This!

This is a difficult passage to read. Here we see the judgement of God fall upon the unbelievers. A sobering passage, it is a stark reminder that what we do with our lives matters. We were made to bring glory to God, to be in right relationship with him. Because of sin and death, this was broken. But the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world came for the very purpose to renew that relationship and make us right with God through the purchase of his blood. This is the truth. This is the gospel. But it is up to us to decide. Will we come to him, confess our sins, repent and serve him as Lord? Or will we harden our hearts? Those that accept his sacrifice gain eternal life. Those that spurn it, a second, eternal death. Dear reader, I pray you choose life.



Did you know?

"The last enemy that will be abolished is death."
1 Corinthians 15:26

? Say What!?

Second Death

The Bible is not quiet about hell. Jesus often spoke of it, and we see it clearly here. All will live for eternity, but the question is: will you be raised to eternal life and fullness with Jesus, or will you experience eternal death in the lake of fire? We all have a choice to make. I pray you choose life today.

Bonus Chart

Not all would agree with this chart but in my research, I found an author's belief of [Who's Who](#) in the millennial kingdom (this was gathered from a premillennial, pretribulation rapture, and futurist source view, so if you agree more with other views, feel free to move on, I simply found it interesting).⁷

Gentile believers that survive the Tribulation	Some will survive the Tribulation and will enter the Kingdom in their normal human bodies.	Matthew 25:31-34
Jewish believers that survive the Tribulation	A remnant of Israel (likely including the 144,000 will survive and enter the kingdom in their normal human bodies.	Revelation 7:1-8 Revelation 14:1-5
Church age believers	Those raptured before the Tribulation and those who died in Christ before will enter in glorified bodies.	1 Corinthians 15:12-58
Resurrected OT believers	Those who believed in the True God in the OT are resurrected when Jesus returns in Glory and will enter the Kingdom in glorified bodies.	Matthew 8:11
Resurrected Tribulation Martyrs	Followers killed during the Tribulation will enter the Kingdom in resurrected bodies.	Revelation 20:6

Revelation Twenty-One

Judgement is complete and now God will dwell with his people! This chapter brings such hope and joy to my heart as I think about my eternal dwelling place. Breathe this in deeply and know the hope to which you are called- what a glorious inheritance we have in Christ!

I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth have passed away, and the sea is no more. ²I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. ³I heard a loud voice out of heaven saying, "Behold, God's dwelling is with people; and he will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; neither will there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more. The first things have passed away."

⁵He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." He said, "Write, for these words of God are faithful and true." ⁶He said to me, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give freely to him who is thirsty from the spring of the water of life. ⁷He who overcomes, I will give him these things. I will be his God, and he will be my son. ⁸But for the cowardly, unbelieving, sinners, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their part is in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

⁹One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls which were loaded with the seven last plagues came, and he spoke with me, saying, "Come here. I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." ¹⁰He carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; ¹²having a great and high wall with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. ¹³On the east were three gates, and on the north three gates, and on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. ¹⁴The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb.



Did you know?

This may feel disheartening, as in, who can even enter then? ¹ Corinthians 6:8-10 gives a similar list, but then comes verse 11 which states: "Some of you were such, but you were washed. You were sanctified. You were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the Spirit of our God." No matter what we once were, Christ Jesus can wash it away and make us clean if we turn to him.

¹⁵ He who spoke with me had for a measure a golden reed to measure the city, its gates, and its walls. ¹⁶ The city is **square**. Its length is as great as its width. He measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand twelve **stadia**. Its length, width, and height are equal. ¹⁷ Its wall is one hundred forty-four **cubits**, by the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. ¹⁸ The construction of its wall was jasper. The city was pure gold, like pure glass. ¹⁹ The foundations of the city's wall were adorned with all kinds of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire; the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, ²⁰ the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. ²¹ The twelve gates were twelve pearls. Each one of the gates was made of one pearl. The street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

²² I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ The city has no need for the sun or moon to shine, for the very glory of God illuminated it and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴ The nations will walk in its light. The kings of the earth bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. ²⁵ Its gates will in no way be shut by day (for there will be no night there), ²⁶ and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it so that they may enter. ²⁷ There will in no way enter into it anything profane, or one who causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.



Did you know?

A cube meant perfection. The city is perfect by every standard.¹



Say What!?

Cubits and Stadia

Based on these measurements, the city is a perfect cube of 1,400 miles, with walls 200 feet thick. It is MASSIVE!²

Apply This!

What a city. Death, mourning, crying, pain- all gone. The sun- unnecessary because of the brightness of the glory of God shines throughout. Gates of pearls, streets of gold. This is the home for those that believe. If you've ever looked around this earth and felt like you didn't belong, I assure you, you don't. Believers, this is not our home. Our home is a heavenly city, a glorious place, an incredible dwelling with the Living God.

Revelation Twenty-Two

You've made it! We come to the end of Revelation as John's vision wraps up and he closes his letter. Let's finish strong.

He showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, ²in the middle of its street. On this side of the river and on that was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruits, yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³There will be no curse any more. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will serve him. ⁴They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵There will be no night, and they need no lamp light or sun light; for the Lord God will illuminate them. They will reign forever and ever.

⁶He said to me, "These words are faithful and true. The Lord God of the spirits of the prophets sent his angel to show to his bondservants the things which must happen soon."

⁷"Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

⁸Now I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. When I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who had shown me these things. ⁹He said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow bondservant with you and with your brothers, the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God." ¹⁰He said to me, "Don't seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. ¹¹He who acts unjustly, let him act unjustly still. He who is filthy, let him be filthy still. He who is righteous, let him do righteousness still. He who is holy, let him be holy still."

¹²"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, to repay to each man according to his work. ¹³I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. ¹⁴Blessed are those who do his commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city. ¹⁵Outside are the dogs, the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. ¹⁶I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify these things to you for the assemblies. I am the root and the offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star."

¹⁷ The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" He who hears, let him say, "Come!" He who is thirsty, let him come. He who desires, let him take the water of life freely.

¹⁸ I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book. ¹⁹ If anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book. ²⁰ He who testifies these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon."

Amen! Yes, come, Lord Jesus!

²¹ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints. Amen.

Apply This!

After all that John witnessed, his call was for the Lord Jesus to come. You see, believers have no need to fear the coming of the Lord. We can look forward to that day with the greatest anticipation and enthusiasm. We can trust in our sovereign Lord who holds the stars, the first and the last, the one with the two-edged sword, the one with the key to the city of David, the faithful and true witness, the alpha and omega to complete his work. Oh, how I long for this day. With all my heart, I join in with John and say, "Yes, come, Lord Jesus!"

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