

REVELATION



By the Discipleship Team

TABLE OF CONTENTS

What to Expect from this Elective	4
Introduction	5
Map of Revelation by The Bible Project	6
Understanding the World of Revelation	7
Four Views of Revelation	8
Act 1	11
Scene 1: A Clear View of Jesus	12
Scene 2: A Call for the Church to Repent	18
Intermission I - The Rapture	31
Scene 3: A Blueprint for Worship	32
Act 2	38
Scene 1: The Seven Seals & 144,000	39
Scene 2: The Seven Trumpets & The Little Scroll	47
Intermission II - Challenging Assumptions	55
Scene 3: Cosmic Battles & The 7 Signs (Symbols)	56
Scene 4: Seven Angels with Bowls	66
Act 3	68
Scene 1: Destruction of Unholy Trinity	69
Scene 2: All Things New	74
Extras	77
Structure of Revelation	78
Interpreting Revelation	80
Jesus Unveiled Through Revelation	81
Symbols in Revelation	82
Four Ways to Read Revelation	90
The Mission of Jesus Rev. 1	91
Seven Churches of Revelation map	92
7 Seals, 7 Trumpets, 7 Bowls Diagrams	93
The 3 Cycles of Judgments: Seals, Trumpets, Bowls	96
A Brief Doctrine of “The Satan” and Dragon from Revelation 12	97

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THIS ELECTIVE

ELECTIVE DESCRIPTION:

Granted, Revelation is fascinating for all its symbols and end-times talk. Curious on-lookers are captivated by the numbers, colors, and PG 13 monsters. But the most important question to ask of this book is not, “When will Jesus return” or even “How will the world come to an end?” Rather, the crucial question is, “How should Christians live in a world so warped as ours?”

Revelation has timeless truths that apply to every generation. One of the problems with many of the commentaries on Revelation is that they approach the book as a calendar. We will instead see how Revelation holds wisdom for all generations and how it can impact our lives today.

ELECTIVE OBJECTIVES:

1. Challenge you to think differently about the book of Revelation than you have before.
2. Understand the different approaches to Revelation and which one best suits the author’s original intended meaning for purposes of interoperation, practice, and application.
3. Be familiar with the codes of Revelation so that you can faithfully navigate it’s complex structure and odd symbols.
4. Provide application of the book’s message to our daily lives and how we can continue to live out it’s message in a 21st century world.

OUR GUIDING THOUGHT:

Revelation is not a book about what will happen, it is a book about what happens, why it happens, and how Christians ought to respond when it does.

ELECTIVE RATING SYSTEM:

This elective follows NLCC’s rating system for StudyGroups. This Elective is rated at a MODERATE level. See definitions below:

Beginner - This level are for those who are new to biblical studies. A beginner level StudyGroup will focus more on life application, introduce participants to the most basic elements of our faith, and how the curriculum and their story fits into God’s story.

Moderate - This middle level StudyGroup may move quicker through material, focus on life application as well as teaching new ideas about God and the Bible, and use historical content to better understand God’s word.

Advanced - This level are for those who have experience studying the Bible and are wanting to be challenged to enrich their lives with complex theological concepts, investigate the original setting of the book, and have a level of discussion that is equal to the content being presented.

CORE SOURCES:

Beale, G. K., *The NIGTC: The Book of Revelation*. (Eerdmans Publishing Co.: Grand Rapids, MI). 1999.

Jackson, Wayne. *Select Studies from the Book of Revelation*. (Courier Publications: Stockton, CA). 1995.

Koester, Craig R., *Revelation and the End of All Things* (Eerdmans Publishing Co: Grand Rapids, MI). 2001.

Moore, Mark E., *How to Dodge a Dragon: A devotional Reading of Revelation*. (Mark Moore: USA). 2015.

INTRODUCTION

Important Dates:

- A.D. 64/7 - The First Great Persecution breaks out in Italy when Rome burns to the ground. Nero blames the Christians.
- A.D. 66 - Jewish Revolt breaks out after 3,600 Jews are slaughtered.
- A.D. 70 - Jerusalem is destroyed by Rome, including the 2nd Temple (Herod's temple).
- A.D. 88-96 - Domitian reigns as Emperor and initiates the 2nd great persecution against Jews/Christians when they refused to worship him as a deity.

Important Terms/People:

- Nero - Caesar of Rome from AD 54-68. He was the last of the Julio-Claudia dynasty. He was the adopted son of Claudius.
- Domitian - Caesar of Rome from AD 81-96. He was the third brother to take the throne after Titus, and he was the son of Vespasian.
- Pre/Post/A - millennialism. A system for understanding the return of Christ in relation to his 1000 year reign on earth in the book of Revelation. Pre= before, Post = After, A = Reigning through the church.
- Eschatology - Doctrine of "last things" or "things to come."
- Worldview - one's perception of the world around them built upon their personal beliefs, experiences, and biology.

THE REVELATION OF JESUS



17-19a

THE FALL OF BABYLON

ALL HUMAN KINGDOMS
WILL RETURN TO
BECOME BABYLON
& MUST BE RESISTED

HISTORY'S PATTERN:

THAT REVEALS
GOD'S PROMISE

JESUS WILL RETURN TO
REMOVE EVIL
FROM HIS WORLD

17-19a

THE FALL OF BABYLON

THE FALL OF BABYLON

ACQUIRERS OF WEALTHS
WILL BE BROKEN
(REVELATION 18:10)

ACQUIRERS OF WEALTHS
WILL BE BROKEN
(REVELATION 18:10)

ACQUIRERS OF WEALTHS
WILL BE BROKEN
(REVELATION 18:10)

ACQUIRERS OF WEALTHS
WILL BE BROKEN
(REVELATION 18:10)

19b-20

THE FINAL BATTLE

THE BATTERED VINDICATED

THE BATTERED VINDICATED

THE BATTERED VINDICATED

THE BATTERED VINDICATED

21-22

THE MARRIAGE OF HEAVEN & EARTH

THE MARRIAGE OF HEAVEN & EARTH

THE MARRIAGE OF HEAVEN & EARTH

THE MARRIAGE OF HEAVEN & EARTH

1a

JOHN

THE BELIEVED
DISCIPLE?

ANOTHER
JOHN?

THE TIME PERIOD BEGINS
JESUS' RESURRECTION & RETURN
FROM THREE PERSPECTIVES

6

THE LAND'S ARMY

MARK GOD'S SERVANTS:
the 144,000
MILITARY GUARDS OF 12 TRIBES
(SEE NUMBERS 1)

7

THE SCROLL

THE SCROLL
REVEALS THE
CHECKS FOR THE
LIVING SACRIFICE
OF THE LAND

11

SEVEN TRUMPETS

THE EXODUS
PAGE'S
CROSSING

12-14

SEVEN SIGNS (SYMBOLS)

THE COSMIC BATTLE (SEE DANIEL 7:12)

THE COSMIC BATTLE (SEE DANIEL 7:12)

THE COSMIC BATTLE (SEE DANIEL 7:12)

15-16

SEVEN BOWLS

THE EXODUS
PLAGUES (AGAIN!)

17-20

THE FALL OF BABYLON

21-22

THE MARRIAGE OF HEAVEN & EARTH

15-16

SEVEN BOWLS

17-20

THE FALL OF BABYLON

1a

JOHN

11b-3

MESSAGE TO THE 7 CHURCHES

THE SEVEN CHURCHES

THE SEVEN CHURCHES

14-5

THE THRONE OF GOD & THE LAMB

THE THRONE OF GOD & THE LAMB

THE THRONE OF GOD & THE LAMB

15-16

SEVEN BOWLS

created by the Bible Project

UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD OF REVELATION

JOHN'S WORLDVIEW AND HOW IT SHAPES INTERPRETATION



FOUR VIEWS OF REVELATION

AND WHY MOST PEOPLE MISUNDERSTAND IT

What are some ways you have seen this book presented in any media, teaching, etc? I.e. what are some popular ways this book has been presented that you are aware of? (Think movies, famous pastors, books, etc.)

There have been four main interpretative approaches to the book of Revelation. We will discuss them briefly here:

PRETERIST - This interpretation of Scripture regards the book of Revelation as a symbolic picture of first-century conflicts, not a description of what will occur in the end times. The term comes from the Latin *praeter*, meaning “past.” Thus, preterism is the view that the biblical prophecies concerning the “end times” have already been fulfilled—in the past. Preterism is directly opposed to futurism, which sees the end-times prophecies as having a still-future fulfillment.

The first sees Revelation as prophecy of the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, which, of course, requires that the Apocalypse be dated prior to this event. “Babylon the Great” would then represent apostate Israel, who aids Rome in oppressing Christians.

The second form of this view holds that Revelation is a prophecy of the fall of the Roman Empire, “Babylon the Great”, the persecutor of the saints, in the fifth century A.D.

HISTORICIST/HISTORICAL - This view of Revelation was commonly held by the Protestant reformers, and also the leaders of the early Restoration Movement. There are many versions of this approach and great disagreements by it’s adherents to how different parts of history fit into the book.

Historicist interpreters generally see Revelation as predicting the major movements of Christian History extending even beyond that of the Roman Empire. The majority of these commentators have understood the seals, trumpets, and bowls as unfolding successive events of history in general chronological order. Christ’s final coming is usually seen as very imminent. Typically this view identifies parts of the Apocalypse as prophecies of the invasion of the Christianized Roman Empire by the Goths and the Muslims. Further, the corruptions of medieval Papacy, the reign of Charlemagne, the Protestant Reformation, and the destruction wrought by Napoleon and Hitler have been seen as predicted by John.

FUTURIST - This theory alleges that most of the book of Revelation is as yet unfulfilled. Chapters 4-22 supposedly pertain to events associated with the second coming of Christ, and so are still believed to be future. This concept, characterized by EXTREME literalism is the view of premillennialists and dispensationalists. There are also two forms of the this perspective. Both

understand the visions from ch. 4 up through 22:5 as referring exclusively to a future time immediately preceding the end of history.

Dispensational futurism - This is the most popular view, which interprets very literally and generally sees the order of the visions as representing the historical order of future events.

- (1) The restoration of ethnic Israel to its land (though not mentioned in Revelation at all).
- (2) the church's rapture into heaven
- (3) a seven-year tribulation
- (4) the antichrist's reign
- (5) the assembly of evil nations to fight over Jerusalem
- (6) Christ's second coming
- (7) His millennial Reign
- (8) Satan's final rebellion at the end of the millennium, gains an army to fight against Christ.
- (9) Christ's eternal reign together with the saints in a new heaven and a new earth.

Modified futurism - This view does not interpret as literally as the popular view and does not hold as strictly that the visions represent the chronological sequence of future history. It affirms that the church is the true Israel, there is no rapture of Christians to escape the tribulation, and that the seals, trumpets, and bowls all represent the same time period just being told in three different ways.

IDEALIST - The idealist approach affirms that Revelation is a symbolic portrayal of the conflict between good and evil, between the forces of God and of Satan. The most radical form of this view holds that the book is a timeless depiction of this struggle. It does not attribute any of the symbols in Revelation to any Historical person or event.

What of these views do you think best describes your view/understanding of the book of Revelation? Or do none of these represent your view of the book?

WHAT VIEW WILL WE BE PURSUING IN THIS ELECTIVE?

I will be pursuing a modified Idealist view combined with Preterist. Here are my reasons for doing so:

1. The book does claim to hold specific prophecies which means there will be ultimate fulfillment. Pure Idealists do not believe this.
2. The book was written to a specific people in a specific time in a specific place for a reason that mattered to them. Therefore, I think a lot of the symbols in the book are rooted in actual Historical events and people that mattered to the 7 churches of Asia Minor.
3. John intended the book to go beyond the specific situation of his church's immediate context. Revelation contains a message that still matters to us today. It was strictly historical and already fulfilled by the end of the first century then it means nothing to us today. On the contrary, during the Canonization, the Spirit led the church leaders to include it, therefore I believe it has a timeless truth that is still very relevant for us today.
4. Ultimately, I believe the book of Revelation answers a modified version of the age old question, "Why do bad things happen to good people." In this case, John is answering the question "why do bad things happen to God's people?" He does this as his own church body is going through extreme trials and uses their current situation as the mold for how he answers that question, but he does it in such a way that is very repeatable throughout history.

APPLICATION

Here's the bottom line. This book is not Nostradamus' diary of end-times events as much as it is a pilgrim's guide through the times of suffering. It won't answer all your questions, but it will shine a light at the end of a dark tunnel to guide you through your tribulation. As such, I suspect that those who suffer most will understand best this marvelous book called Revelation. Those those Christians facing physical persecution, this book makes sense. To those believers ravaged by seemingly senseless suffering, this book brings healing. To those saints who are at the end of their rope, this book brings hope. To this end I pray that the remaining weeks we have together will magnify the light this book sheds on your own personal pilgrimage.

How is our world and John's world similar? What are we experiencing that they experienced?

How is our world and John's world different? Why are they different?

What are you hoping to get from our study with the book of Revelation?

ACT 1

PREPARING FOR SUFFERING

1a OPENING

APOCALYPSE (1:1) GREEK: αποκαλυψις

- A TYPE OF JEWISH LITERATURE (EZEKIEL, DANIEL, 4 EZRA, 1 ENOCH)
- **SYMBOLIC VISIONS** THAT REVEAL A HEAVENLY PERSPECTIVE ON HISTORY IN LIGHT OF ITS FINAL OUTCOME

JOHN
THE BELOVED DISCIPLE?
ANOTHER JOHN?

ASIA MINOR

LETTER (1:4, 22:21)

SENT TO: **7 CHURCHES**

ITS MEANING FOR US MUST BE ANCHORED IN JOHN'S MEANING FOR THEM.

PROPHECY (1:3)

- GOD'S WORD THROUGH A PROPHET
- BRINGS OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY TO ITS CLIMAX

MEANINGFUL IMAGES DRAWN FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

1b-3 MESSAGE TO THE 7 CHURCHES

THE SEVEN CHURCHES (SEE ZECHARIAH 4)

EPHESUS, SMYRNA, PERGAMUM, THYATIRA, SARDIS, PHILADELPHIA & LAODICEA

APATHY

PERSECUTION

TRIBULATION (2:9-10)

IMMORALITY

COMPROMISE

DOMITIAN

FAITHFULNESS

THE CONQUERORS ARE REWARDED in the NEW CREATION (chs. 21 & 22)

4-5 THE THRONE OF GOD & THE LAMB

HOLY! HOLY! HOLY! (SEE ISAIAH 6, EZEKIEL 1, DANIEL 7)

MESSAGE OF THE PROPHETS (ISAIAH 8:16, EZEKIEL 2:3, DANIEL 12) ABOUT HOW GOD'S KINGDOM WILL COME ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

WHO CAN OPEN THE SCROLL?

THE LION OF JUDAH! (GENESIS 49:9) THE ROOT OF DAVID! (ISAIAH 11:1)

SEES

HEARS

THE SACRIFICED LAMB

- GOD'S KINGDOM WAS INAUGURATED THROUGH THE CRUCIFIED MESSIAH WHO DIED FOR HIS ENEMIES.
- HIS DEATH WAS CONQUEST OVER EVIL.

SCENE 1: A CLEAR VIEW OF JESUS

CHAPTER 1

PROLOGUE

1 The revelation of Jesus Christ that God gave Him to show His slaves what must quickly take place. He sent it and signified it through His angel to His slave John, **2** who testified to God's word and to the testimony about Jesus Christ, in all he saw. **3** The one who reads this is blessed, and those who hear the words of this prophecy and keep what is written in it are blessed, because the time is near!

4 John: To the seven churches in Asia.

Grace and peace to you from the One who is, who was, and who is coming; from the seven spirits before His throne; **5** and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To Him who loves us and has set us free from our sins by His blood, **6** and made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—the glory and dominion are His forever and ever. Amen.

7 Look! He is coming with the clouds,
and every eye will see Him,
including those who pierced Him.
And all the families of the earth
will mourn over Him.
This is certain. Amen.

VISION OF JESUS

8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "the One who is, who was, and who is coming, the Almighty."

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

12 I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me. When I turned I saw seven gold lampstands, **13** and among the lampstands was One like the Son of Man, dressed in a long robe and with a gold sash wrapped around His chest. **14** His head and hair were white like wool—white as snow—and His eyes like a fiery flame. **15** His feet were like fine bronze as it is fired in a furnace, and His voice like the sound of cascading waters. **16** He had seven stars in His right hand; a sharp double-edged sword came from His mouth, and His face was shining like the sun at midday.

INTERPRETATION OF VISION

17 When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. He laid His right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid! I am the First and the Last, **18** and the Living One. I was dead, but look—I am alive forever and ever, and I hold the keys of death and Hades. **19** Therefore write what you have seen, what is, and what will take place after this. **20** The secret of the seven stars you saw in My right hand and of the seven gold lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

INTRODUCTION:

1. If anyone is willing, please share BRIEFLY a moment from your life when your faith was truly challenged. How did that make you feel? What did that make you think?

2. What got you through that time of difficulty? Who helped you?

OUR IDENTITY

List out all the descriptions used for us/the recipients of John's letter:

KINGDOM, PRIESTS, LOVED BY GOD.

In verse 6, John calls us a "Kingdom, priests to His God and father." This is a direct reference to Ex. 19:6. Let's read below.

Read Exodus 19:3-6

3 Moses went up the mountain to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain: "This is what you must say to the house of Jacob, and explain to the Israelites: **4** 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to Me. **5** Now if you will listen to Me and carefully keep My covenant, you will be My own possession out of all the peoples, although all the earth is Mine, **6** and you will be My kingdom of priests and My holy nation.'

3. What does it mean for us to be a Kingdom?

IT MEANS THAT WE ARE THE TRUE ISRAEL. THE LIGHT OF SALVIFIC REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, (SOMETHING OT PROPHETS BLAME ISRAEL FOR NOT BEING). UNBELIEVING JEWS ARE OF THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN (2:9)

4. What does it mean for us to be a Kingdom of Priests? (see 1 Peter 2:5-10) What makes that possible?

A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS MEANS THAT WE ARE CAPABLE OF APPROACHING GOD THROUGH OUR HIGH PRIEST. WE ARE ACCOMPLISHING THE WORK OF ISRAEL, GOD'S PEOPLE. FOLLOWING HIS LAWS/RULES AND BEING THE FAVORED PEOPLE OF GOD.

JESUS' IDENTITY

Chapter one has a lot to say about who we are, but it has even more to say about who Jesus is. List all the descriptions of Jesus from Revelation chapter 1.

CHRIST, FAITHFUL WITNESS, FIRST BORN FROM THE DEAD, ALPHA AND OMEGA, BEGINNING
AND END, RULER OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH, ONE WHO IS TO COME, THE ALMIGHTY,
FIRST AND LAST, LIVING ONE, ONE WITH THE KEYS TO HADES

The first presentation of Jesus is as Son of Man Vs. 4, 7, 8, 13, 14,

READ DANIEL 7:9-14

9 "As I kept watching,
thrones were set in place,
and the Ancient of Days took His seat.
His clothing was white like snow,
and the hair of His head like whitest wool.
His throne was flaming fire;
its wheels were blazing fire.

10
A river of fire was flowing,
coming out from His presence.
Thousands upon thousands served Him;
ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.
The court was convened,
and the books were opened.

11 "I watched, then, because of the sound of the arrogant words the horn was speaking. As I continued watching, the beast was killed and its body destroyed and given over to the burning fire. **12** As for the rest of the beasts, their authority to rule was removed, but an extension of life was granted to them for a certain period of time. **13** I continued watching in the night visions,

and I saw One like a son of man
coming with the clouds of heaven.
He approached the Ancient of Days
and was escorted before Him.

14
He was given authority to rule,
and glory, and a kingdom;
so that those of every people,
nation, and language
should serve Him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion
that will not pass away,
and His kingdom is one
that will not be destroyed.

READ ZECHARIAH 12:10-12

10 “Then I will pour out a spirit of grace and prayer on the house of David and the residents of Jerusalem, and they will look at Me whom they pierced. They will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only child and weep bitterly for Him as one weeps for a firstborn.

This is a very odd thing to hear in Daniel 7 about the son of Man. In the OT, the phrase, son of man is used 100 times and 93 of those are in Ezekiel. Every time God calls Ezekiel “Son of man” he is not lifting him up but putting him in his place. He is saying “I am God. You’re son of man.’ You are human - - warts, pimples and all. A human - human.” There is only one verse in the OT that doesn’t fit this pattern. It is here in Daniel 7:14. Daniel a contemporary of Ezekiel, both writing from Exile in Babylon, and Daniel probably familiar of Ezekiel’s writing furthers the idea of son of Man. So this is odd because when you hear “son of man” you think human. When you hear clouds of heaven you think “God.” Suddenly the two have combined up where God dwells. That is the OT. In the NT the two have combined down here on where men dwell in the word who became flesh. So when John turns around, what he expects to see is Jesus, but what he sees is God. He sees the divine and the human blended together right down where he lives.

The chief picture of Jesus here is him as **HIGH PRIEST**

REVELATION 1:12-16

12 I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me. When I turned I saw seven gold lampstands, **13** and among the lampstands was One like the Son of Man, dressed in a long robe and with a gold sash wrapped around His chest. **14** His head and hair were white like wool—white as snow—and His eyes like a fiery flame. **15** His feet were like fine bronze as it is fired in a furnace, and His voice like the sound of cascading waters. **16** He had seven stars in His right hand; a sharp double-edged sword came from His mouth, and His face was shining like the sun at midday.

What is Jesus wearing? How is he described?

HE IS DESCRIBED AS A HIGH PRIEST. HE IS WEARING A LONG ROBE WITH GOLD SASH, HE IS DESCRIBED AS HAIR WHITE LIKE WOOL, EYES LIKE A FIERY FLAME, FEET LEAVE A CHARCOAL WAKE.

HOW DOES THIS DESCRIPTION ALIGN WITH DANIEL 7:9?

JESUS IS DESCRIBED LIKE THE ANCIENT OF DAYS FROM DANIEL 7:9. THERE THAT WAS GOD THE FATHER, SO HERE, THE SON OF MAN AND THE ANCIENT OF DAYS ARE THE SAME PERSON. HMMMMM..... TRINITY? - SEE VS. 4 WHICH CONTAINS ALL THREE.

INTERPRETATION OF VISION

5. What is John’s reaction to what he sees when he turns around?

HE FALLS DOWN LIKE A DEAD MAN OUT OF FEAR OF WHAT HE SEES BEFORE HIM.

6. What do the Stars and Lampstands represent as told to John by Jesus?

STARS = ANGELS/MESSENGERS

LAMPSTANDS = CHURCH

APPLICATION

7. Why do you think John began such an odd book with such a strange vision of Jesus and descriptions of the church?

HE IS SETTING AN IMPORTANT PRECEDENT. LIKE PAUL WHO BEGINS ALL HIS LETTERS BY REMINDING THEM OF WHO JESUS IS, JOHN IS REMINDING HIS READERS OF THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST OVER ALL THINGS.

8. What would you tell someone who struggling with a crisis of faith and identity when they come knocking on your door?

I WOULD REMIND THEM OF WHO THEY ARE JUST LIKE MUFASA REMINDS SIMBA OF HIS IDENTITY WHEN DECIDING IF HE SHOULD RUN FROM HIS PROBLEM OR AT IT.

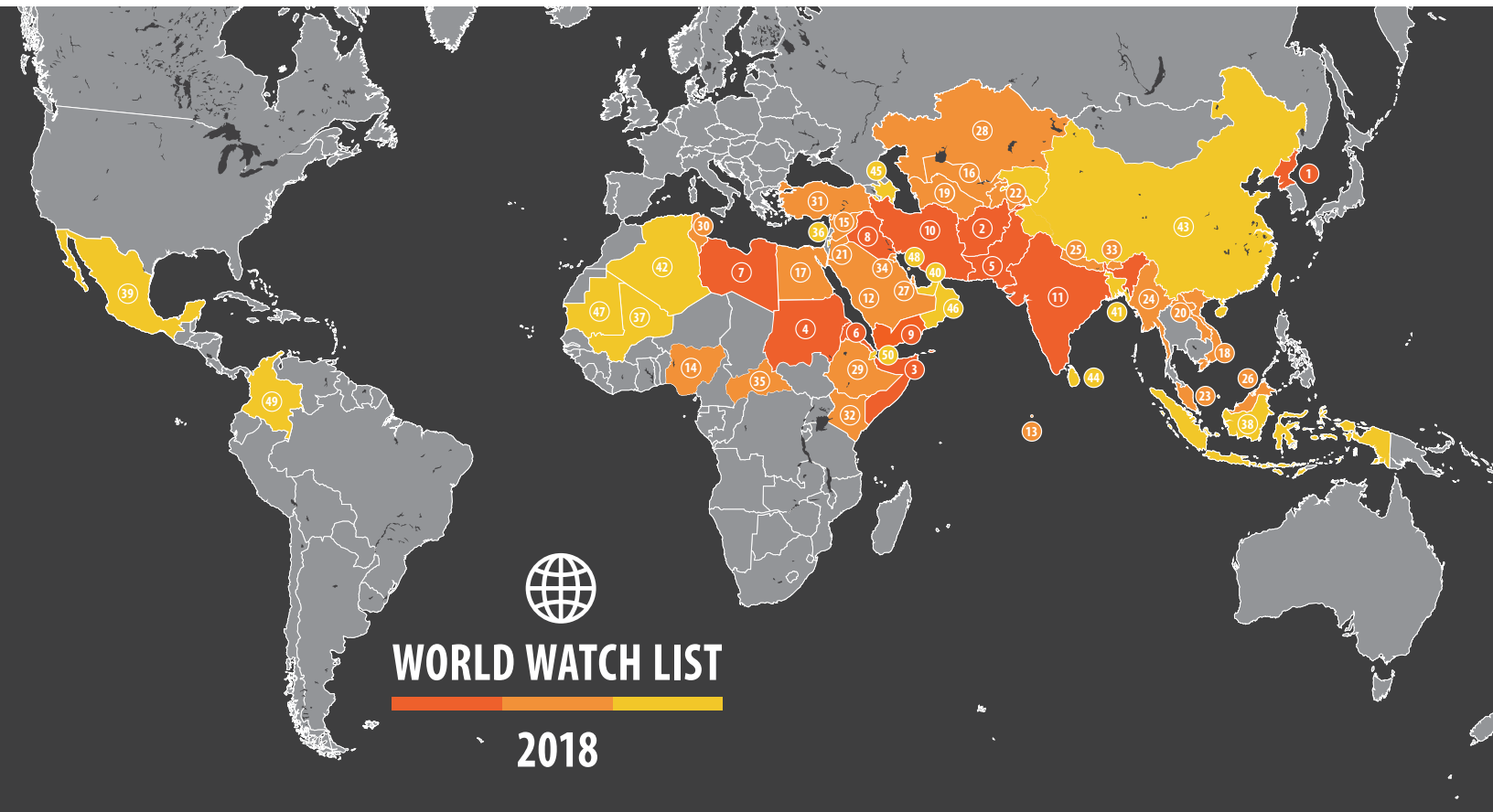
9. The world has always persecuted Christians and it will go on persecuting Christians. What keeps the church afloat when proclaiming faith is life threatening? (See following Page)

**THE TRUST THAT JESUS IS KING AND IN CONTROL, EVEN IF THAT MEANS DEATH. IT IS BETTER TO SERVE JESUS THAN TO DENOUNCE HIM.
*** SIDE QUESTION: WHAT ABOUT THOSE WHO IN TIMES OF PERSECUTION DENOUNCE CHRIST? LIKE IN THE MOVIE/BOOK SILENCE.**

10. We often internalize/personalize/individualize our faith to just our experience. This is a symptom of our western/America way of thinking. When we do that, it becomes very possible to make the faith about what it means to me, rather than what it means to us. There ought to be a certain reverence in the idea that we share this faith with countless others in a Kingdom who's King rules the world, now. Revelation 1 is an effort by John to bring reverence to his reader's faith where fear, and anxiousness may have settled in. What reverence do you bring to your faith? How do we live out a reverent faith?

The **World Watch List** uses data from Open Doors fieldworkers and independent experts to track the deep structures of persecution. It measures the degree of freedom a Christian has to live out their faith in five spheres of life—private, family, community, national and church life—plus a sixth sphere measuring the degree of violence.

The data is translated into points and countries are ranked accordingly. The list is independently audited by the International Institute for Religious Freedom.




WORLD WATCH LIST

2018

The 50 countries where it is most dangerous to follow Jesus:

Extreme Persecution

- 1 North Korea
- 2 Afghanistan
- 3 Somalia
- 4 Sudan
- 5 Pakistan
- 6 Eritrea
- 7 Libya
- 8 Iraq
- 9 Yemen
- 10 Iran

Very High Persecution

- 11 India
- 12 Saudi Arabia
- 13 Maldives
- 14 Nigeria
- 15 Syria
- 16 Uzbekistan
- 17 Egypt
- 18 Vietnam
- 19 Turkmenistan
- 20 Laos

High Persecution

- 21 Jordan
- 22 Tajikistan
- 23 Malaysia
- 24 Myanmar
- 25 Nepal
- 26 Brunei
- 27 Qatar
- 28 Kazakhstan
- 29 Ethiopia
- 30 Tunisia
- 31 Turkey
- 32 Kenya
- 33 Bhutan
- 34 Kuwait
- 35 Central African Republic
- 36 Palestinian Territories
- 37 Mali
- 38 Indonesia
- 39 Mexico
- 40 United Arab Emirates
- 41 Bangladesh
- 42 Algeria
- 43 China
- 44 Sri Lanka
- 45 Azerbaijan
- 46 Oman
- 47 Mauritania
- 48 Bahrain
- 49 Colombia
- 50 Djibouti

WORLD WATCH LIST 2018 // RANKING METHODOLOGY

Pressure
Degree of pressure in five spheres of Christian life

- Church life
 - National life
 - Community life
 - Family life
 - Private life
- Max score per sphere = 16.7

Violence
Amount of violent incidents against Christians and the Church

Violence Max score = 16.7

MAX SCORE = 83.3 + MAX SCORE = 16.7 = RANK # MAX SCORE = 100

The Persecution of Christians



North Korea

"What happens when God is changing the country from the inside out? The forces of darkness will resist. If you look with human eyes, then your prayers made the situation worse. But if you look with spiritual eyes, you should be joyful."

A CHRISTIAN FIELDWORKER WHO SERVES IN NORTH KOREA



Laos

"We don't have any words to say except thank you. When my husband was in prison, you prayed for us and helped us. You remembered us."

JIK*, THE WIFE OF A PASTOR IN LAOS WHO WAS UNJUSTLY IMPRISONED



Sri Lanka

"Not many organizations focus on those holding ministry positions in areas of persecution, but Open Doors has blessed us by making us a priority. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."

PASTOR DINESH, A CHRISTIAN IN SRI LANKA

SCENE 2: A CALL FOR THE CHURCH TO REPENT

CHAPTERS 2-3

INTRODUCTION:

The book of Revelation contains seven letters from Jesus to churches in seven important cities in the Roman province of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). In these letters, after a brief but significant description of himself, Jesus addresses the spiritual condition of each church: as appropriate, he praises, challenges, and symbolically makes a promise to each.

For us, the praises, challenges, and promises are best understood when some background information about each city is taken into account.

Finally, each letter ends with the similar refrain “to the one who is victorious” (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21), which points to the main function of the entire book of Revelation: to give assurance and comfort to suffering and persecuted believers. The book assures Christians of the ultimate victory of God and God’s people over the powers of evil and death (John 16:33, “In this world you will have trouble, but take heart for I have overcome the world).

Structure of this Lesson:

1. The Historical background of the seven churches
2. Group exercise: breaking down the messages from Jesus
3. The overall structure of the seven letters
4. Application

*For simplicity’s sake, I lumped the background, text, and messages of Jesus by each city rather than by topic.

The seven epistles to the seven churches of Asia Minor follow an internal pattern:

1. **DICTATION: COMMAND TO WRITE**
2. **SALUTATION: PICTURE OF JESUS**
3. **COMMENDATION: POSITIVE**
4. **ACCUSATION: NEGATIVE**
5. **EXHORTATION: COMMAND**
6. **CONDEMNATION: IF DISOBEDIENT**
7. **EXALTATION: IF OBEDIENT**

THE SEVEN CHURCHES REVELATION 2-3

In groups, fill in the relevant information for each church for the “Jesus Message to . . .” section. What does Christ say is good, bad? What command does he give? What will happen if they are disobedient to the command? What will happen if they are obedient?



THE 7 CHURCHES

EPHESUS (2:1-7)

Background:

An influential commercial and cultural center built in the tenth century BC which had a major sea port. Ephesus became one of the prominent cultural centers of the ancient world. Ephesus would only be behind Alexandria and Rome in its cultural influence on the ancient world. The city was the main worship center of the goddess Artemis. Much of the city life and its prestige revolved around the temple and its activities, carried out by thousands of priests and a well-organized temple bureaucracy. There were also two other temples in the city. They were both temples dedicated to the imperial cult, which meant that this cult also played an essential part in the city's life. One could not enter into the impressive *Agora* (town market) without taking incense and putting it into the incense burner in honor of Caesar.

Social, cultural, and legal pressures were probably exerted for all citizens, including Christians, to conform to pagan worship and emperor worship.

Artemis, known in Rome as Diana, was an ancient goddess of hunting and fertility. The Temple of Artemis in Ephesus was one of the Seven wonders of the Ancient world.

The church of Ephesus was a fabulous congregation that can identify its roots to the Apostle Paul, himself. By this time, the congregation is about 40 years old. They have had a string of famous preachers as long as your arm, including (as mentioned already) Paul, Apollos, Timothy, Thychicus, John the Apostle, Aquila and Priscilla. And according to one tradition, even Mary, Jesus' mother, lived there.

Nicolaitans - As a group, they compromised their Christian identity by incorporating pagan practices in their lives. Possibly, they corrupted the teaching of Nicolas from Antioch, one of the Church's first deacons (Acts 6:1-5).

Text:

2 "Write to the angel of the church in Ephesus:

"The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand and who walks among the seven gold lampstands says: **2** I know your works, your labor, and your endurance, and that you cannot tolerate evil. You have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and you have found them to be liars. **3** You also possess endurance and have tolerated many things because of My name and have not grown weary. **4** But I have this against you: You have abandoned the love you had at first. **5** Remember then how far you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. Otherwise, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. **6** Yet you do have this: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7 "Anyone who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches. I will give the victor the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in God's paradise.

Jesus Message to Ephesus:

Picture of Jesus - **HOLDS 7 STARS, WALKS AMONG THE 7 LAMPS**

Positives - **TOIL AND PATIENT, ENDURANCE FOR JESUS SAKE, ABHORRENCE OF EVIL AND FALSE TEACHING**

Negatives - **ABANDONED FIRST LOVE**

Command - **REMEMBER, REPENT AND RETURN TO PREVIOUS GOOD WORKS**

Disobedience - **WILL HAVE THEIR LAMP STAND REMOVED**

Obedience - **WILL EAT FROM THE TREE OF LIFE**

Overall problem with Ephesus is this: **TOO INWARD FOCUSED (NO EVANGELISM)**

SMYRNA (2:8-11)

Background:

This is the only church that still exists. This was the first city of Asia. It is located 35 miles north of Ephesus. It was one of the most beautiful cities in the region, a sloping city on a hill overseeing the Mediterranean Sea. This is an ancient and wealthy port. It was one of the most important Roman cities of the area; a place where emperor worship was central to the life and prestige of the city, although the temple to Athena was also a source of city pride and a significant contributor to the city's economy. Individuals could aspire to economic prosperity and greater social standing only by participating to some degree in the Roman cult. Citizens of both upper and lower classes were required by local law to sacrifice to the emperor on various special occasions, and sometimes even visitors and foreigners were invited to do so.

It had a large population of Jewish people, many of whom cooperated with the city leaders persecuting Christians, revealing by their actions that they opposed God. Those who would avoid conforming to the culture of Smyrna would be seen as politically disloyal and unpatriotic and would be arrested and punished according to Roman law (exile, capital punishment).

Evidence suggests that life for a Christian in Smyrna was more perilous than anywhere else in the entire empire of Rome. This is the city where the bishop Polycarp (AD 65-156) ministered and ultimately martyred in the arena. It was said that they tried to burn him alive but he was miraculously protected. So they ordered him to be pierced. When they punctured him, so much blood spewed out that it extinguished the fire. The hallmark of Polycarp's faith in the city of Smyrna can be summed up in his reply to the demand that he denounce Christ, "86 years I have served him, and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?"

The prayer of Polycarp: "O Lord God Almighty, the Father of your beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the knowledge of you, the God of angels, powers and every creature, and of all the righteous who live before you, I give you thanks that you count me worthy to be numbered among your martyrs, sharing the cup of Christ and the resurrection to eternal life, both of soul and body, through the immortality of the Holy Spirit. May I be received this day as an acceptable sacrifice, as you, the true God, have predestined, revealed to me, and now fulfilled. I praise you for all these things, I bless you and glorify you, along with the everlasting Jesus Christ, your beloved Son. To you, with him, through the Holy Ghost, be glory both now and forever. Amen."

Text:

8 "Write to the angel of the church in Smyrna:

"The First and the Last, the One who was dead and came to life, says: **9** I know your affliction and poverty, yet you are rich. I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. **10** Don't be afraid of

what you are about to suffer. Look, the Devil is about to throw some of you into prison to test you, and you will have affliction for 10 days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

11 “Anyone who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches. The victor will never be harmed by the second death.

Jesus Message to Smyrna:

Picture of Jesus - **1ST AND THE LAST, DEAD AND ROSE.**

Positives - **ENDURING OPPOSITION AND SLANDER AND BEING SPIRITUALLY RICH**

Negatives - **NONE**

Command - **BE FAITHFUL TO THE POINT OF DEATH**

Disobedience - **NONE**

Obedience - **WILL BE GIVEN THE CROWN OF LIFE AND WILL NOT BE HURT BY THE SECOND DEATH**

Overall problem with Smyrna is this: **PERSECUTION**

PERGAMUM (2:12-17)

Background

Pergamum was also an important city of Asia minor. It was a center of learning, especially of medicine. It had the site of the sanctuary of Asclepius (who's symbol was a serpent and referred to a savior), the god of healing. The word parchment is derived from the name Pergamum and its use is due to the prominence of learning and education. Although not invented in Pergamum, parchment refers to an animal skin that has been prepared in such a way that it can be written on. It contained the second largest library in the ancient world, smaller only than the library of Alexandria in Egypt. It contained at least 200,000 scrolls.

In BC 29, the city was the first to receive permission from Rome to build a temple dedicated to a living ruler. Within a brief period of time, the city had three places of worship to Caesars. It was also an administrative center for the province; also famous for its emperor worship and its great altar to Zeus, an ancient wonder of the world. There was a temple for every major god in the empire. No wonder it was referred to by Christ as “Satan's throne.”

In the Old Testament, Balaam was a pagan prophet that Balak, the Moabite king, hired to curse Israel. But God had Balaam speak only what God put in his mouth (Num. 22:35), and Balaam ended up only blessing Israel. Unfortunately,

Balaam eventually led Israel to idolatry, and around the time that the New Testament was written, Balaam was considered by the Jews a prime example of a person whose teachings should not be followed (see 2 Peter 2:15, Jude 11).

Text:

12 “Write to the angel of the church in Pergamum:

“The One who has the sharp, double-edged sword says: **13** I know where you live—where Satan’s throne is! And you are holding on to My name and did not deny your faith in Me, even in the days of Antipas, My faithful witness who was killed among you, where Satan lives. **14** But I have a few things against you. You have some there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to place a stumbling block in front of the Israelites: to eat meat sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality. **15** In the same way, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. **16** Therefore repent! Otherwise, I will come to you quickly and fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

17 “Anyone who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches. I will give the victor some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name is inscribed that no one knows except the one who receives it.

Jesus Message to Pergamum:

Picture of Jesus - **HAS A SHARP, DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD**

Positives - **HOLDING FAST TO JESUS’ NAME AND NOT DENYING HIS FAITH**

Negatives - **SOME HAVE ACCEPTED FALSE TEACHING**

Command - **REPENT**

Disobedience - **WILL FACE WAR FROM THE SWORD OF JESUS’ MOUTH**

Obedience - **WILL BE GIVEN HIDDEN MANNA AND A WHITE INSCRIBED STONE**

THYATRIA (2:18-29)

Background:

The city was a commercial center, located between Pergamum and Sardis, on an important Roman road. It was not the cultural icon like Ephesus or Smyrna. However, it was a blue collar town. It served as a crucial military post for whoever controlled the area. Also, it was well known for its many trade guilds: craftsmen of wool and linen; makers of leather, bronze, and outer garments; dyers, potters, and bakers; and dealers in slaves. The trade guilds (think labor Unions) of Thyatiria were tightly connected to the pagan religion of the area, so

they likely opposed Christianity. Thyatira was the home of Lydia, a dealer of purple cloth and an early Christian believer who helps start the church in Phillipi (Acts 16:14, 40).

The patron god of Thyatira was Apollo, referred to as “the Son of God.”

Jezebel is the name of the wife of King Ahab, king of Israel, in the Old Testament (1 Kings 16:31). She led her husband and Israel to worship the pagan gods of her native land. As used in chapter 2 of Revelation, the name probably refers to an actual person who received the name as an epithet, because of the heretical ideas the individual taught and were accepted by the church.

Text:

18 “Write to the angel of the church in Thyatira:

“The Son of God, the One whose eyes are like a fiery flame and whose feet are like fine bronze, says: **19** I know your works—your love, faithfulness, service, and endurance. Your last works are greater than the first. **20** But I have this against you: You tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and teaches and deceives My slaves to commit sexual immorality and to eat meat sacrificed to idols. **21** I gave her time to repent, but she does not want to repent of her sexual immorality. **22** Look! I will throw her into a sickbed and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her practices. **23** I will kill her children with the plague. Then all the churches will know that I am the One who examines minds and hearts, and I will give to each of you according to your works. **24** I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who haven’t known the deep things of Satan—as they say—I do not put any other burden on you. **25** But hold on to what you have until I come. **26** The one who is victorious and keeps My works to the end: I will give him authority over the nations—

27 and he will shepherd them with an iron scepter;
he will shatter them like pottery—

just as I have received this from My Father. **28** I will also give him the morning star.

29 “Anyone who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.

Jesus Message to Thyatira:

Picture of Jesus - **SON OF GOD, BLAZING EYES, FEET OF BRONZE**

Positives - **LOVE, FAITH, SERVICE AND FAITHFUL ENDURANCE**

Negatives - **TOLERATION OF FALSE TEACHING, IDOLATRY AND SEXUAL IMMORALITY**

Command - **REJECT FALSE TEACHING AND HOLD FAST TO JESUS**

Disobedience - **TRIBULATION AND DEATH**

Obedience - **WILL BE GIVEN AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS AND GIVE THE MORNING STAR**

SARDIS (3:1-6)

Background:

Built high above a plain, making it militarily important, and located on an important highway, making it, at least for a time, a center of commerce; served as the capital of the powerful and wealthy Lydian empire for a time.

When Cyrus the great of Persia was conquering the world from modern day Iran to Greece, he could not conquer Sardis because it was impregnable. So he camped around it and began a siege. It wasn't until a lowly soldier revealed a secret door into the city by accident that Cyrus discovered the key to taking the city.

It was the center for the manufacture of carpets and woolen goods; also known as the source for nearly pure gold and silver coins and the start of modern currency.

It was the site of a large synagogue, and a bath house-gymnasium complex that covered over five acres.

Text:

3 "Write to the angel of the church in Sardis:

"The One who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars says: I know your works; you have a reputation for being alive, but you are dead. **2** Be alert and strengthen what remains, which is about to die, for I have not found your works complete before My God. **3** Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; keep it, and repent. But if you are not alert, I will come like a thief, and you have no idea at what hour I will come against you. **4** But you have a few people in Sardis who have not defiled their clothes, and they will walk with Me in white, because they are worthy. **5** In the same way, the victor will be dressed in white clothes, and I will never erase his name from the book of life but will acknowledge his name before My Father and before His angels.

Jesus Message to Sardis:

Picture of Jesus - **HAS 7 SPIRITS AND HOLDS 7 STARS**

Positives - **A FEW WHO HAVE NOT DEFILED THEIR CLOTHES, AND ARE WORTHY.**

Negatives - **SPIRITUALLY DEAD AND INCOMPLETE IN WORKS**

Command - **WAKE UP, STRENGTHEN FAITH AND REPENT**

Disobedience - **WILL BE OPPOSED BY JESUS WHO WILL COME LIKE A THIEF**

Obedience - **WILL WALK WITH JESUS, BE CLOTHED IN WHITE, WILL HAVE NAMES IN THE BOOK OF LIFE AND CONFESSED BY HIM BEFORE THE FATHER OF ANGELS.**

Overall problem with Pergamum, Thyatira, and Sardis is this: **COMPROMISE**

PHILADELPHIA (3:7-13):

Background:

Philadelphia was founded only about 200 years before Christ and named by King Eumenes II (King of Pergamon) for his brother, Attalus. This city was a successful commercial center, mainly because of its being situated at the entrance of a particularly fertile valley; also known for its many temples and religious festivals.

This area was prone to earthquakes, because it is located close to an active volcanic region; in AD 17, the city was completely destroyed by a devastating earthquake but eventually rebuilt.

Text:

7 “Write to the angel of the church in Philadelphia:

“The Holy One, the True One, the One who has the key of David, who opens and no one will close, and closes and no one opens says: **8** I know your works.

Because you have limited strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name, look, I have placed before you an open door that no one is able to close.

9 Take note! I will make those from the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews and are not, but are lying—note this—I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and they will know that I have loved you. **10** Because you have kept My command to endure, I will also keep you from the hour of testing that is going to come over the whole world to test those who live on the earth.

11 I am coming quickly. Hold on to what you have, so that no one takes your crown. **12** The victor: I will make him a pillar in the sanctuary of My God, and he will never go out again. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God—the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God—and My new name.

13 “Anyone who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.

Jesus’ message to Philadelphia:

Picture of Jesus - **HOLY AND TRUE, KEY OF DAVID, WHAT HE OPENS NO ONE SHUTS**

Positives - **KEPT JESUS’ WORD, NOT DENIED HIS NAME AND PATIENTLY ENDURED**

Negatives - **NONE**

Command - **HOLD FAST**

Disobedience - **NONE**

Obedience - **WILL BE KEPT FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL, MADE A PILLAR IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD AND HAVE THE NAME OF GOD, NEW JERUSALEM AND JESUS WRITTEN ON THEM.**

Overall problem with Philadelphia is this: PERSECUTION

LAODICEA (3:14-22)

Background:

Laodicea was a strategic city located at the crossroads of two crucial trading routes; in Roman times, a prosperous commercial center especially known for its banking, its textile industry (especially its production of black wool), and its school of ophthalmology (noted for an eye salve it developed).

It was financially strong, even able to rebuild without imperial aide when destroyed by an earthquake in AD 60. It was the banking center for the region. Those who lived here were affluent and blessed.

The city lacked an adequate water supply, so it had an aqueduct built to bring in water. The water source was a that contained lots of minerals that made it not taste well and to spit it from one's mouth. The journey of the water caused it to become tepid. The remaining plumbing of the city shows the buildup of minerals.

Text:

14 "Write to the angel of the church in Laodicea:

"The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Originator of God's creation says: **15** I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were cold or hot. **16** So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit you out of My mouth. **17** Because you say, 'I'm rich; I have become wealthy and need nothing,' and you don't know that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked, **18** I advise you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire so that you may be rich, white clothes so that you may be dressed and your shameful nakedness not be exposed, and ointment to spread on your eyes so that you may see. **19** As many as I love, I rebuke and discipline. So be committed and repent. **20** Listen! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and have dinner with him, and he with Me. **21** The victor: I will give him the right to sit with Me on My throne, just as I also won the victory and sat down with My Father on His throne.

22 "Anyone who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches."

Jesus' message to Laodicea

Picture of Jesus - **THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS, ORIGINATOR OF GOD'S CREATION.**

Positives - **NONE**

Negatives - **SPIRITUALLY LUKEWARM, WRETCHED, PITIABLE, POOR AND BLIND; NEED TO BUY SPIRITUAL GOLD AND SALVE TO BECOME SPIRITUALLY RICH, CLOTHED AND SEEING.**

Command - **BE ZEALOUS, REPENT AND HEAR JESUS' VOICE**

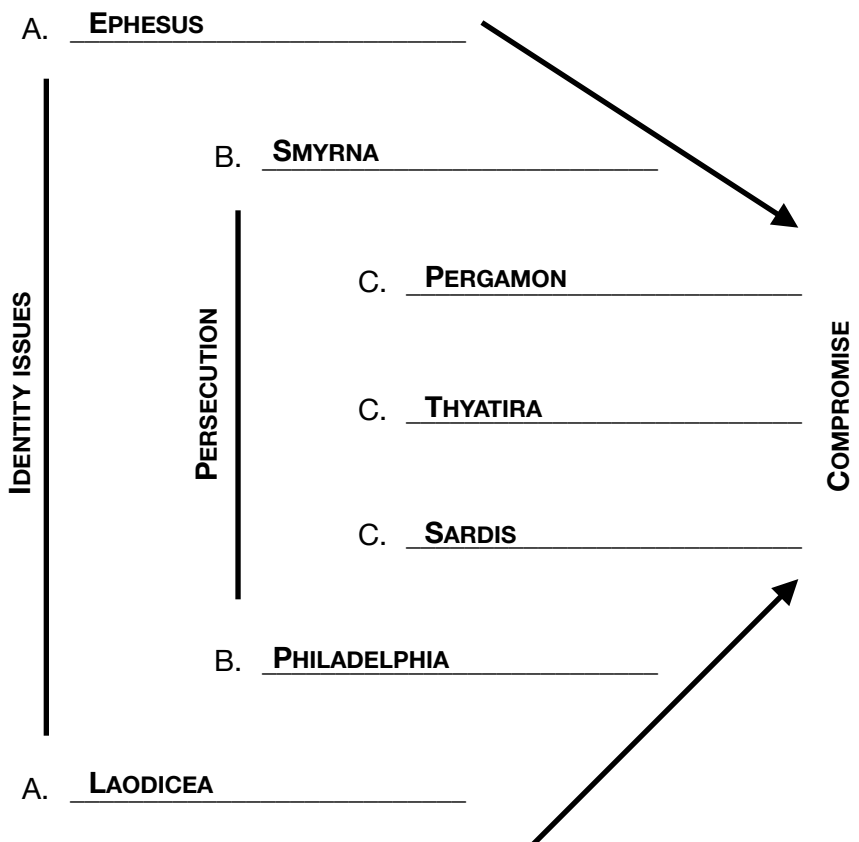
Disobedience - **WILL BE SPIT OUT**

Obedience - **WILL EAT WITH JESUS AND SIT WITH HIM ON HIS THRONE.**

Overall problem with Laodicea is this: **TOO OUTWARD FOCUSED (MATERIALISM)**

STRUCTURE OF THE 7 LETTERS WHEN PUT TOGETHER:

In addition to this internal pattern, there is an overall structure that needs to be considered as well, and of course, it is a chiastic structure. (write down would I write on the board)



APPLICATION

The major issues of the churches are:

Ephesus: TOO INWARD - DOCTRINAL PURITY

Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis: COMPROMISE IN CHURCH

Laodicea: TOO OUTWARD - LACK OF DOCTRINAL PURITY/MATERIALISM

Smyrna & Philadelphia: PERSECUTION

- 1. Do you see any connection between the title Jesus uses to address the church and the overall message of the letter? Give an example from any of the 7 letters.

Ephesus: holds 7 stars, walks among the lamp stands: (1:12) _____

TO BE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD - A BEACON TO THE LOST

Smyrna: 1st and last, dead and rose: (1:17-18) _____

CONNECTING WITH THEIR IMPENDING STRUGGLE AND MARTYRDOM

Pergamum: Has a sharp double-edge sword (1:16): _____

GOD IS JUDGE, LIKE BALAAM THREATENED BY SWORD NUM. 22:23, 31

Thyatira: Son of God, blazing eyes, feet of bronze: (1:13-15) _____

GOD IS JUDGE, DRESSED AS SUCH

Sardis: Holds 7 spirits and 7 stars: _____

GOD IS JUDGE, GIVING THEM THE POWER NECESSARY TO BE THE LIGHT.

Philadelphia: Holy and true, key of David, what he opens no one shuts (1:5,18) _____

THIS DIRECTLY RELATES TO ISRAEL, WHO WAS THE HARBINGER OF SALVATION. ISA. 22:22. NOW JESUS HOLDS THE POWER OVER DEATH, SALVATION, AND JUDGEMENT.

Laodicea: Amen, faithful, true, ruler of God's creation: (1:5) _____

RULER OF GOD'S CREATION BECAUSE HE IS THE FIRST REMADE. LAODICEA NEEDS INJECTION OF CR. RESURRECTION POWER.

- 2. Which of the seven churches do you think the church in America might resemble the most? Explain your answer. Remember to be respectful, this is the Bride of Christ we are talking about.

-
-
3. Recalling the five major aspects of John's worldview that we discussed in Lesson 1 (Roman persecution, Temple destruction, Jewish ostracizing, Heretics, and fractured community) how do the four main problems identified above fit the worldview of John? How do they correlate?

-
-
4. Explain how the 4 main problems of the seven churches identified above impacts their witness.

-
-
5. Jesus gave specific examples of obstacles for the churches to overcome (Doctrinal inclusivity, persecution, false teaching, etc). Does our church need to overcome any obstacles in order to be the shining lamp stand Christ wants us to be?
-
-

MAIN IDEA:

Continuing the idea from chapter one that John is addressing churches using Kingdom language, here too, John is reminding them of their kingdom work. In chapter 1 he reminded them of their identity. In chapters 2-3 he is telling them specifically how to the Kingdom. The climax of each letter is the promise of inheriting eternal life with Christ.

The seven churches fall into three groups. The first and last are in danger of losing their very identity as a Christian church. The churches addressed in the three central letters have to varying degrees some who have remained faithful and others who are compromising with pagan culture. The second and sixth letters are written to churches which have proved themselves faithful and loyal to Christ's name even in the face of persecution from both Jews and pagans.

However, all of the letters deal generally with the issue of witnessing for Christ in the midst of a pagan culture. The churches with problems are all exhorted to strengthen their witness in various ways, and the two churches without problems are encouraged to continue to persevere in the faithful witness that they have been maintaining.

Therefore, in John's understanding of the Kingdom, we are not being the true church unless with are witnessing to the truth and light of Jesus Christ and if we are to survive as a church, we must advance the kingdom with healthy evangelism and discipleship. Here at NLCC, the combination of evangelism and discipleship is called "disciple-making." How are you making disciples?

INTERMISSION I - THE RAPTURE

*Watch the 25 min video by Shane Wood (Ozark Professor) on the issue of Rapture. The video can be found on the church's podcast page with all the other videos for this lesson. Feel free to take notes in the outline below:

Notes:

- I. Historical Origins of the Rapture
 - A. Key Figures:
 1. Margaret MacDonald (1830)
 2. John Nelson Darby
 3. Cyrus Scofield
 4. Dwight L. Moody
 5. Billy Graham
 6. Hal Lindsey
 7. Tim LaHaye
 - B. Conclusion: The Rapture theology develops quite late in church history.
- II. Biblical Texts Regarding the Rapture
 - A. Matt. 24:36-41
 1. Who is taken?
 - a) Rapturists – The good are taken and the bad are left behind
 - b) The Bible – The bad are taken and the good are left behind
 - B. 1 Thess. 4:13-18
 - C. Revelation 4:1
- III. Conclusion

Questions

What are my initial thoughts after watching Shane's presentation about the Rapture?

What questions do I still have about the Rapture?

How does removing Rapture theology from our thinking of the end times alter what we should expect to happen?

SCENE 3: A BLUEPRINT FOR WORSHIP

CHAPTERS 4-5

THE THRONE ROOM OF HEAVEN

4:1 After this I looked, and there in heaven was an open door. The first voice that I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”

2 Immediately I was in the Spirit, and a throne was set there in heaven. One was seated on the throne, **3** and the One seated looked like jasper and carnelian stone. A rainbow that looked like an emerald surrounded the throne. **4** Around that throne were 24 thrones, and on the thrones sat 24 elders dressed in white clothes, with gold crowns on their heads. **5** Flashes of lightning and rumblings of thunder came from the throne. Seven fiery torches were burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God. **6** Something like a sea of glass, similar to crystal, was also before the throne. Four living creatures covered with eyes in front and in back were in the middle and around the throne. **7** The first living creature was like a lion; the second living creature was like a calf; the third living creature had a face like a man; and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. **8** Each of the four living creatures had six wings; they were covered with eyes around and inside. Day and night they never stop, saying:

Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God, the Almighty,
who was, who is, and who is coming.

9 Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to the One seated on the throne, the One who lives forever and ever, **10** the 24 elders fall down before the One seated on the throne, worship the One who lives forever and ever, cast their crowns before the throne, and say:

11 Our Lord and God,
You are worthy to receive
glory and honor and power,
because You have created all things,
and because of Your will
they exist and were created.

THE LAMB TAKES THE SCROLL

5:1 Then I saw in the right hand of the One seated on the throne a scroll with writing on the inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. **2** I also saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” **3** But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or even to look in it. **4** And I cried and cried because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or even to look in it.

5 Then one of the elders said to me, “Stop crying. Look! The Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has been victorious so that He may open the scroll and its seven seals.” **6** Then I saw One like a slaughtered lamb standing between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent into all the earth. **7** He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of the One seated on the throne.

THE LAMB IS WORTHY

8 When He took the scroll, the four living creatures and the 24 elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and gold bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of

the saints. **9** And they sang a new song:

You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because You were slaughtered,
and You redeemed people
for God by Your blood
from every tribe and language
and people and nation.

10 You made them a kingdom
and priests to our God,
and they will reign on the earth.

11 Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels around the throne, and also of the living creatures and of the elders. Their number was countless thousands, plus thousands of thousands. **12** They said with a loud voice:

The Lamb who was slaughtered is worthy
to receive power and riches
and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and blessing!

13 I heard every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, on the sea, and everything in them say:

Blessing and honor and glory and dominion
to the One seated on the throne,
and to the Lamb, forever and ever!

14 The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.

INTRODUCTION

Today we will be diving into the confusing language of Revelation similar to what we have seen in Revelation 1. My goal for us today is to end chapters 4-5 with an appreciation for how we ought to approach our worship of God and what that means for our faith. Worship is the central theme of these chapters, but why does John present this heavenly activity first? How might this impact his initial readers? How might it impact us today? These are the questions we ought to ask ourselves as we work through this material.

1. When was a time in your life when you were changed because of a worship experience?

2. What elements make a worship service? Why do you say that?

SYMBOLS

3. Do we read Revelation literally or figuratively? Are Symbols figurative or Literal?

~~neither, we read it naturally. Figurative means metaphorically, and literally describes something that actually happened.~~
~~Symbols are very real representations of something else.~~

4. The answer is found in the powerful use of symbols. Symbols have power. Give an example of a powerful symbol from our culture/world.

~~Burning a flag, kneeling at a football game, marching on Washington, falling on your sword, bowing before a monarch, etc.~~
~~riding a colt donkey, laying down of palm branches,~~

Working through Symbols

context - 4 verses before and 4 verses after. "forgive them for ..."

Context - The entire book - go back to the first time it is used in book.

CONTEXT - Go to the OT - Love in Jn 3:16 compared to Genesis 22.

NUMBERS

3 = Number of God, divine, used 467 times in the bible.

4 = Number of creation, the earth/ where man dwells

7 = Completeness or perfection. Used 54 times in revelation.

10 = Complete or perfect number. 4 creation + 6 mankind = complete order

12 = God's people

24 = Associated with priesthood and worship of YHWH. 1 Chr. 23-34.

40 = Period of testing

Used conventionally

For counting purposes. (prose)

Used symbolically

7 = completeness or perfection. (Apocalyptic/Hebrew)

Used rhetorically -

Not mentioned but a number is intended. Naming off 7 times. (Poetic)

WORSHIP

Worship in revelation 4-5 is connected to war. Who is the one that is reigning? In antiquity worship led to victory on the battle field. The rest of Revelation unveils the judgments upon the earth. The worship that we see here in Revelation 4-5 are given to bring about the judgements/war against evil. It initiates the beginning of the end of evil's reign.

5. What is worship?

6. What emotions ought we to bring in worship? What is the emotion for worship in the Bible?

One of the purposes of the church meeting on earth in its weekly gatherings is to be reminded of its heavenly existence and identity by modeling its worship and liturgy on the angels' and the heavenly church's worship of the exalted lamb. This is why scenes of heavenly liturgy are woven throughout the Apocalypse. It is to remind his followers what they are a part of.

Chapters 1-3 is those who have ears let him hear, in chapters 4-5 it is let him who has eyes let him see. See God for who he is.

7. Without arguing over worship styles, how can we bring a proper attitude and atmosphere to worship in our church?

How do you worship the Lord?

END of ACT ONE

As we come to the end of Act one, here is what we can sum up in the three scenes.

Scene 1: Chapter one: You better know who Jesus is. He blurs the lines between Jesus and the Father to emphasis Jesus' deity.

Scene 2: Chapter two-three: You better get your church's business in order if you are going to survive impending persecution.

Scene 3: Chapter four-five: You better be worshipping with the reverence that God requires.

ACT 2

UNRAVELING REALITIES IN SUFFERING

6-16 3 SETS OF 7 DIVINE JUDGMENTS

A LITERAL SEQUENCE OF EVENTS (PAST, PRESENT, OR FUTURE) **BUT NOTICE:** = BOWLS CONTAINED WITHIN 7th TRUMPET, TRUMPETS WITHIN 7th SEAL = EACH SET CONCLUDES WITH FINAL JUDGMENT

B THE TIME PERIOD BETWEEN JESUS' RESURRECTION & RETURN FROM THREE PERSPECTIVES

6-8a SEVEN SEALS

1 WAR 2 CONQUEST 3 FAMINE 4 DEATH 5

(SEE ZECHARIAH ch. 1)

6 THE DAY OF THE LORD! (ISAIAH 2 JOEL 2)

HOW LONG, O LORD? REST A LITTLE LONGER... WHO CAN STAND?!

ch. 7 THE LAMB'S ARMY

MARK GOD'S SERVANTS: the 144,000 MILITARY CENSUS OF 12 TRIBES (SEE NUMBERS 1)

THEY CAN! HEARS SEES

THE MESSIANIC ARMY OF GOD'S KINGDOM FROM ALL NATIONS

7

85

8b-11 SEVEN TRUMPETS

THE EXODUS PLAGUES (SEE EXODUS ch. 7-11)

1 NAIL 2 BLOOD 3 DARKNESS 4 DARKNESS 5 DEMON LOCUSTS

6 THE FOUR HORSEMEN

THE NATIONS DON'T REPENT (9-20-21)

10-11-13 THE LAMB'S SCROLL

MEASURE THE TEMPLE... PROTECTION (SEE ZECHARIAH 2)

BUT EXCLUDE THE COURTS.

A) LITERAL DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

B) NEW TEMPLE = SYMBOL OF GOD'S PEOPLE (1 CORINTHIANS 3:16 HEBREWS 3:6 1 PETER 2:4-5)

TWO WITNESSES PROPHECY... ...& ARE KILLED...

LAMPSTANDS = CHURCHES (11:4 → 1:2)

2 LITERAL PROPHETS

3 SYMBOLS OF THE CHURCH'S PROPHETIC ROLE (SEE DANIEL 7)

THE SCROLL REVEALS THE CHURCH'S MISSION: IMITATE THE LOVING SACRIFICE OF THE LAMB = GOD'S MERCY BRINGS REPENTANCE

...BUT THEN VINDICATED... GLORY TO GOD! ...& THE NATIONS DO REPENT (11:13)

11:19

12-14 SEVEN SIGNS (=SYMBOLS)

12 THE COSMIC BATTLE (BASED ON GENESIS 3:15)

THE MESSIAH & HIS PEOPLE

THEY CONQUER THE DRAGON THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB (12:11)

NOT THE REAL ENEMY

THE DRAGON

13 THE EARTHLY BATTLE (BASED ON DANIEL 7:12)

MILITARY POWER 666 ECONOMIC MACHINE BABYLON PERSIA GREECE ROME, etc....

1) THE ANTI-SHEMA PRAYER OF ALLEGIANCE FROM DEUTERONOMY 6:4-8 WRITTEN ON FOREHEAD & HAND (THOUGHTS) (ACTIONS)

MARK OF THE BEAST = ALLEGIANCE

2) THE NUMBER 666 = 666 = 666 (NERO (CAESAR) = 666)

14a THE LAMB'S ARMY

THE ETERNAL GOSPEL (14:6)

THE NEW JERUSALEM

FEAR GOD & GIVE HIM GLORY!

THE GRAIN HARVEST OF GOD'S PEOPLE

14b FINAL JUSTICE

THE GRAPE HARVEST OF HUMANITY'S EVIL

THE CHOICE

RESIST BABYLON TO FOLLOW THE LAMB

OR

FOLLOW THE BEAST & SUFFER ITS DEFEAT

15-16 SEVEN BOWLS

THE EXODUS PLAGUES (AGAIN!)

1 SORES 2 BLOOD 3 BLOOD 4 FIRE 5 DARKNESS

ARMAGEDDON:

LOCATION OF MANY ISRAELITE BATTLES (JUDGES 5:19, 2 KINGS 23:29)

SYMBOL OF REBELLIOUS NATIONS (EZEKIEL 38-39)

16:17-21

SCENE 1: THE SEVEN SEALS & 144,000

CHAPTERS 6-8:5

STRUCTURE OF THIS LESSON:

1. Discussion Questions
2. Studying the 7 seals
3. Examining the application of chapter 7
4. The Main Idea

The First Seal on the Scroll

6:1 Then I saw the Lamb open one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, “Come!” **2** I looked, and there was a white horse. The horseman on it had a bow; a crown was given to him, and he went out as a victor to conquer.

The Second Seal

3 When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, “Come!” **4** Then another horse went out, a fiery red one, and its horseman was empowered to take peace from the earth, so that people would slaughter one another. And a large sword was given to him.

The Third Seal

5 When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come!” And I looked, and there was a black horse. The horseman on it had a set of scales in his hand. **6** Then I heard something like a voice among the four living creatures say, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius—but do not harm the olive oil and the wine.”

The Fourth Seal

7 When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, “Come!” **8** And I looked, and there was a pale green horse. The horseman on it was named Death, and Hades was following after him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill by the sword, by famine, by plague, and by the wild animals of the earth.

The Fifth Seal

9 When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the people slaughtered because of God’s word and the testimony they had. **10** They cried out with a loud voice: “Lord, the One who is holy and true, how long until You judge and avenge our blood from those who live on the earth?” **11** So a white robe was given to each of them, and they were told to rest a little while longer until the number would be completed of their fellow slaves and their brothers, who were going to be killed just as they had been.

The Sixth Seal

12 Then I saw Him open the sixth seal. A violent earthquake occurred; the sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair; the entire moon became like blood; **13** the stars of heaven fell to the earth as a fig tree drops its unripe figs when shaken by a high wind; **14** the sky separated like a scroll being rolled up; and every mountain and island was moved from its place.

15 Then the kings of the earth, the nobles, the military commanders, the rich, the powerful, and every slave and free person hid in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains. **16** And they said to the mountains and to the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of the One

seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, **17** because the great day of Their wrath has come! And who is able to stand?"

The Sealed of Israel

Interlude

7:1 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, restraining the four winds of the earth so that no wind could blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree. **2** Then I saw another angel, who had the seal of the living God rise up from the east. He cried out in a loud voice to the four angels who were empowered to harm the earth and the sea: **3** "Don't harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we seal the slaves of our God on their foreheads."

4 And I heard the number of those who were sealed:

144,000 sealed from every tribe of the Israelites:

5 12,000 sealed from the tribe of Judah,

12,000 from the tribe of Reuben,

12,000 from the tribe of Gad,

6 12,000 from the tribe of Asher,

12,000 from the tribe of Naphtali,

12,000 from the tribe of Manasseh,

7 12,000 from the tribe of Simeon,

12,000 from the tribe of Levi,

12,000 from the tribe of Issachar,

8 12,000 from the tribe of Zebulun,

12,000 from the tribe of Joseph,

12,000 sealed from the tribe of Benjamin.

A Multitude from the Great Tribulation

9 After this I looked, and there was a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, which no one could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were robed in white with palm branches in their hands. **10** And they cried out in a loud voice:

Salvation belongs to our God,
who is seated on the throne,
and to the Lamb!

11 All the angels stood around the throne, the elders, and the four living creatures, and they fell facedown before the throne and worshiped God, **12** saying:

Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom
and thanksgiving and honor
and power and strength
be to our God forever and ever. Amen.

13 Then one of the elders asked me, "Who are these people robed in white, and where did they come from?"

14 I said to him, "Sir, you know."

Then he told me:

These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation.
They washed their robes and made them white
in the blood of the Lamb.

15 For this reason they are before the throne of God,
and they serve Him day and night in His sanctuary.
The One seated on the throne will shelter them:

16 They will no longer hunger;

they will no longer thirst;
 the sun will no longer strike them,
 nor will any heat.

17 For the Lamb who is at the center of the throne
 will shepherd them;
 He will guide them to springs of living waters,
 and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

The Seventh Seal

8:1 When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

2 Then I saw the seven angels who stand in the presence of God; seven trumpets were given to them. **3** Another angel, with a gold incense burner, came and stood at the altar. He was given a large amount of incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the gold altar in front of the throne. **4** The smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up in the presence of God from the angel's hand. **5** The angel took the incense burner, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it to the earth; there were rumblings of thunder, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.



INTRODUCTION:

The Lamb is the one worthy to open the scroll. The Lamb has gone to the one who sits on the throne and has taken the scroll from his hand. All of creation is praising the Lamb because he is worthy. Now the scroll is about to be opened, one seal at a time. The first five chapters of Revelation have been in preparation for the unveiling of this concealed scroll. Chapter 6 begins to reveal the “things which must soon take place” (1:1).

1. Give some examples of when there were periods of trials in history of the earth.

WWI and WWII, Vietnam, Iraq and Iran.

Bubonic Plague, The Crusades,

Slavery in USA, Slavery in Egypt, the slaughtering of people in Africa, Asia, Middle East

2. When someone questions the existence of Divinity, what do you tell them when they lob the question at you, “If God is all Good, all loving, and all powerful, then why do bad things happen to good people? Wouldn't God want to spare the people he loves from harm?”

THE SEVEN SEALS:

The Four Horseman are released

Seal	Text	INTERPRETATION
1 <u>White Horseman</u> With a bow	6:1-2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jesus 2. Satanic figure 3. *Any world leader trying to conquer another another group of people
2 <u>Red Horseman</u> People kill people	6:3-4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Beast 2. Persecution against Christians 3. *War - People kill other people in War
3 <u>Black Horseman</u> Carrying scales	6:5-6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. *Famine in the land. The costs of these items are outrageous and luxuries are no longer an option.
4 <u>Pale Green Horseman - Death</u>	6:7-8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. *Innocent people die including the unrighteous and the righteous people
5 <u>Prayers of the martyrs</u>	6:9-11	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. *The martyred Christians pray to God how much long must they endure this persecution. He tells them just a little while longer. Could represent any Christian who is experiencing persecution of some kind.
6 <u>World Destruction</u>	6:12-17	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Destruction of the world. This is the end of the world and all things. Jesus comes and spares the Believers. 2. *It is the end of those who were causing the war that led to famine and death. The persecution of the Christians comes to an end.
Interlude: Chapter 7 The 144,000 & Multitude		
7 <u>Silence</u>	8:1-6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 30 minutes or so of silence in heaven. These begin to introduce the next seven sets of judgements, the trumpets.

Discussion Questions

Read Zechariah 1:7-11, 6:1-8 & Ezekiel 14:21

3. How do the Zechariah passages relate to our text in Revelation? What connections are made/what looks similar?

These passages show us that this is not the first time we have seen the imagery of the four horseman. It tells me that this would be better to be taken as symbols for the judgment of God than to rather expect four literal horseman or these four horsemen personified in literal people. While I do think that these represent real people, I do not think that there is one intended fulfillment.

4. How do the Ezekiel passages relate to our text in Revelation? What connections are made/what looks similar?

See above

5. Revelation 6:11 says, “So a white robe was given to each of them, and they were told to rest a little while longer until the number would be completed of their fellow slaves and their brothers, who were going to be killed just as they had been.” Imagine how difficult it must be to tell people who are suffering that they must endure and wait upon God’s justice. What would you tell someone in this situation?

I would tell them that their faith will be rewarded as long as they endure. That I can’t imagine what they are going through. I’d want to pray for them.

THE SEALED OF ISRAEL 7:1-17

The answer to question 5, for John, comes in chapter 7 of Revelation. What do you say to people who asked to endure suffering and pain while on this earth? How is God going to comfort a church in the midst of Suffering? What words can possibly alleviate such pain? If you are in the throes of tribulation, try these three on for size:

1. The first comes in **7:3** _____

“Don’t release those winds . . . UNTIL we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of God.”

Application: **You are not forgotten by God. He has inscribed himself on your soul. You are his property. He will, therefore, not allow anything devastating to happen to his property that is out of control. You are not alone!**

2. The Second comes in 7:10-12

“And they cried out in a loud voice:
**Salvation belongs to our God,
who is seated on the throne,
and to the Lamb!**

All the angels stood around the throne, the elders, and the four living creatures, and they fell facedown before the throne and worshiped God, saying:

Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom
and thanksgiving and honor
and power and strength
be to our God forever and ever. Amen.

Application: **Where is God? He is on his throne. This earth may be going to hell in a hand-basket, but God is not going anywhere! Is your life out of control? Not if you're God's child! Never! At least now while God is on his throne**

3. The Third comes in 7:16-17

For this reason they are before the throne of God,
and they serve Him day and night in His sanctuary.
The One seated on the throne will shelter them:
They will no longer hunger;
they will no longer thirst;
the sun will no longer strike them,
nor will any heat.
For the Lamb who is at the center of the throne
will shepherd them;
He will guide them to springs of living waters,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

Application: **Your suffering is not going to last forever. It simply will not last. It is momentary against the backdrop of eternity. There may be no end in sight for your suffering. That's why God gave us this vision of Revelation, so that we might be able to realistically evaluate life in the here and now.**
DON'T GIVE UP!!

So who are the 144,000?

12x12x10x10x10

This is not a literal 144,000 because we have surpassed that number. It is also not just Jewish people who are saved. Israel = the people of God. We are the fulfillment of Israel. The 144,000 is a numerical way to say ALL OF GOD'S PEOPLE WILL BE SAVED!!!!!! It's how a Jewish writer would write this statement without using BOLD, ALL CAPS, and several exclamation points

MAIN IDEA:

The thought that “if God is good, he would not want saints to suffer” *or* “if God is all-powerful, surely he could do something about it” creates quite a theological dilemma. Suffering is a strange thing. Mine is always worse than yours. And someone else’s is always worse than mine. Yet whether your suffering is big or small, the principles for dealing with it are basically the same. Whether it is war or cancer, martyrdom or losing a friend these chapters help us understand what in the world God is doing. It is generally true that the greater our suffering, the more likely we are to understand why Jesus is trying to tell us with these very strange pictures. Yet even if our suffering doesn’t come close to others’, even though it may not reach biblical proportions, Revelation 6-8:5 (especially 7) gives us a message of hope.

If we are to look toward a timeline and see when these seven seals occur in history, we find them happening again and again and again and again. With the exception of Seal 6 and 7, these are not what will happen, they are not what has happened, they are simply what happens when a world is thrown into sin. Sinful people act causing others harm and death and unfortunately God’s people are caught in the middle. While this doesn’t seem fair or right, we can take solace in the thought God is in control and his strength is perfected in our weakness. Continue to pray for those who persecute you.

SCENE 2: THE SEVEN TRUMPETS & THE LITTLE SCROLL

CHAPTERS 8:6-11

The First Trumpet

8:7 The first angel blew his trumpet, and hail and fire, mixed with blood, were hurled to the earth. So a third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

The Second Trumpet

8 The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain ablaze with fire was hurled into the sea. So a third of the sea became blood, **9** a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

The Third Trumpet

10 The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from heaven. It fell on a third of the rivers and springs of water. **11** The name of the star is Wormwood, and a third of the waters became wormwood. So, many of the people died from the waters, because they had been made bitter.

The Fourth Trumpet

12 The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day was without light, and the night as well.

13 I looked again and heard an eagle flying high overhead, crying out in a loud voice, "Woe! Woe! Woe to those who live on the earth, because of the remaining trumpet blasts that the three angels are about to sound!"

The Fifth Trumpet

9:1 The fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from heaven to earth. The key to the shaft of the abyss was given to him. **2** He opened the shaft of the abyss, and smoke came up out of the shaft like smoke from a great furnace so that the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke from the shaft. **3** Then locusts came out of the smoke on to the earth, and power was given to them like the power that scorpions have on the earth. **4** They were told not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green plant, or any tree, but only people who do not have God's seal on their foreheads. **5** They were not permitted to kill them but were to torment them for five months; their torment is like the torment caused by a scorpion when it strikes a man. **6** In those days people will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, but death will flee from them.

7 The appearance of the locusts was like horses equipped for battle. Something like gold crowns was on their heads; their faces were like men's faces; **8** they had hair like women's hair; their teeth were like lions' teeth; **9** they had chests like iron breastplates; the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses rushing into battle; **10** and they had tails with stingers like scorpions, so that with their tails they had the power to harm people for five months. **11** They had as their king the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he has the name Apollyon. **12** The first woe has passed. There are still two more woes to come after this.

The Sixth Trumpet (Hell Brakes lose)

13 The sixth angel blew his trumpet. From the four horns of the gold altar that is before God, I heard a voice **14** say to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels bound at the great river Euphrates.” **15** So the four angels who were prepared for the hour, day, month, and year were released to kill a third of the human race. **16** The number of mounted troops was 200 million (*actual translation: twice ten thousand times ten thousand or “myriads and myriads”*); I heard their number. **17** This is how I saw the horses in my vision: The horsemen had breastplates that were fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow. The heads of the horses were like lions’ heads, and from their mouths came fire, smoke, and sulfur. **18** A third of the human race was killed by these three plagues—by the fire, the smoke, and the sulfur that came from their mouths. **19** For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails, for their tails, which resemble snakes, have heads, and they inflict injury with them.

20 The rest of the people, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands to stop worshiping demons and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood, which are not able to see, hear, or walk. **21** And they did not repent of their murders, their sorceries, their sexual immorality, or their thefts.

Interlude: The Mighty Angel and the Small Scroll

10:1 Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, surrounded by a cloud, with a rainbow over his head (see 4:3). His face was like the sun (see 1:16), his legs were like fiery pillars, **2** and he had a *little* scroll opened in his hand. He put his right foot on the sea, his left on the land, **3** and he cried out with a loud voice like a roaring lion (see 5:5). When he cried out, the seven thunders spoke with their voices. **4** And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write. Then I heard a voice from heaven, saying, “Seal up what the seven thunders said, and do not write it down!”

5 Then the angel that I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven. **6** He swore an oath by the One who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it: “There will no longer be an interval of time, **7** but in the days of the sound of the seventh angel, when he will blow his trumpet, then God’s hidden plan will be completed, as He announced to His servants the prophets.”

8 Now the voice that I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, “Go, take the scroll that lies open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land.”

9 So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the *little* scroll. He said to me, “Take and eat it; it will be bitter in your stomach, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth (see Ezekiel 2:8-3:3, 14 and Jeremiah 15:16-17; cf Psalm 119:103).” **10** Then I took the little scroll from the angel’s hand and ate it. It was as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I ate it, my stomach became bitter. **11** And I was told, “You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages, and kings.”

The Two Witnesses

11:1 Then I was given a measuring reed like a rod, with these words: “Go and measure God’s sanctuary and the altar, and count those who worship there. (see Ezekiel 41:13; Zechariah 2) **2** But exclude the courtyard outside the sanctuary. Don’t measure it, because it is given to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for 42 months (= 3.5 years). **3** I will empower my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days (= 3.5 years), dressed in sackcloth.” **4** These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. **5** If anyone wants to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and consumes their enemies;

if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way. **6** These men have the power to close up the sky so that it does not rain during the days of their prophecy. They also have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every plague whenever they want.

The Witnesses Martyred

7 When they finish their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, conquer them, and kill them. **8** Their dead bodies will lie in the public square of the great city, which prophetically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. **9** And representatives from the peoples, tribes, languages, and nations will view their bodies for three and a half days and not permit their bodies to be put into a tomb. **10** Those who live on the earth will gloat over them and celebrate and send gifts to one another because these two prophets brought judgment to those who live on the earth.

The Witnesses Resurrected

11 But after 3½ days, the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet. So great fear fell on those who saw them. **12** Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." They went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies watched them. **13** At that moment a violent earthquake took place, a tenth of the city fell, and 7,000 people were killed in the earthquake. The survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. **14** The second woe has passed. Take note: The third woe is coming quickly!

The Seventh Trumpet

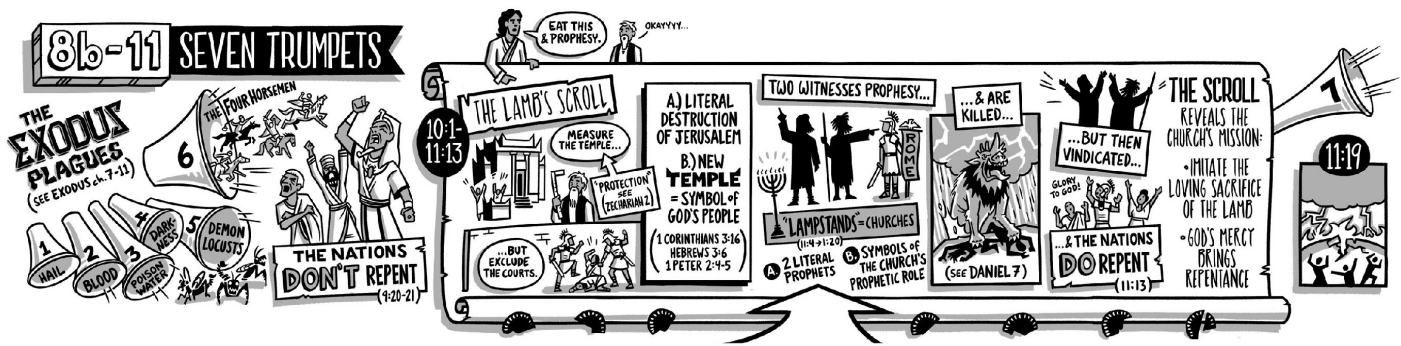
15 The seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven saying: The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Messiah, and He will reign forever and ever!

16 The 24 elders, who were seated before God on their thrones, fell facedown and worshiped God, **17** saying:

We thank You, Lord God, the Almighty,
who is and who was,
because You have taken Your great power
and have begun to reign.

18 The nations were angry,
but Your wrath has come.
The time has come
for the dead to be judged
and to give the reward
to Your servants the prophets,
to the saints, and to those who fear Your name,
both small and great,
and the time has come to destroy
those who destroy the earth.

19 God's sanctuary in heaven was opened, and the ark of His covenant appeared in His sanctuary. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings of thunder, an earthquake, and severe hail.



INTRODUCTION:

1. When was there a time in your life when you had to deliver bad news? When was there a time in your life when you got to deliver good news? Was there ever a time when those were the same thing?

2. The Gospel message is initially Good news and continues to be good news for those who accept it. It becomes bad news for those who reject it. What emotions have you felt when you shared the good news of the resurrection with someone?

“If you think it’s tough to suffer as a Christian, you ought to try suffering as a pagan! In the first cycle of sevens, Christians suffer the seals along with their non-christian neighbors. This second cycle of sevens, however is different. The Bride of Christ is exempt from much of the stuff that assaults the world through the trumpets. It goes something like this: The seventh seal is broken and all heaven stands in awe for a half an hour (8:1). Why? Because the seventh seal (as well as the seventh trumpet and the seventh bowl), represents the final judgment of God. The courtroom always sits in silence as it awaits the reading of the verdict. But the silence doesn’t last long. Soon come the sounds of judgment: “peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake” (v. 5, cf. 4:5; 11:19; 16:18). All this would be too much to take, save the one note of comfort. That is, the angel of God delivers to his Majesty the prayers of the saints. God has listened to his church; she is secure through the judgment. Suddenly the tape rewinds and we go through the cycle again. In other words, we move from heaven and the end of time, back to the earth and the time of tribulation. This time, however, we look at the suffering of the world from a different angle. In the first round, we were looking at the tribulation through the lens of the church. In round two, we see it from the vantage point of the world. Here’s what happens.”

MOORE, MARK. HOW TO DODGE A DRAGON: AN UNCOMMENTARY ON REVELATION (KINDLE LOCATIONS 653-664). MARKMOORE.ORG. KINDLE EDITION.

GETTING THE STORY STRAIGHT

Before we can begin to investigate the 7 trumpets it will be incredibly beneficial for us to see how John is drawing similarities to his present age, and by extension our age, to that of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. There are a number of elements that he draws out of the Old Testament and places in the middle of his apocalypse.

The MAIN IDEA of this tactic is to draw a line between the Christian experience and the Israelites enslaved in Egypt. John invites his readers to view the coming Kingdom of God as a sort of “Second Exodus” for G0d’s covenant people. We sketch the main points of comparison below:

Israelites in Egypt	Christians in Asia Minor/All of us
1. Israel, the people of God, suffer oppression in Egypt under the vil Pharaoh.	1. The new Israel, People of God, are enslaved in the present evil age and oppressed by all sorts of powers.
2. God sends 10 plagues on Egyptians to demonstrate his power.	2. God sounds the first 5 Trumpets that are similar to the 10 plagues to demonstrate his power.
3. Israel, God’s people are spared from the plagues.	3. The New Israel, God’s people are spared from the last three Trumpets, but must endure the first four.
4. Through the 10 Plagues, God & Pharaoh hardens Pharaoh’s heart. He does not repent.	4. Many people Harden their hearts, refusing to repent of their sins and turn from false gods to serve YHWH 9:20-21.
5. God defeats/beats down Pharaoh in the Red Sea. The Israelites give praises to God that he will reign forever.	5. John describes a final judgment and consummation of god’s kingdom. This includes a song of praise that announces God’s eternal reign (Trumpet 7)
6. At God’s command, Israel builds a tabernacle containing the ark of the covenant where God is present with his people.	6. God’s people are given access to his temple, the ark of the covenant, signifying the lord’s presence with his covenant people (Rev. 11:19)

Just like with the 7 seals, the real heart of the message comes in the interlude between the last two judgements from God.

We will first go through the 7 Trumpets and then we will go back and examine the interlude between Trumpet 6 and 7 to get to the heart of what John is trying to tell us.

- A. *Trumpets are instruments of war and instruments of worship. Revelation tells us that our worship is a form of weapon. We fight the spiritual battle of our lives in worship just like the Israelites used trumpets to worship*
- B. *The Trumpets and Bowls // each other much more than the Seals with the Trumpets and the Bowls because the Old Testament is the driving force behind it.*
- C. *The plagues call both the Believers and Unbelievers to repentance (think back to the 7 churches and their need to repent).*
- D. *These need to be read in harmony, not necessarily individually. Take what they all have to say first, then break it down.*

- E. Trumpets portray judgment on unbelievers because of their hardened attitude thus demonstrating God's incomparable sovereignty and glory.
- F. The first 6 woes precede the last punishment, represented by the 7th seal and the 7th trumpet. Therefore, the trumpets do not follow the 7th seal chronologically but only literarily. The trumpets recapitulate (summarize and state again the main points) the seals.

THE SEVEN TRUMPETS

		Trumpets	Text	INTERPRETATION
Common to All people		1 <u>Hail</u>	8:7	See Ex. 9:13-35
		2 <u>Blood</u>	8:8-9	See Ex. 7:20-25
		3 <u>Poison Water</u>	8:10-11	See Ex. 7:20-25
		4 <u>Darkness</u>	8:12-13	See Ex. 10:21-23
Woes		5 <u>Demon Locusts</u>	9:1-12	Ex. 10:12-15
		6 <u>The 4 Angels</u> 4 horseman?	9:13-21	Possible allusion to the Parthian Empire and the fear that would strike in the Romans. They are bringing hell to the earth for those who are unbelievers.
	Interlude: Chapter 10:1-11:14 The little scroll/2 witnesses			
		7 <u>Lightning & Thunder</u>	11:15-19	God Wins

THE INTERLUDE (10:1-11:14)

3. Why would the scroll taste sweet as honey but be bitter in the stomach? See Ezekiel 2:8-3:3, 14 and Jeremiah 15:16-17. What is the bitter part of the scroll?

The message of God is sweet. Delivering the message of God makes us uncomfortable when it is rejected by our peers and we become the target of ridicule and persecution. There is a weight to bear when preaching the good news.

4. In chapter 11, John is handed a measuring stick and is told to measure the temple. What is this temple referencing? Explain your answer.

The people of God. There is no Temple in the time of Ezekiel 40, which is what this is referencing. We are God's sanctuary. We should have no expectations of a temple being built on the temple Mount in the future.

Measuring in the Old Testament has three purposes:

- i. **Ownership**_____
- ii. **Protection**_____
- iii. **Sovereignty**_____

See Ezekiel 40. There the prophet is observing the temple being measured. This is odd because Ezekiel is living in a time when there is no temple on earth to YHWH. So is this temple the new temple that God created? No. It is God's people.

Who are the two witnesses:

- i. **Jesus, King, Moses, Law, Us**_____
- ii. **Jesus, Priest, Elijah, Prophets, Us**_____

5. What is the result of their resurrection after being killed by the beast? If these two witnesses have so much power than why are they killed by the beast in the first place? What might be the message that John is trying to tell his readers that the way to win those with hard hearts to Christ?

They are taken up to heaven on a cloud (like Jesus) and then the people who are left repent.

They chose not to use their power like Jesus chose not to use his when he was being nailed to the cross. It is the way of pacifism because the message is stronger than the power. Our witness is how we win people to Christ. How we live our lives in faithfulness is when people will see the real power of God.

6. How do you think the 7 churches would respond to this message?

Depends on the church. Ephesus and Laodicea would see the need for purity of witness (the locust are in our Kingdom). Smyrna and Philadelphia might simply think, yep. We are living this already. Thyatira, Pergamum and Sardis might think they need to wake up and get their act together. WAKE UP!

MAIN IDEA

Here again we find the main idea of the Trumpets hidden in symbols in the interlude. No matter who the witnesses are, their purpose is clear; preach the truth of scripture in the face of fiery persecution. No matter what you face, God expects his church to be a light. He expects his church to be the sounding of truth and grace. God does not promise to protect you from suffering. We are never promised a time of prosperity of wealth or independence and freedom to practice our faith. What we are promised, however, is that he will protect us in our suffering. One thinks of Jesus' words, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." We can be assured of victory that comes as we witness to God in the midst of suffering in a hostile and sin-captured world. We are sealed by the lamb of God and spared the wicked forces working in the spiritual realms but we are not spared the physical assault against us.

Here is what John is saying, *when the gospel is lived out by the ultimate means of the martyr's end, then the unrighteous will see the power of God.* The interlude is all about this concept. That the way God plans to bring repentance from sinners is in the death of the believers who bear witness to God's truth.

The Seals message = Who can stand against the judgement of the lamb? The people of God can. Now get out and witness.

The Trumpets message = Your ultimate faithfulness to God will lead to the repentance of sinners. Your witness (how you live your life; ethics and faith) is what will bring people to repentance.

INTERMISSION II - CHALLENGING ASSUMPTIONS

*Watch the 18 minute video on the StudyGroup Podcast page. In this video Dr. Shane Wood will levy against the notion that Revelation is a roadmap to determining the end of the world. Feel free to take notes on the outline below.

Notes:

I. Revelation is . . .

A. Chronological Road Map of the future. Really?

1. Chapter six of Revelation - we hit the end of the world and judgement day
2. Chapter 11 of Revelation - We hit the end of the world . . . Again.
3. Chapter 14 of Revelation - We hit the end of the world . . . Again.
4. Chapter 16 of Revelation - We hit the end of the world . . . Again.
5. Chapter 19 of Revelation - We hit the end of the world . . . Again.
6. Chapter 20 of Revelation - We hit the end of the world . . . Again.

B. Purpose of Revelation.

1. Revelation 12 - Woman gives birth to a baby/Jesus.
2. Revelation's Goal - pull back the veil.
3. Revelation's Target - YOU!

Questions

What assumptions did you have about Revelation that have been put to the test through this series?

How has your perspective changed on Revelation, if at all?

Why is it so difficult for us to "course correct" our thinking about beliefs we may have held for so long?

When does Revelation teach the beginning of the "tribulation" and "end times" begin if we change how we read this book?

SCENE 3: COSMIC BATTLES & THE 7 SIGNS (SYMBOLS)

CHAPTERS 12-15:4

INTRODUCTION:

The Bible Project Video: Revelation Part 2

Notes: _____

Chapters 11 through 13 are very important. These visions & Signs open our eyes to the real battle we face, the real characters with which we wage war. Each chapter describes our spiritual struggle from a different angle. In chapter 11 we view it from the perspective of the church and the martyrdom of the two witnesses as they proclaim the good news of Christ, yet in their death God has victory. In chapter 12 we see the struggle from the perspective of heaven's vantage point where we see the cosmic battle being played between God and the Satan. In chapter 13, we will see the same struggle from the perspective of the world and the rise of Kingdoms.



What this section does for us:

Introduces to us the key Antagonist to the Story, Satan.

Chiastic Structure about to unfold:

- A. The Dragon (chp 12)
- B. The Beast of Sea (chp 13)
- C. Beast of earth (chp 13)
- D. The Whore of Babylon (17)
- D' The Whore of Babylon (18)
- C' The False Prophet (19)
- B' The Beast of Sea (chp 19)
- A' The Dragon (chp 20)

1. Why is Babylon the key emphasis of this structure?

Babylon is their reality. It is how they see the forces of evil play out around them since they are blind to the spiritual realm and the battle there.

2. Why is Satan at the beginning and the end of the structure?

Because John is saying the real enemy isn't Babylon/Rome. They are just the faces of the real enemy, Satan. He is the instigator of all their woes.

UNDERSTANDING THE SIGNS:

1. The conflict of the serpent with the woman and her seed (12:1-18)
2. Persecution by the beast from the sea (13:1-10)
3. Persecution by the beast from the land (13:11-18)
4. The Lamb and the 144,00 standing on Mount Zion (14:1-5)
5. The proclamation of the gospel and of judgment by the three angels (14:6-13)
6. The son of man's harvest of the earth (14:14-20)
7. The saints victory over the sea beast and their victory song (15:2-4)

Take the sign you were assigned and read through it complete the following (1) summarize the sign - details, story, etc. & (2) Identify all the symbols that are listed. Some of them we have discussed before. Many we have not. When we are finished, we will come back together and work through the interpretation.

SIGN 1 - 12:1-18 THE CONFLICT OF THE SERPENT WITH THE WOMAN AND HER SEED
(THE FIRST SIGN IS BROKEN INTO THREE PARTS: 1-6, 7-12, 13-18)

Part 1: Verses 1-6

12:1 A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of 12 stars on her head. **2** She was pregnant and cried out in labor and agony as she was about to give birth. **3** Then another sign appeared in heaven: There was a great fiery red dragon having seven heads and 10 horns, and on

his heads were seven diadems. **4** His tail swept away a third of the stars in heaven and hurled them to the earth. And the dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she did give birth he might devour her child. **5** But she gave birth to a Son—a male who is going to shepherd all nations with an iron scepter—and her child was caught up to God and to His throne. **6** The woman fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared by God, to be fed there for 1,260 days.

The Story:

A pregnant woman that is described astronomically gives birth to a child that the Dragon (satan) wants to Devour.

The Dragon swept 1/3 of stars out of sky.

Woman flees into the wilderness.

The Symbols:

Image of dragon - horns, heads, tail, crowns. = Satan and his rule over nations

Woman - clothed in the sun, crown of 12 stars, moon under feet. = God's people/12 disciples.

Child - ruler of the earth/ Jesus

1/3 of stars in heaven = Believers satan persecutes/kills, possibly angels

The Interpretation:

What we see here is the crucifixion to ascension scene in the spiritual realm. The 12 disciples are in labor over their Leader leaving them. Once he is born, it is him going away. The woman is taken into a trial period where she is nurtured by the Holy Spirit for the fullness of time required to be there.

Part 2:

12:7 Then war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon.

The dragon and his angels also fought, **8** but he could not prevail, and there was no place for them in heaven any longer. **9** So the great dragon was thrown out—the ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the one who deceives the whole world. He was thrown to earth, and his angels with him.

10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say:

The salvation and the power
and the kingdom of our God
and the authority of His Messiah
have now come,
because the accuser of our brothers
has been thrown out:

the one who accuses them
before our God day and night.

11 They conquered him
by the blood of the Lamb
and by the word of their testimony,
for they did not love their lives
in the face of death.

12 Therefore rejoice, you heavens,
and you who dwell in them!
Woe to the earth and the sea,
for the Devil has come down to you
with great fury,
because he knows he has a short time.

The Story:

The dragon follows the baby up into heaven and attacks Him there but is met by Michael the archangel. He is beaten and cast down. We are told in a hymn that salvation and the KOG have come to the earth. We can defeat him by the blood of the lamb and our faithful witness.

The Symbols:

Michael = the archangel Michael who leads the Lord's forces. Maybe Jesus.

The Interpretation:

Satan follows Jesus up into heaven and wages war against him, but loses and is cast down. He is forced to do his bidding down here on the earth. That is cause for concern because he will now attack the earth.

Part 3:

12:13 When the dragon saw that he had been thrown to earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. **14** The woman was given two wings of a great eagle, so that she could fly from the serpent's presence to her place in the wilderness, where she was fed for a time, times, and half a time. **15** From his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river flowing after the woman, to sweep her away in a torrent.

16 But the earth helped the woman. The earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the river that the dragon had spewed from his mouth. **17** So the dragon was furious with the woman and left to wage war against the rest of her offspring—those who keep God's commands and have the testimony about Jesus. **18** He stood on the sand of the sea.

The Story:

The dragon attack the woman on earth/in the wilderness. She is spared and taken away by wings of an eagle. Dragon tries to drown her. The earth swallows the water.

Dragon now goes after her descendants. He stands on sea of chaos and and rules over the stirring waters.

The Symbols:

Wings of an eagle = God's protection Ex. 19

Spewed Water = His attack on the 12 disciples/us. His lies. His chaos.

The Earth = God's creation bearing witness against the devil.

Standing on edge of sea = He is ruler over the chaos and is about to bring it.

The Interpretation:

Dragon, facing reality of his situation, knows his only attack against God is to go after his people. He starts with the 12, but their mission is protected by God, so he then goes after their followers. That's you and me!

***But we were told how to overcome him and his attack. Salvation comes from the blood of the lamb and remaining faithful to him through our witness.**

SIGN 2 - PERSECUTION BY THE BEAST FROM THE SEA

13:1 And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea. He had 10 horns and seven heads. On his horns were 10 diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names. **2** The beast I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like a bear's, and his mouth was like a lion's mouth. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. **3** One of his heads appeared to be fatally wounded, but his fatal wound was healed. The whole earth was amazed and followed the beast. **4** They worshiped the dragon because he gave authority to the beast. And they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to wage war against him?"

5 A mouth was given to him to speak boasts and blasphemies. He was also given authority to act for 42 months. **6** He began to speak blasphemies against God: to blaspheme His name and His dwelling—those who dwell in heaven. **7** And he was permitted to wage war against the saints and to conquer them. He was also given authority over every tribe, people, language, and nation. **8** All those who live on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name was not written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slaughtered.

9 If anyone has an ear, he should listen:

10 If anyone is destined for captivity,
into captivity he goes.

If anyone is to be killed with a sword,
with a sword he will be killed.

This demands the perseverance and faith of the saints.

The Story:

The Symbols:

The Interpretation:

SIGN 3 - PERSECUTION BY THE BEAST FROM THE LAND

13:11 Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; he had two horns like a lamb, but he sounded like a dragon. **12** He exercises all the authority of the first beast on his behalf and compels the earth and those who live on it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. **13** He also performs great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in front of people. **14** He deceives those who live on the earth because of the signs that he is permitted to perform on behalf of the beast, telling those who live on the earth to make an image of the beast who had the sword wound and yet lived. **15** He was permitted to give a spirit to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast could both speak and cause whoever would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. **16** And he requires everyone—small and great, rich and poor, free and slave—to be given a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, **17** so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark: the beast’s name or the number of his name.

18 Here is wisdom: The one who has understanding must calculate the number of the beast, because it is the number of a man. His number is 666 (*some manuscripts have 616*).

The Story:

The Symbols:

The Interpretation:

SIGN 4 - THE LAMB AND THE 144,00 STANDING ON MOUNT ZION

14:1 Then I looked, and there on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with Him were 144,000 who had His name and His Father's name written on their foreheads. **2** I heard a sound from heaven like the sound of cascading waters and like the rumbling of loud thunder. The sound I heard was also like harpists playing on their harps. **3** They sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders, but no one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. **4** These are the ones not defiled with women, for they have kept their virginity. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. They were redeemed from the human race as the first-fruits for God and the Lamb. **5** No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.

The Story:

The Symbols:

The Interpretation:

SIGN 5 - THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL AND OF JUDGMENT BY THE THREE ANGELS

The Proclamation of Three Angels

14:6 Then I saw another angel flying high overhead, having the eternal gospel to announce to the inhabitants of the earth—to every nation, tribe, language, and people.

7 He spoke with a loud voice: “Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come. Worship the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”

8 A second angel followed, saying: “It has fallen, Babylon the Great has fallen, who made all nations drink the wine of her sexual immorality, which brings wrath.”

9 And a third angel followed them and spoke with a loud voice: “If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, **10** he will also drink the wine of God’s wrath, which is mixed full strength in the cup of His anger. He will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the sight of the holy angels and in the sight of the Lamb, **11** and the smoke of their torment will go up forever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or anyone who receives the mark of his name. **12** This demands the perseverance of the saints, who keep God’s commands and their faith in Jesus.”

13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write: The dead who die in the Lord from now on are blessed.”

“Yes,” says the Spirit, “let them rest from their labors, for their works follow them!”
Reaping the Earth’s Harvest.

The Story:

The Symbols:

The Interpretation:

SIGN 6 - THE SON OF MAN'S HARVEST OF THE EARTH

14:14 Then I looked, and there was a white cloud, and One like the Son of Man was seated on the cloud, with a gold crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand.

15 Another angel came out of the sanctuary, crying out in a loud voice to the One who was seated on the cloud, "Use your sickle and reap, for the time to reap has come, since the harvest of the earth is ripe." **16** So the One seated on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested.

17 Then another angel who also had a sharp sickle came out of the sanctuary in heaven. **18** Yet another angel, who had authority over fire, came from the altar, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, "Use your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from earth's vineyard, because its grapes have ripened."

19 So the angel swung his sickle toward earth and gathered the grapes from earth's vineyard, and he threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath. **20** Then the press was trampled outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press up to the horses' bridles for about 180 miles.

The Story:

The Symbols:

The Interpretation:

SIGN 7 - THE SAINTS VICTORY OVER THE SEA BEAST AND THEIR VICTORY SONG

15:1 Then I saw another great and awe-inspiring sign in heaven: seven angels with the seven last plagues, for with them, God's wrath will be completed. **2** I also saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had won the victory over the beast, his image, and the number of his name, were standing on the sea of glass with harps from God. **3** They sang the song of God's servant Moses and the song of the Lamb:

Great and awe-inspiring are Your works,
Lord God, the Almighty;
righteous and true are Your ways,
King of the Nations.

4 Lord, who will not fear
and glorify Your name?
Because You alone are holy,
for all the nations will come
and worship before You
because Your righteous acts
have been revealed.

The Story:

The Symbols:

The Interpretation:

MAIN IDEA:

Chapters 11-13 should not be read without the postscript of chapter 14. In fact, you might run and hide from those chapters and what it promises for believers. However, we

mustn't read about the schemes of the Dragon, and Beasts without reading about the work of God. He will save and sustain his people. This is the first half of the end of the story, namely, that Christians will be saved.

Chapter 14 tells us that our worship to God is how we defeat our enemies. Our battle cry is our praises, our weapon is the blood of the lamb, and our battle ground is the "in labor pains" earth. Make no mistake, we are at war. Now this is not a war fought by two visible armies. John had to pull the veil back to reveal the battle lines. The Dragon, the beast and the false prophet wage war against you and me. Yet who can stand against the ancient of days? Who can stand against the lion of Judah? Who can stand against the wrath of the righteous? Who can stand?

Let us then continue to work out our salvation in fear and trembling receiving help from the lamb until we and the Earth are made perfect. Chapters 12-15:4 tells us ultimately two important lessons: The first is Satan is nothing more than God's marionette; the second is, so are we. So live as God would direct you and overcome the beast of our age.

SCENE 4: SEVEN ANGELS WITH BOWLS

CHAPTERS 15-16

Preparation for the Bowl Judgments

15: Then I saw another great and awe-inspiring sign in heaven: seven angels with the seven last plagues, for with them, God's wrath will be completed. **2** I also saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had won the victory over the beast, his image, and the number of his name, were standing on the sea of glass with harps from God. **3** They sang the song of God's servant Moses and the song of the Lamb:

Great and awe-inspiring are Your works,
Lord God, the Almighty;
righteous and true are Your ways,
King of the Nations.

4 Lord, who will not fear
and glorify Your name?
Because You alone are holy,
for all the nations will come
and worship before You
because Your righteous acts
have been revealed.

5 After this I looked, and the heavenly sanctuary—the tabernacle of testimony—was opened.

6 Out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues, dressed in clean, bright linen, with gold sashes wrapped around their chests. **7** One of the four living creatures gave the seven angels seven gold bowls filled with the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. **8** Then the sanctuary was filled with smoke from God's glory and from His power, and no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

The First Bowl

16:1 Then I heard a loud voice from the sanctuary saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath on the earth." **2** The first went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and severely painful sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image.

The Second Bowl

3 The second poured out his bowl into the sea. It turned to blood like a dead man's, and all life in the sea died.

The Third Bowl

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

You are righteous,
who is and who was, the Holy One,
for You have decided these things.

6 Because they poured out
the blood of the saints and the prophets,
You also gave them blood to drink;
they deserve it!

7 Then I heard someone from the altar say:
Yes, Lord God, the Almighty,
true and righteous are Your judgments.

The Fourth Bowl

8 The fourth poured out his bowl on the sun. He was given the power to burn people with fire, **9** and people were burned by the intense heat. So they blasphemed the name of God, who had the power over these plagues, and they did not repent and give Him glory.

The Fifth Bowl

10 The fifth poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues because of their pain **11** and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, yet they did not repent of their actions.

The Sixth Bowl

12 The sixth 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 unclean spirits like frogs coming from the dragon's mouth, from the beast's mouth, and from the mouth of the false prophet. **14** For they are spirits of demons performing signs, who travel to the kings of the whole world to assemble them for the battle of the great day of God, the Almighty.

Interlude

15 "Look, I am coming like a thief. The one who is alert and remains clothed so that he may not go around naked and people see his shame is blessed."

16 So they assembled them at the place called in Hebrew, Armagedon.

The Seventh Bowl

17 Then the seventh poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the sanctuary from the throne, saying, "It is done!" **18** There were flashes of lightning and rumblings of thunder. And a severe earthquake occurred like no other since man has been on the earth—so great was the quake. **19** The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the Great was remembered in God's presence; He gave her the cup filled with the wine of His fierce anger. **20** Every island fled, and the mountains disappeared.

21 Enormous hailstones, each weighing about 100 pounds, fell from the sky on people, and they blasphemed God for the plague of hail because that plague was extremely severe.

ACT 3

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

SCENE 1: DESTRUCTION OF UNHOLY TRINITY

CHAPTERS 17-20

The Woman and the Scarlet Beast

17 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me: “Come, I will show you the judgment of the notorious prostitute who sits on many waters. **2** The kings of the earth committed sexual immorality with her, and those who live on the earth became drunk on the wine of her sexual immorality.” **3** So he carried me away in the Spirit to a desert. I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and 10 horns. **4** The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, precious stones, and pearls. She had a gold cup in her hand filled with everything vile and with the impurities of her prostitution. **5** On her forehead a cryptic name was written:

BABYLON THE GREAT
THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES
AND OF THE VILE THINGS OF THE EARTH.

6 Then I saw that the woman was drunk on the blood of the saints and on the blood of the witnesses to Jesus. When I saw her, I was greatly astonished.

The Meaning of the Woman and of the Beast

7 Then the angel said to me, “Why are you astonished? I will tell you the secret meaning of the woman and of the beast, with the seven heads and the 10 horns, that carries her. **8** The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up from the abyss and go to destruction. Those who live on the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast that was, and is not, and will be present again.

9 “Here is the mind with wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated. **10** They are also seven kings: Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he comes, he must remain for a little while. **11** The beast that was and is not, is himself an eighth king, yet he belongs to the seven and is going to destruction. **12** The 10 horns you saw are 10 kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they will receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. **13** These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast. **14** These will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will conquer them because He is Lord of lords and King of kings. Those with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.”

15 He also said to me, “The waters you saw, where the prostitute was seated, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages. **16** The 10 horns you saw, and the beast, will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate and naked, devour her flesh, and burn her up with fire. **17** For God has put it into their hearts to carry out His plan by having one purpose and to give their kingdom to the beast until God’s words are accomplished. **18** And the woman you saw is the great city that has an empire over the kings of the earth.”

The Fall of Babylon the Great

18 After this I saw another angel with great authority coming down from heaven, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. **2** He cried in a mighty voice: It has fallen,

Babylon the Great has fallen!
She has become a dwelling for demons,
a haunt for every unclean spirit,
a haunt for every unclean bird,

and a haunt for every unclean and despicable beast.

3 For all the nations have drunk
the wine of her sexual immorality,
which brings wrath.
The kings of the earth
have committed sexual immorality with her,
and the merchants of the earth
have grown wealthy from her excessive luxury.

4 Then I heard another voice from heaven:

Come out of her, My people,
so that you will not share in her sins
or receive any of her plagues.

5 For her sins are piled up to heaven,
and God has remembered her crimes.

6 Pay her back the way she also paid,
and double it according to her works.
In the cup in which she mixed,
mix a double portion for her.

7 As much as she glorified herself and lived luxuriously,
give her that much torment and grief,
for she says in her heart,
“I sit as a queen;
I am not a widow,
and I will never see grief.”

8 For this reason her plagues will come in one day—
death and grief and famine.
She will be burned up with fire,
because the Lord God who judges her is mighty.

The World Mourns Babylon’s Fall

9 The kings of the earth who have committed sexual immorality and lived luxuriously with her will weep and mourn over her when they see the smoke of her burning. **10** They will stand far off in fear of her torment, saying:

Woe, woe, the great city,
Babylon, the mighty city!
For in a single hour
your judgment has come.

11 The merchants of the earth will also weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their merchandise any longer— **12** merchandise of gold, silver, precious stones, and pearls; fine fabrics of linen, purple, silk, and scarlet; all kinds of fragrant wood products; objects of ivory; objects of expensive wood, brass, iron, and marble; **13** cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, and frankincense; wine, olive oil, fine wheat flour, and grain; cattle and sheep; horses and carriages; and slaves and human lives.

14 The fruit you craved has left you.
All your splendid and glamorous things are gone;
they will never find them again.

15 The merchants of these things, who became rich from her, will stand far off in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, **16** saying:

Woe, woe, the great city,
dressed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet,
adorned with gold, precious stones, and pearls,
17 for in a single hour
such fabulous wealth was destroyed!

And every shipmaster, seafarer, the sailors, and all who do business by sea, stood far off **18** as they watched the smoke from her burning and kept crying out: "Who is like the great city?"

19 They threw dust on their heads and kept crying out, weeping, and mourning:

Woe, woe, the great city,
where all those who have ships on the sea
became rich from her wealth,
for in a single hour she was destroyed.

20 Rejoice over her, heaven,
and you saints, apostles, and prophets,
because God has executed your judgment on her!

The Finality of Babylon's Fall

21 Then a mighty angel picked up a stone like a large millstone and threw it into the sea, saying:

In this way, Babylon the great city
will be thrown down violently
and never be found again.

22 The sound of harpists, musicians,
flutists, and trumpeters
will never be heard in you again;
no craftsman of any trade
will ever be found in you again;
the sound of a mill
will never be heard in you again;

23 the light of a lamp
will never shine in you again;
and the voice of a groom and bride
will never be heard in you again.

All this will happen
because your merchants
were the nobility of the earth,
because all the nations were deceived
by your sorcery,

24 and the blood of prophets and saints,
and of all those slaughtered on earth,
was found in you.

Celebration in Heaven

19:1 After this I heard something like the loud voice of a vast multitude in heaven, saying:

Hallelujah!

Salvation, glory, and power belong to our God,

2 because His judgments are true and righteous,
because He has judged the notorious prostitute
who corrupted the earth with her sexual immorality;
and He has avenged the blood of His slaves
that was on her hands.

3 A second time they said:

Hallelujah!

Her smoke ascends forever and ever!

4 Then the 24 elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who is seated on the throne, saying:

Amen! Hallelujah!

5 A voice came from the throne, saying:

Praise our God,
all His slaves, who fear Him,
both small and great!

Marriage of the Lamb Announced

6 Then I heard something like the voice of a vast multitude, like the sound of cascading waters, and like the rumbling of loud thunder, saying:

Hallelujah, because our Lord God, the Almighty,
has begun to reign!

7 Let us be glad, rejoice, and give Him glory,
because the marriage of the Lamb has come,
and His wife has prepared herself.

8 She was given fine linen to wear, bright and pure.

For the fine linen represents the righteous acts of the saints.

9 Then he said to me, "Write: Those invited to the marriage feast of the Lamb are fortunate!" He also said to me, "These words of God are true." **10** Then I fell at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow slave with you and your brothers who have the testimony about Jesus. Worship God, because the testimony about Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

The Rider on a White Horse

11 Then I saw heaven opened, and there was a white horse. Its rider is called Faithful and True, and He judges and makes war in righteousness. **12** His eyes were like a fiery flame, and many crowns were on His head. He had a name written that no one knows except Himself. **13** He wore a robe stained with blood, and His name is the Word of God. **14** The armies that were in heaven followed Him on white horses, wearing pure white linen. **15** A sharp sword came from His mouth, so that He might strike the nations with it. He will shepherd them with an iron scepter. He will also trample the winepress of the fierce anger of God, the Almighty. **16** And He has a name written on His robe and on His thigh:

KING OF KINGS
AND LORD OF LORDS.

The Beast and His Armies Defeated

17 Then I saw an angel standing on the sun, and he cried out in a loud voice, saying to all the birds flying high overhead, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, **18** so that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of commanders, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of their riders, and the flesh of everyone, both free and slave, small and great."

19 Then I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to wage war against the rider on the horse and against His army. **20** But the beast was taken prisoner, and along with him the false prophet, who had performed the signs in his presence. He deceived those who accepted the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image with these signs. Both of them were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. **21** The rest were killed with the sword that came from the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Satan Bound

20 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven with the key to the abyss and a great chain in his hand. **2** He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for 1,000 years. **3** He threw him into the abyss, closed it, and put a seal on it so that

he would no longer deceive the nations until the 1,000 years were completed. After that, he must be released for a short time.

The Saints Reign with the Messiah

4 Then I saw thrones, and people seated on them who were given authority to judge. I also saw the people who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of God's word, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and who had not accepted the mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with the Messiah for 1,000 years. **5** The rest of the dead did not come to life until the 1,000 years were completed. This is the first resurrection. **6** Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of the Messiah, and they will reign with Him for 1,000 years.

Satanic Rebellion Crushed

7 When the 1,000 years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison **8** and will go out to deceive the nations at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle. Their number is like the sand of the sea. **9** They came up over the surface of the earth and surrounded the encampment of the saints, the beloved city. Then fire came down from heaven and consumed them. **10** The Devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet are, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

The Great White Throne Judgment

11 Then I saw a great white throne and One seated on it. Earth and heaven fled from His presence, and no place was found for them. **12** I also saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged according to their works by what was written in the books.

13 Then the sea gave up its dead, and Death and Hades gave up their dead; all were judged according to their works. **14** Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. **15** And anyone not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

SCENE 2: ALL THINGS NEW

CHAPTERS 21-22

The New Creation

21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea no longer existed. **2** I also saw the Holy City, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband.

3 Then I heard a loud voice from the throne:

Look! God's dwelling is with humanity,
and He will live with them.

They will be His people,
and God Himself will be with them
and be their God.

4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes.
Death will no longer exist;
grief, crying, and pain will exist no longer,
because the previous things have passed away.

5 Then the One seated on the throne said, "Look! I am making everything new." He also said, "Write, because these words are faithful and true." **6** And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give water as a gift to the thirsty from the spring of life. **7** The victor will inherit these things, and I will be his God, and he will be My son. **8** But the cowards, unbelievers, vile, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars—their share will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

The New Jerusalem

9 Then one of the seven angels, who had held the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues, came and spoke with me: "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

10 He then 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, **11** arrayed with God's glory. Her radiance was like a very precious stone, like a jasper stone, bright as crystal. **12** The city had a massive high wall, with 12 gates. Twelve angels were at the gates; the names of the 12 tribes of Israel's sons were inscribed on the gates. **13** There were three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. **14** The city wall had 12 foundations, and the 12 names of the Lamb's 12 apostles were on the foundations.

15 The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. **16** The city is laid out in a square; its length and width are the same. He measured the city with the rod at 12,000 *stadia*. Its length, width, and height are equal. **17** Then he measured its wall, 144 cubits according to human measurement, which the angel used. **18** The building material of its wall was jasper, and the city was pure gold like clear glass.

19 The foundations of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone:

the first foundation jasper,
the second sapphire,
the third chalcedony,
the fourth emerald,

20 the fifth sardonyx,
the sixth carnelian,
the seventh chrysolite,

the eighth beryl,
the ninth topaz,
the tenth chrysoptase,
the eleventh jacinth,
the twelfth amethyst.

21 The 12 gates are 12 pearls; each individual gate was made of a single pearl. The broad street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

22 I did not see a sanctuary in it, because the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its sanctuary. **23** The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, because God's glory illuminates it, and its lamp is the Lamb. **24** The nations will walk in its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. **25** Each day its gates will never close because it will never be night there. **26** They will bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. **27** Nothing profane will ever enter it: no one who does what is vile or false, but only those written in the Lamb's book of life.

The Source of Life

22 Then he showed me the river of living water, sparkling like crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb **2** down the middle of the broad street of the city. The tree of life was on both sides of the river, bearing 12 kinds of fruit, producing its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree are for healing the nations, **3** and there will no longer be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and His slaves will serve Him. **4** They will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. **5** Night will no longer exist, and people will not need lamplight or sunlight, because the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign forever and ever.

The Time Is Near

6 Then he said to me, "These words are faithful and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent His angel to show His slaves what must quickly take place."

7 "Look, I am coming quickly! The one who keeps the prophetic words of this book is blessed."

8 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. When I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had shown them to me. **9** But he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow slave with you, your brothers the prophets, and those who keep the words of this book. Worship God." **10** He also said to me, "Don't seal the prophetic words of this book, because the time is near. **11** Let the unrighteous go on in unrighteousness; let the filthy go on being made filthy; let the righteous go on in righteousness; and let the holy go on being made holy."

12 "Look! I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me to repay each person according to what he has done. **13** I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

14 "Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates. **15** Outside are the dogs, the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.

16 "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to attest these things to you for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright Morning Star."

17 Both the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" Anyone who hears should say, "Come!" And the one who is thirsty should come. Whoever desires should take the living water as a gift.

18 I testify to everyone who hears the prophetic words of this book: If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book. **19** And if anyone takes away from the words of this prophetic book, God will take away his share of the tree of life and the holy city, written in this book.

20 He who testifies about these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly."
Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

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

EXTRAS

TOOLS FOR READING REVELATION

STRUCTURE OF REVELATION

- I. Preparation for Suffering (1-5)
 - A. Prologue (1:1-8)
 - B. Vision of Jesus (1:9-20)
 - C. A Call to Repent (2:1-3:22) – Letters to 7 churches
 - D. A Vision of God (4-5)
- II. Description of Suffering – Series of Sevens (6-19)
 - A. Seven Seals (6:1-8:5)
 - Interlude – 144,000 and the great congregation (7:1-17)
 - B. Seven Trumpets (8:5-11:19)
 - Interlude – Angel and the Little Scroll (10:1-11)
 - C. Cosmic Gladiators (11-14)
 - 1. Two witnesses (11)
 - 2. Woman and the Dragon (12)
 - 3. Two Beasts, from the Sea and Land (13)
 - 4. The Lamb and the 144,000 (14)
 - D. Seven Angels with seven bowls (15-16)
- III. Consequences of Suffering (or a tale of two cities) (17-22)
 - A. Destruction of the unholy Trinity (17-20)
 - 1. Down goes the Harlot (17) and Babylon (18)
 - 2. Down goes the beast and his armies (19)
 - 3. Down goes the Dragon – the Devil (20)
 - B. Establishment of the New Jerusalem (21-22)

INTRODUCTION

1-3

7 X



JESUS AMONG HIS 7 CHURCHES

GOD'S THRONE HEAVEN

4-5



THE REIGNING CREATOR & THE REDEEMING LAMB

6:1-8:1

7 X



7 SEALS

8:2-11:19

7 X



7 TRUMPETS

12-14



UNNUMBERED SIGNS

15-16

7 X



7 BOWLS

17:1-19:10



THE FALL OF BABYLON

19:11-20:1



THE FINAL VICTORY

GOD'S THRONE NEW CREATION

21:1-22:5



GOD, THE LAMB & THE REDEEMED REIGNING IN THE NEW JERUSALEM

22:6-21

JESUS RETURNING SOON FOR HIS CHURCHES

CONCLUSION

GOD'S UNFOLDING JUDGEMENT & MERCY

INTERPRETING REVELATION

By Mark Moore

1. Revelation is the story of Jesus Christ (1:1). Keep your eyes on who he is and you'll not go far a field in your exegesis.
2. Revelation is an apocalypse (1:1). Therefore we must expect:
 - a. Eschatological perspective. This is not so much a prediction of future events as it is a radical expectation that you are living in the last days. That changes how one talks, walks, believes, and prays.
 - b. Wild, figurative language that uses numbers, colors, and hyperbolic beasts and turmoil to make a non-literal point.
 - c. Cryptic language to speak only to insiders.
3. Revelation is performative not merely informative. That is, the goal is not so much to explain the future as it is to alter the present. The primary purpose of this book is to encourage believers to hang on to Jesus. In short, it is a guide for living through terrible times (1:3)
4. Revelation is a promise (1:3, cf. 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7; 22:14). It is the only book that comes with this kind of "money-back" guarantee. The general story line is simple: We win. It's closest relative is the book of Acts. Both tell of the victory of Jesus only Acts is history, whereas Revelation is apocalypse; Acts centers on the victory of the Holy Spirit through the church, Revelation centers on the defeat of Satan in the world.
5. Revelation was applicable to the first century (1:4).
6. Revelation was written for tribulation times (1:9). Thus, those who are familiar with suffering will likely have a better handle on this book than others. In this way it is similar to Job. Existentialism is important to interpretation of this piece. Revelation is not a calendar but a template. When placed over any period of suffering it makes sense out of life that seems to be catastrophic and out of control.
7. Revelation is a book of victory, not fear (1:17). The only ones who should be frightened by this book or unbelievers (who slough it off) and nominal believers who are lukewarm. They should be terrorized into worshipping Jesus.
8. Revelation tells of past, present and future events (1:19). Where we draw the line here is the key.
9. Revelation is cyclical. We come to what looks like the end eight different times (6:12-17; 8:5; 10:6-7; 11:15-19; 14:7, 14-20; 16:14-18; 19-22).
10. It tells of the coming of Jesus, "I am coming" (2:5, 16; 3:11; 16:15; 22:7, 12, 20).

JESUS UNVEILED THROUGH REVELATION

- 1:5 Jesus is the faithful witness, firstborn from the dead, ruler of the kings, blood liberator
- 1:13 One like a Son of Man (cf. Dan 7:13–14)
- 1:13–15 Jesus is the King, priest, warrior, God
- 1:16 He holds the seven stars, and a doubled edged sword comes out his mouth
- 1:17 Jesus is the first and the last, cf. 22:13
- 1:18 Jesus has the keys to death and Hades (cf. 'key of David', 3:7), he is the living one
- 5:5 Jesus alone has all authority for judgment,
- 5:5-6 The Lion is the Lamb and the Lamb is the Shepherd (7:17)
- 5:6 He is God (in the center of the throne). With all power (7 horns) and all spiritual insight (7 eyes). He is worshiped as God (5:11-14)
- 5:8 He receives the prayers of the saints
- 6:16-17 He is frightening in his retribution!
- 12:5 He rules with an iron scepter
- 19:11-16 Jesus returns as a victorious and powerful warrior. His name is 'word of God'
19:16 He is the 'king of kings and lord of lords'
- 21:22-23 Jesus and God are the temple and the light of the New Jerusalem.

SYMBOLS IN REVELATION

Symbols - a mark or character used as a conventional representation of an object, function, or process. They can be powerful motivators when presented in distressed situations. For example. The American flag by itself is already a powerful motivator for patriotism and pride in country. However, if you turn the flag upside down or burn it in protest, the symbol takes on a whole new meaning that elicit a whole new range of emotions, feelings, and thoughts.

The Following pages are Revealed Symbols and hidden Symbols that we can take an educated guess to their meaning.

Revealed Symbols

Text	Symbol	Interpretation
1:20	Seven Stars	Seven (αγγελος) Messengers of the churches
1:20	Seven lamp Stands	Seven Churches of Asia minor
5:6	Seven Eyes of Jesus	Seven Spirits of God
5:8	Bowls of Incense	Prayers of the Saints
12:9	The Great Dragon/Serpent	Satan
12:17	Offspring of the Woman	Those who obey God
13:18	Mark of the Beast	Man's number, 666
16:13	Frog Spirits	Spirits of demons with deceitful miracles
17:8(11)	Beast	The 8th king who was; is not; Abyss
17:9	Seven heads	Seven hills/seven kings, five fell, one is, and one who is to come remains briefly.
17:12	Ten Horns	Ten brief kings
17:15	Water	Multiplicity of people and language
17:18	Woman	The Great city - Babylon the Great (in the first century, only one adequately fulfilled this description, Rome).
19:8	Fine Linen	Righteous acts of the saints
20:2	Dragon	Satan
20:4-5	Reigning with Christ	The 1st resurrection = conversion (cf. 20:6)
20:14 & 21:8	Lake of Fire	The 2nd death
21:9-10	Bride	New Jerusalem

Images to Examine

Text	Symbol	Examination
1:4	Seven Spirits	(1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6) -- used only in Revelation. According to 1:4 it looks like the Holy Spirit as part of the Trinity. In 4:5 the “Seven Spirits” are seven lamps and in 5:6 they are seven eyes (cf. Zech 4:10), (and horns?). They are possessed by Jesus (3:1; 5:6).
1:10	Loud Voice	(φωνην μεγαλην), used 24 times (verses) in Revelation. Apparently indicates either the intensity of the messenger or more likely, the magnitude of the message.
1:12	Seven Gold Lampstands	This seven pronged lamp (Num 8:2) was part of the furnishings of the Holy place along with the table of show bread (Exo 26:35). It was made out of pure gold and was for giving light (Exo 35:14), symbolic of the Holy Spirit (Zech 4:1-7). Here they represent the seven churches (Rev 1:20).
1:13	Robe	Robe reaching down to his feet and a golden sash --This appears to be the garb of the priest in the temple (Exo 28:4; 29:5), and indeed, the very dress of God in the temple (Isa 6:1). The only difference is the priests’ sash was of blue linen, Jesus’ is of gold.
1:14	White Hair	This is a picture of God himself from Daniel 7:9 " <i>As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze.</i> " (For “Ancient of Days” see also Daniel 7:13 & 22)
1:14	Eyes of blazing fire	Rev 1:14; 2:18; 19:12. Fire typically indicates judgment. Thus, this seems to symbolize the coming judgment of Jesus as he views the affairs of earth.
1:15	Many Waters	Its primary significance is its deafening sound (Rev 1:15; 14:2; 19:6), indeed it describes the very voice of God (eze 43:2) and the movement of the great creatures (Eze. 1:24). But rushing waters also symbolize judgement as in the destruction of a flood (Job 20:28).
1:16	Stars	These are the “angels” or better, the “messengers” (i.e. Preachers) of the seven churches (1:20). Most of the time, stars in the Bible are used to show the multiplicity of some entity. Here, however, the symbolism is that of light (cf. Dan 12:3; Phil 2:15). Individuals who are moral guides are sometimes called stars whether the influence is good (num 24:17; Rev 22:16) or bad (Isa 14:12; Jude 1:13). Maybe a reference to a coin minted for the Son of Domitian who died. The coin has the boy sitting on the world holding 7 stars.
1:16	Double edged sword	An allusion to the Word of God (Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12). In other words, Jesus’ words are God’s words.

Text	Symbol	Examination
1:16	Shining Face	Moses' face shined after being in the presence of God (Ex. 34:29-30, 35). More to the point, however, is the plea of the Psalms (8 X's), for God to make his face shine on us and thus bless us with his radiant goodness.
1:17	Fell down as though Dead	This is the typical response to a non-incarnational appearance of Jesus (Eze 1:25-28; Dan 7:13-14; 10:4-9).
2:7	Paradise of God	(cf. Lk 23:43; 2 Cor 12:4), the word itself means a garden, park or even a hunting ground. In Scripture it indicates the rest for good disembodied souls, and specifically in the presence of G0d.
2:11	Second Death	(Cf. 20:6, 14; 21:8), this is the lake of fire (20:14), that is, hell.
2:17	Manna	The mysterious sustenance was provided by God from heaven (exo 16:31-35; Num 11:6-9). Jesus claimed that he was like manna in so much as he was spiritual sustenance provided by God from heaven (Jn 6:48-58). Here, then, overcomes are promised eschatological sustenance as a reward for faithfulness.
2:17	White Stone	The appears to be a reference to the Urim and Thummun. Twelve stones were engraved with the twelve names of the sons of Israel. This priestly vest was used for making decisions (Ex. 28:9-14). The implication is that whoever has his name on the vest is part of God's people.
2:28	Morning Star	Isa. 14:12; 2 Peter 1:19; Rev 2:28; 22:16. It has something to do with brightness and represents great leadership. It is a description of Jesus at last at Rev 22:16.
3:4	White	This is the color of victory (2:17; 3:4-5; 6:2, 11, 19:11, 14), Purity (1:14; 3:18; 7:9, 13-14; 19:14) and authority (4:4; 14:14; 20:11), all of which go hand in hand
3:8	Open Door	That no one can shut - The most likely connection is with Mt. 25:10-11 and Lk 13: 25, parables of a wedding banquet. Invited guests walk through an open door. Those who are rejected have the door shut on them.
3:5	The book of life	Psa 69:28; Phil 4:3; Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17; 20:12; 20:15; 21:27. This is a registry of G0d's people, apparently written at the creation of the world.
4:3	Jasper & Carnelian	The mention of these stones signifies beauty, wealth, and perhaps also translucence. This is the wow, oh, and ooh of heaven.
4:5	Lightning	Is a sign of judgement and comes with the territory in the presence of God.

Text	Symbol	Examination
4:6	Sea of Glass	<p>Glass represents purity (Rev. 21:18) and transparency (Rev 21:21). The sea seems to represent separation. In 15:2 this glassy sea mixed with fire appears to separate the wicked from the righteous. Here in 4:6 the sea separates John from the transcendent God (Cf. Eze 1:22). It is not until Rev. 21:1 that there is no longer any sea. While the sea brings opportunity for commerce and wealth, it was also extremely dangerous and took the lives of a lot of people.</p> <p>There is a possible OT reference to the Laver in Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 7:23-26, 2 Kings 25:13).</p> <p>I believe that the sea represents chaos. It is dangerous and untamable. Look at Genesis 1:2 "the spirit hovered above the chaotic waters." Here we see the sea (Chaos) must submit to the Lord and in its submission it is perfectly still.</p>
4:6	Four living creatures	<p>These are apparently some kind of servants of God whose primary task appears to be proclamation and praise of God (Eze 1:5; Rev 4:6; 4:8; 5:6; 5:8; 5:14-6:1; 6:6; 7:11; 14:3; 15:7; 19:4). These look an awful lot like the four creatures of Eze 1:5-14 and the Seraphs of Isa 6:2. In fact, there appears to be a deliberate connection between Rev 4-5 and Eze 1-3: The four creatures (Eze 1:4-15); the sea of glass (1:22); a sapphire throne (Eze 1:26); the appearance of the Son of Man (Eze 1:26-27); a rainbow (1:28); A commission to preach (Eze 2:3-8); a two-sided scroll (Eze 2e:10) and a bitter/sweet scroll the prophet had to eat (Eze 3:1-3).</p>
5:5	The root of David	<p>This is a symbol of the Messiah, fulfilled in Jesus (Isa 11:10; 53:2; Rom 11:17-18; 15:12; Rev 22:16).</p>
5:8	Harp	<p>Instruments for making loud festive music (rev 14:2). Both the four living creatures (5:8) and the martyrs (15:2) have them in Revelation.</p>
6:2	White horse	<p>White appears to be a symbol of victory and purity (see above). The horse is a symbol of either war or the transportation of a king. Here the horses clearly symbolize war. They most certainly reflect the same idea as Zech 1:8 & 6:2 - God's harbingers of judgment.</p>
6:4	Red	<p>May indicate the guilt of sin (Isa 1:18), but here refers to bloodshed (Isa 63:2; Nah 2:3).</p>
6:12	Earthquake	<p>This is an eschatological sign of God's judgment (Isa 13:13; 29:6; Eze 38:19; Hag 2:6; Zech 14:14; Mt 24:7; Mk 13:8; Lk 21:11).</p>
6:12-13	Galactic signs	<p>This looks a lot like Joel 2:31. The signs are a harbinger of God's judgment which appears to be in force throughout the Christian dispensation (Acts 2:20). In prophetic vocabulary, these heavenly signs are used to describe the downfall of great nations (Babylon, Isa 13:0; Tyre, Isa 24:21-23; Egypt, Eze 32:7). Here, however, appears to be the culmination of the age as God comes in judgement and rattles the earth.</p>

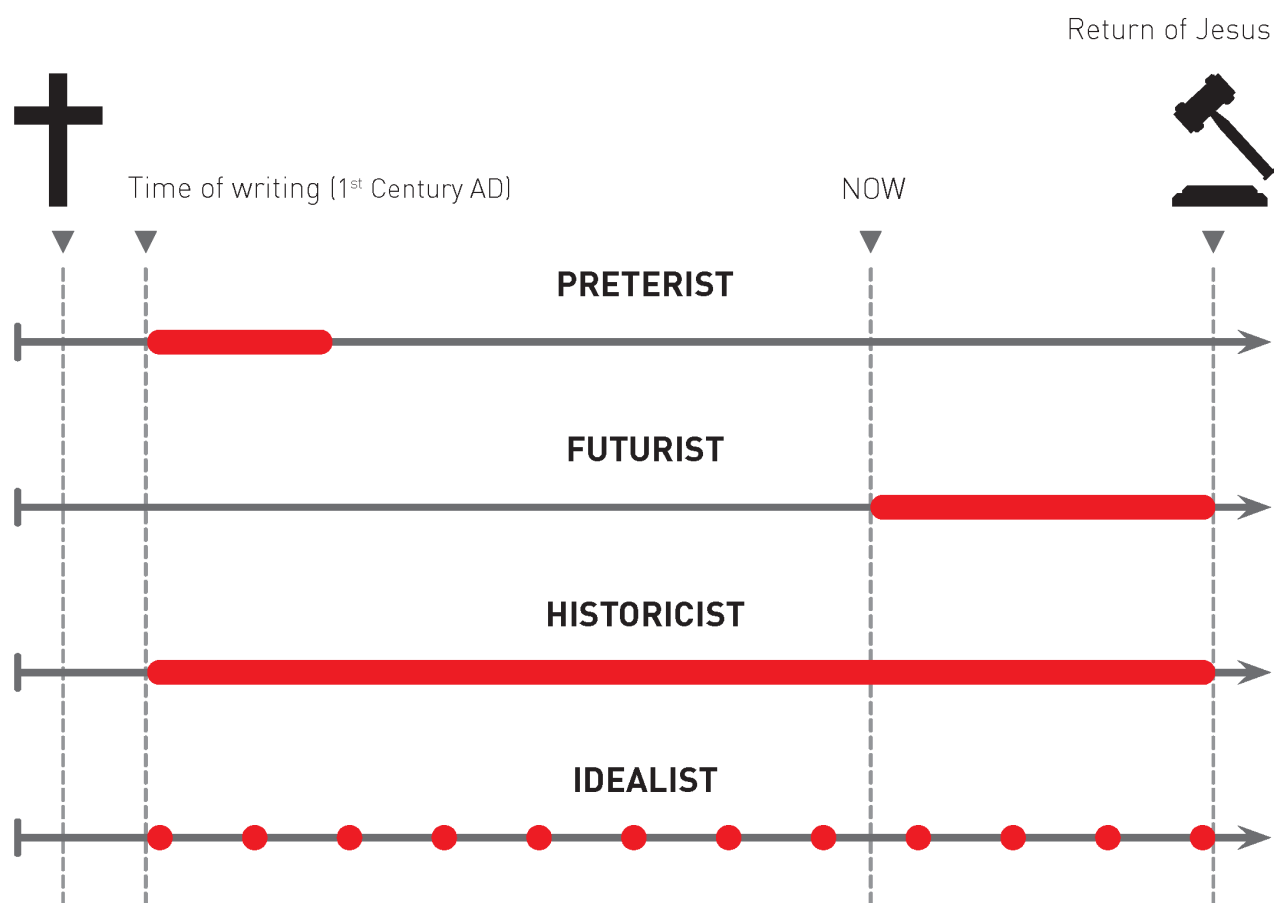
Text	Symbol	Examination
7:1	4 angels/4 winds	These angels seem to be God's harvesters that have the power to gather the elect (Mt 23:31) or to bring destruction to the wicked if they let the four winds go (Jer 49:36; Dan 7:2).
8:1	Seven	It appears often in the context of judgment and cleansing. It may signify four (humanity) and three (divinity) as they come together.
8:5	Censer	These censers were filled with incense and represent the prayer of God's people. This censer, the prayers of the saints, is hurled to the earth and brings about God's wrath on behalf of the martyred saints. This is God's answer to the prayers of 6:10.
8:5	Thunder/lightning/ earthquake	these three are used together only in Rev 8:5; 11:19; & 16:18. Each time they indicate the final judgment and God's presence.
8:6	Trumpet (7)	An instrument of worship and of War. Think of the trumpets the Israelites sounded against Jericho. Combination of Worship and War.
8:7	Hail & Fire	This takes us back to the plagues of Egypt (Exo 9:19-34) when God inflicted hail along with lightning flashes that destroyed the vegetation of the land.
9:1	Abyss	This bottomless pit is the place where demons are imprisoned (Luke 8:31) and where Satan will be imprisoned (Rev 20:1-3). Out of the Abyss comes smoke and locust-scorpions (Rev 9:2-3), the destroyer angel (Rev 9:11); and the beast (Rev 11:7; 17:8).
9:3	Locust	See Joel 1:2-7, 2:1-11. Locusts are emphasized as overwhelming. They are agents of God's judgment against people in OT both Pagans and his own people. The magnitude of the effect is complete and wide stretching. Attached to God's desire for his people to repent. Evil under the control of God. 1. Locust used in OT Ex. 10:1-20, Deut. 28:30-32, Psalm 78:48, Psalm 105:43, Amos 4:9, Amos 7:1, 2 Chronicles 7:13-14 (bring repentance), The fifth trumpet may be demons commissioned to torment hardened unbelievers by further impoverishing their souls reminding them of their hopeless spiritual plight. The angel represents sinful humanity, and his role is to inflict woe on humanity because Christ has begun to judge him.
9:13	4 Horns of the Altar	May be Christ's voice. Horns = Power. Count them, there are 4. This means absolute power or complete power.
9:15	4 angels bound at river Euphrates	This is probably a reference to the great Parthian Empire. It could be the 4 horsemen mentioned in the Seals.

Text	Symbol	Examination
10:1-2	Mighty Angel	A number of elements reminds us of the throne room of chapter 4 - rainbow, shouting, robed in a cloud, face like the sun, legs of fiery pillars. In other words, this guy comes straight from God. There are also several strong ties here to Ezekiel [a rainbow 1:28; A commission to preach (Eze 2:3-8); a two-sided scroll (Eze 2:10) and a bitter/sweet scroll the prophet had to eat (Eze 3:1-3)]. The message Ezekiel had to preach, however, is one of doom, not of repentance. This does not appear to be “the gospel” but a prophecy of doom (10:11).
10:2	Little Scroll	Maybe a reference to the scroll that had the 7 seals on it in Rev. 6-8. But the distinction of little scroll may make it a different scroll. This scroll has a message and plan of God on it. John is suppose to eat it which is an allusion back to Jeremiah 15:16-17 and Ezekiel 2:8-3:3, 14 and makes the messenger integrated with the message.
10:4	The 7 Thunders	Something we don't get to hear. Probably a description of God's voice. Some things are to sacred to share with others.
11:1	The Temple for measurment	Vs. 2 tells us that this is the temple on earth. In heaven there would be no outer courtyard. -There is no current temple in the time of John's writing. He is referencing Ezekiel 40:41 and Zechariah 2. To measure the temple here is to measure God's people.
11:3-4	The Two Witnesses	These two olive branches and two lamp stands come straight out of Zechariah 4:3, 11-14. They are described as the two servants anointed to serve the Lord of the Earth. Presumably they are the ones who account the content of the bitter-sweet scroll (Rev 10:10-11) which may be the same as the flying scroll (Zech 5:1-3). At Rev 1:12, 20, these lamp stands are the seven churches and in Zechariah (4:1-7) there is a strong connection to the Holy Spirit. Of course the allusion to two witnesses reminds us of Moses' injunction for a legal witness (Deut 17). Thus, this may represent a Spirit-empowered legal witness proclaiming God's judgment on the earth. The two witnesses can be summed up this way: Moses = Law, Elijah = Prophets.
11:5-6	Fire comes from their mouths	This is a description of God's spoken judgment (2 Sam 22:9). This power is also given to his prophet (Jer 5:14). Allusion is also made to the power God gave Elijah to shut up the rain and Moses to strike the plagues.
12:1-3	The Woman crowned with 12 stars/ clothed in sun/ moon at her feet in labor.	Three possibilities: 1. This is Mary, about to give birth to Jesus. 2. These are the 12 Disciples and Jesus is about to be taken away (see John 16:19-24) 3. All of God's people (Israel past, Christians present)
12:4	Stars swept out of heaven by Satan	Two possibilities: 1. Angels who now become demons. 2. Referring to the persecution of Believers. See Daniel 8:10

Text	Symbol	Examination
12:5	Son/Male Child to the woman	This is Jesus.
12:6	Wilderness	This is where the woman goes to. It is a prepared place for her to be taken care of for 1,260 days. This is the same length of time as the two witnesses from chapter 11. Wilderness is always a period of trial for the person. Not necessarily punishment. The Israelites wandered the Desert for 40 years. Jesus did the same for 40 days. 1,260 days refers to the fullness of the time required for the trial. Perhaps the entire period between the advents of Jesus. The trial here is the onslaught of persecution by the Dragon. But we are told she will be taken care of. The woman, if she is the 12 disciples, then their ministry is protected so the church can flourish. The Dragon will try and pursue her there but fails to catch her.
13:1-2	Beast from the sea	This looks and awful lot like Dan 7:1-7 with the four kingdoms. That makes sense in light of (a) water symbolizing many peoples, tribes and tongues (17:15) and the description of the beast as a leopard, bear and lion. He also appears to be trying to imitate the Christ: (a) 10 diadems (13:1 vs 19:12); (b) blasphemous name (13:1 vs 19:11-12, 16); (c) Causes men to worship Satan (13:4 vs 1:6); (d) a seemingly fatal wound (13:3, 12, 14); (e) he has the power and throne and authority of the devil (13:2 vs 12:5, 10).
13:1-2	10 Horns & 7 heads	This connects the dragon (12:3) with the beast. In Daniel 7:24, the 10 horns represented the 10 kings of the Seleucid line and the seven heads came from the four beasts the third of which had four heads. Here the beast certainly represents the anti-god Roman Empire and it's seven heads are its emperors.
13:11	The Second Beast	This appears to be the false prophet (16:13) or false religion which exercises the power of these beastly governments whether that be atheistic humanism, voodoo, Muslim, Hindu, etc. He looks like the beast of Dan 8:3ff. In other words, the real power behind these nations is Satan. Satan and these two beasts seem to form an evil trinity in opposition to God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. And they mark their men just as God marks His (13:16ff, vs. 7:3).
14:8	Babylon the Great	Appears to be Jerusalem (a symbol of national Israel) the great prostitute who seduces the nations (16:19; 17:1-2, 5). Any city that is called great is actually evil. The city could also be a reference to Rome. He may be using the kingdom of Babylon as code for Rome.
14:10	The wine of God's fury	This is reminiscent of Jeremiah 25:15 when God made the nations drink of the wine of his wrath.

Text	Symbol	Examination
15:3	The Song of Moses	Cf. Exo 15:1-17, a praise to God for the victory over Pharaoh and Egypt, the symbol of the oppressors of God's people. The song of the Lamb is perhaps Rev 5:9-10
15:7	Seven Bowls	We have moved from seals to trumpets to bowls or more accurately, cups (Cf. Isa 51:17ff,; Jer 25:15ff). The seas were a revelation, the trumpets were warnings, but the bowls are pure punishment. The seals were things suffered by the saints along with the rest of the earth (6:10). These are things inflicted by mankind on itself as well as nature. The trumpets are inflicted on unbelievers (7:3, 8:3, 9:4). These are things suffered through God's angels and demons. The bowls appear to be inflicted by God's own hand (16:9). It is once again, evil or chaos under the control of God (like the sea of glass in his presence).
17:1	The Whore of Babylon	This almost surely has reference to Israel. Metaphorical uses of prostitute in the OT refer primarily to Israel (Cf. Eze 23:1-44; His 4:11-19). But that does not necessarily mean Ethnic Israel, but those who falsely claim affinity with God. Just as the beast tries to imitate Christ, so this woman is a cheap imitation of the bride of Jesus (the church; chapter 13).
17:1-2	Seated on many waters	That is a good geographical description of Babylon and all its rivers and canals. But in 17:15, the interpretation is given of peoples, multitudes, nations and languages.
17:3	The Scarlet beast	With its seven heads and ten horns and blasphemous names this is clearly the beast of Rev. 13:1
20:8	Gog & Magog	This story from Eze 38-39 tells of how God will summon the peoples of the north to attack his people only to find themselves destroyed. This is what the end will be like.
21:1	New Heaven and New Earth	(Isa 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet 3:13). This is referring to the earth that has been remade, where we dwell. Heaven here refers to the sky. Earth refers to the ground.

FOUR WAYS TO READ REVELATION



1. **PRETERIST: Revelation is about events in the past**

The events described in Revelation all took place around the time of the letter's writing and should be read with that historical context in mind. In other words, the letter was written first and foremost to Christians in the first century, under Roman rule and persecution. As such, we need to understand how they would have originally read it, before applying it to ourselves.

2. **FUTURIST: Revelation is about events in the future**

The events described in Revelation were predicted to take place in the far distant future, at least from the point of view of the original readers. So, the focus is on events that are still to come, including times like "the tribulation" and "the millennium."

3. **HISTORICIST: Revelation is about all of history**

Revelation describes the key events of history stretching from the death and resurrection of Jesus to his return as judge. It can be seen as a *timetable*, by which we can interpret "the signs of the times." In other words, world events *today* are described in Revelation.

4. **IDEALIST: Revelation is about timeless principles**

Revelation isn't talking about a specific time. It is talking about a pattern of events or trends that repeated throughout history, as an encouragement to God's people of all times who face persecution. In that sense, it is a "timeless" message.

I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands ... (12-13)



... and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. (13)



The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow ... (14)



... and his eyes were like blazing fire. (14)



His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace ... (15)



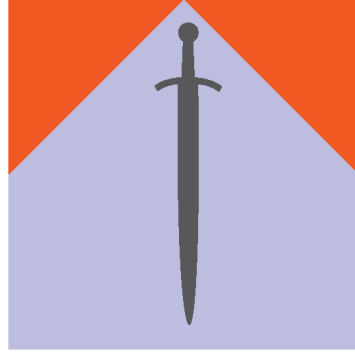
... and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. (15)



In his right hand he held seven stars ... (16)



... and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. (16)



His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: ... (16-17)



"Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades." (17-18)



THE VISION OF JESUS REVELATION 1

© Mark Barry 2014 | visualunit.me
Please do not republish without permission, but feel free to copy for personal use.

THE SEVEN CHURCHES REVELATION 2-3

1 EPHEBUS (2:1-7)

Image of Christ: Holds 7 stars, walks among 7 lamp stands.
Positive: Hard work, perseverance, intolerant of wicked men & false teachers.
Negatives: Forsaken 1st love.
Command: Remember & Repent
Disobedience: Remove lamp
Obedience: Eat from the tree of life which is in paradise of God.

2 SMYRNA (2:8-11)

Image of Christ: 1st and last, dead and rose from it.
Positive: Affliction and poverty, slander, therefore faithful.
Negatives: None
Command: Endure
Disobedience: None
Obedience: Crown of life and not hurt by 2nd death

3 PERGAMUM (2:12-17)

Image of Christ: Has a sharp, double-edge sword
Positive: Remain true amidst Satan's throne
Negatives: Some follow teaching of Balaam & Nicolaitans; sexually immoral and eat foods sacrificed to idols
Command: Repent
Disobedience: be killed by the sword of his mouth
Obedience: receive hidden manna, white stone, new name.

4 THYATIRA (2:18-29)

Image of Christ: Son of God, blazing eyes, feet of bronze
Positive: Better deeds now than before, love, faith, service, perseverance, growth.
Negatives: Some tolerate Jezebel, sexually immoral, and eat foods sacrificed to idols
Command: Repent
Disobedience: Bed of suffering, kill children according to your deeds
Obedience: be given authority over the nations.



5 SARDIS (3:1-6)

Image of Christ: Holds 7 spirits and the 7 stars
Positive: A few are unsoiled
Negatives: Dead and incomplete deeds
Command: Wake up, remember and repent
Disobedience: Come like a thief
Obedience: Walk with Christ dressed in white, name in the book of life. (Acknowledged by God).

6 PHILADELPHIA (3:7-13)

Image of Christ: Holy and true, key of David, what he opens no one shuts
Positive: Kept word and not denied Jesus
Negatives: None
Command: Endure
Disobedience: None
Obedience: Make false Jews acknowledge them, keep them from trial, make them a pillar, get a new name - God's

7 LAODICEA (3:14-22)

Image of Christ: Amen, faithful, true, ruler of God's creation
Positive: None
Negatives: Lukewarm and poor
Command: Buy gold, white clothes and salve (=Repent)
Disobedience: Spit you out
Obedience: Table fellowship with Jesus; reign with Jesus on a throne.

PATMOS (1:9)

An Aegean island south of Samos, where prisoners were exiled by the Roman authorities. John was sent here 'on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus' (1:9) and received his prophetic revelation during this stay.

THE SEVEN SEALS REVELATION 6-8

THE FOUR HORSEMEN

1				6:1-2 1ST SEAL = WHITE HORSE = CONQUEST	A rider holding a bow, wearing a crown and riding out as a conqueror bent on conquest.
2				6:3-4 2ND SEAL = RED HORSE = WAR	A powerful rider on a fiery red horse, holding a sword and taking peace from the earth.
3				6:5-6 3RD SEAL = BLACK HORSE = FAMINE	A rider on a black horse, holding a pair of scales and bringing famine (indicated by the grossly-inflated crop prices).
4				6:7-8 4TH SEAL = PALE HORSE = DEATH	Death riding on a pale horse, with Hades following behind, having power over a quarter of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague and by wild beasts.
5				6:9-11 5TH SEAL = THE SOULS OF MARTYRS	The souls of the martyrs calling out to God for justice, given white robes and told to wait a little longer.
6				6:12-17 6TH SEAL = CREATION UNCREATED	A great earthquake strikes, the sun turns black, the moon turns red, the stars fall to earth, the heavens disappear, every mountain and island is removed. The day of the Lamb's wrath has come!
				7:1-17 PAUSE = THE REDEEMED ARE SEALED	The redeemed, those whose robes are washed in the blood of the Lamb, are sealed against destruction.
7				8:1 7TH SEAL = SILENCE IN HEAVEN	

THE SEVEN TRUMPETS REVELATION 8-11

8:2-6 GOD GIVES TRUMPETS TO SEVEN ANGELS



8:7 **1ST TRUMPET = HAIL & FIRE**

Hail and fire burns up a third of the earth, as well as the trees and grass.



8:8-9 **2ND TRUMPET = A FIERY MOUNTAIN**

A fiery mountain turns a third of the sea into blood and destroys a third of sea creatures and ships.



8:10-11 **3RD TRUMPET = A BLAZING STAR**

A blazing star turns a third of the waters bitter and many die.



8:12-13 **4TH TRUMPET = DARKNESS**

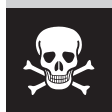
Darkness covers a third of the sun, moon, stars, day and night.

THE THREE WOES



9:1-12 **5TH TRUMPET = TORMENTING LOCUSTS**

THE 1ST WOE: Locusts with the power of scorpions are released by an angel from the abyss to torment people without God's seal.



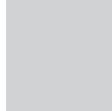
9:13-21 **6TH TRUMPET = MOUNTED WARRIORS**

THE 2ND WOE: Four angels, commanding 200 million mounted warrior, are released to kill a third of humanity.



10:1-11 **PAUSE = THE ANGEL & THE LITTLE SCROLL**

A angel gives John a scroll of prophecy against the nations to eat



11:1-14 **THE TWO WITNESSES**

God's witnesses are killed by the beast, but raised by God.



11:15-19 **7TH TRUMPET = GOD REIGNS IN HEAVEN**

THE 3RD WOE: The kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Lord and his Christ. God's servants are rewarded and his enemies destroyed.

THE SEVEN BOWLS REVELATION 16

16:1 SEVEN BOWLS OF GOD'S WRATH



16:2 1ST BOWL POURED ON THE LAND

People who bear the mark of the beast and worship its image are afflicted with sores.



16:3 2ND BOWL POURED ON THE SEA

The sea is turned into blood and everything that lives in it dies.



16:4-7 3RD BOWL POURED ON RIVERS & SPRINGS

Rivers and springs are turned into blood.



16:8-9 4TH BOWL POURED ON THE SUN

The sun scorches people with fire. They curse God, but refuse to repent and glorify him.



16:10-11 5TH BOWL POURED ON THE THRONE OF THE BEAST

The kingdom of the beast is plunged into darkness. People curse God, but refuse to repent.



16:12 6TH BOWL POURED ON THE RIVER EUPHRATES

The river is dried up to make way for the kings of the East.



16:13-16 PAUSE = KINGS GATHERED FOR BATTLE

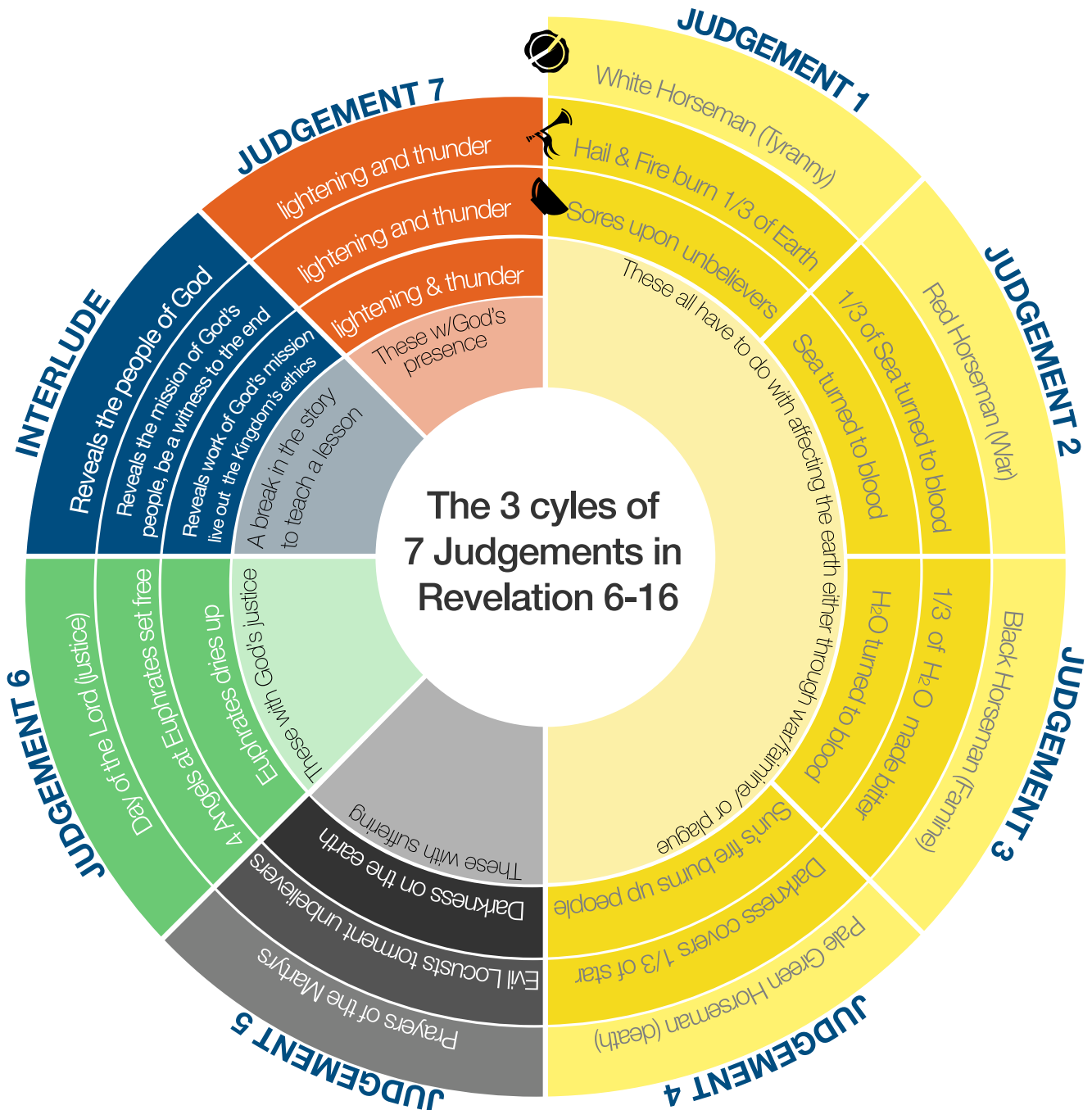
Three demonic frog spirits gather kings for battle at Armageddon.



16:17-21 7TH BOWL POURED INTO THE AIR

From the throne comes a voice, thunder, lightning and a great earthquake that splits 'the great city' and collapses the cities of the nations. Islands and mountains disappear and huge hailstones rain from the sky.

THE 3 CYCLES OF JUDGMENTS: SEALS, TRUMPETS, BOWLS



Revelation 6-16 more or less retells the same story of suffering and persecution upon the earth, believers, and unbelievers. But each time it goes around it tells it from a different vantage point. They each contain an interlude that reveals more of the message of Revelation; (1) you are God's people (2) God's people must be a witness for Christ, even unto death & (3) your witness is how you live the kingdom life.

A BRIEF DOCTRINE OF “THE SATAN” AND DRAGON FROM REVELATION 12

I. Name “The Satan”

- a. Satan (Hebrew word for Accuser, Adversary, one who resists) In the Greek translation of the Old Testament (The Septuagint) the word is translated to *Diabolos* or Devil (in English).
- b. The word is used 18 times in the Old Testament. 14 of those times are used in Job’s first two chapters.
 - i. In job, “the” always precedes the name Satan. This leads the reader to think of a title rather than a name. “The one who accuses” or “The one who brings charges against” what God has made.
 - ii. The job would be that of a prosecutor. One who accuses a defendant of something. In this case, Job is the accused and Satan brings his case against him through all of Job’s sufferings.
- c. Hypothesis of his role in the Old Testament:
 - i. To bring a case against the people of God. His job is to try and find fault with them. His work is to show their faults to God.
 - ii. He doesn’t turn against God fully until the ministry of Christ (see below).

II. Origin

- a. **In the beginning, he was among the Heavenly Host of God that carries out God’s will.** While there are different classifications of angels, he was more than likely NOT an angel like Gabriel. The term “Angel” simply means messenger and refers more to their occupation in the service of God rather than their type of created being. There are other terms used for heavenly host that we affectionately call angels, but they are not messengers.
- b. **He was once created to be good and became bad on his own.** We can assume this to be the truth because of what we call “Creation Principles.” These are truths rooted in the creation and character of God that can reveal meaning and truth beyond what is just discussed in the opening chapters of the Bible.
 - i. **Genesis 1:31** says, God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. Evening came and then morning: the sixth day.
 - ii. **James 1:13-14** says, No one undergoing a trial should say, “I am being tempted by God.” For God is not tempted by evil, and He Himself doesn’t tempt anyone. 14 But each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own evil desires.
- c. **When, Where, and How did Satan go evil?** This question is not an easy one to answer. We can make some educated guesses but to be truthful, the Bible does not tell us these details. One of the famous passages that we go to for the origin of Satan is Ezekiel 28 where the prophet Ezekiel writes down God’s message and Lament for the King of Tyre. We call this “Typology.” This means that Tyre *COULD BE* a *TYPE* or an example of Satan and Ezekiel here is giving us a heavenly message rooted in a real person (King of Tyre) to reveal the origins of the Evil One. Let’s see what it says (I’ve bolden the sections that relate to our study). Isaiah does something similar in his book, chapter 14. Compare them.
 - i. **Your heart is proud,
and you have said, ‘I am a god;**

I sit in the seat of gods
in the heart of the sea.’
Yet you are a man and not a god,
though you have regarded your heart
as that of a god.

³ Yes, you are wiser than Daniel;
no secret is hidden from you!
⁴ By your wisdom and understanding
you have acquired wealth for yourself.
You have acquired gold and silver
for your treasuries.

⁵ By your great skill in trading
you have increased your wealth,
but your heart has become proud
because of your wealth.” **⁶ Therefore this is what the Lord God says:**

ii. **Because you regard your heart as that of a god,**

⁷ I am about to bring strangers against you,
ruthless men from the nations.
They will draw their swords
against your magnificent wisdom
and will defile your splendor.

⁸ They will bring you down to the Pit,
and you will die a violent death
in the heart of the sea.

⁹ Will you still say, ‘I am a god,’
in the presence of those who kill you?
Yet you will be only a man, not a god,
in the hands of those who kill you.

¹⁰ You will die the death of the uncircumcised
at the hands of strangers.
For I have spoken.

This is the declaration of the Lord God.

iii. The word of the Lord came to me: **¹² “Son of man, lament for the king of Tyre and say to him: This is what the Lord God says:**

You were the seal of perfection,
full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

¹³ You were in Eden, the garden of God.
Every kind of precious stone covered you:
carnelian, topaz, and diamond,
beryl, onyx, and jasper,
sapphire, turquoise and emerald.

Your mountings and settings were crafted in gold;
they were prepared on the day you were created.

¹⁴ You were an anointed guardian cherub,
for I had appointed you.

You were on the holy mountain of God;
you walked among the fiery stones.

¹⁵ From the day you were created
you were blameless in your ways

until wickedness was found in you.

**¹⁶ Through the abundance of your trade,
you were filled with violence, and you sinned.**

**So I expelled you in disgrace
from the mountain of God,
and banished you, guardian cherub,
from among the fiery stones.**

**¹⁷ Your heart became proud because of your beauty;
For the sake of your splendor
you corrupted your wisdom.**

**So I threw you down to the earth;
I made you a spectacle before kings.**

¹⁸ You profaned your sanctuaries
by the magnitude of your iniquities
in your dishonest trade.

**So I made fire come from within you,
and it consumed you.**

I reduced you to ashes on the ground
in the sight of everyone watching you.

¹⁹ All those who know you among the nations
are appalled at you.

**You have become an object of horror
and will never exist again.”**

- d. **IF** this is a “Type” referring to the origins of Satan, and I can’t stress enough the IF in that sentence, then here is what we can learn.
- i. He was perfect at one time, wiser than any other.
 - ii. He was ordained in Beauty.
 - iii. He was an Archangel/Cherub (Guardian Angel)
 - iv. He was stationed in the Garden of Eden
 - v. His occupation led him astray. Something about his station led him to wickedness.
 - vi. He was cast out, and was consumed with his own hatred.
- e. The Theory I believe holds the most weight is that of my professor, Johnny Pressley. He was a guardian Angel sent to protect at least the garden if not the sacred trees themselves. His work led him out of the presence of God’s throne room and out of anger decided to corrupt God’s creation. Perhaps he thought this job was beneath him. Perhaps, when we include the role of “The accuser” (see above) he was sent there to try and find fault with God’s creation. When he couldn’t find fault because everything was “Very Good,” He created a situation to make fault by tempting Eve, thus going beyond his initial role as an accuser or prosecutor. What we see in Genesis 3 then, is perhaps the fall of not only Humans but also of Satan. This is the scene where he becomes the dragon, and an enemy of God’s people, (but perhaps not God, just yet – see below).

III. His Casting out of Heaven

- a. So then when was he cast down out of heaven? Well, Ezekiel says that event happened in the past from the time of Ezekiel’s writing, which is possible. However, we need to also consider some other passages.

- i. **Luke 10:18**, He [Jesus] said to them, “I watched Satan fall from Heaven like a lightning flash.”
 - 1. This was during the 12 going out and spreading the news about the Kingdom of God being at hand. So his fall, if meant literally from heaven, occurred during the ministry of Jesus.
- ii. **Revelation 12:7** Then war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. The dragon and his angels also fought, ⁸ but he could not prevail, and there was no place for them in heaven any longer. ⁹ So the great dragon was thrown out—the ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the one who deceives the whole world. He was thrown to earth, and his angels with him.
 - 1. This event also takes place around the time of Jesus’ life. Either right after his birth or right after his resurrection depending on how you interpret the situation with the Woman about to give birth. Again, not before creation.
- iii. **Job 1:6** One day the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them. ⁷ The Lord asked Satan, “Where have you come from?”

“From roaming through the earth,” Satan answered Him, “and walking around on it.”

 - 1. This event is prior to the ministry of Christ but after Creation as it relates to Job, a man of God. Here Satan is free to enter into heaven.
- b. So if we attribute these texts to the actual casting out of Satan from Heaven, meaning barred access to the presence of God, then it’s occurrence seems to fit around the time of the first advent, not before creation.

IV. Final Analysis

- a. When comparing all this, perhaps we need to reimagine a Devil that was wicked since before creation began. Perhaps his fall from perfection was a gradual one. He ultimately becomes the figure we know and love to hate around the time of Jesus. This is also because the Hebrews developed their doctrines of the Angels and Satan in the period between the Old Testament and the New Testament. That is why we read more about Satan in the New Testament than we do in the Old.
- b. He was sent to the Garden with a purpose of finding fault with God’s creation. This was his occupation perhaps as a Guardian Angel. He was meant to Guard the goodness of it, but his work led him beyond his defined role. When no fault could be found with God’s creation he made it happen.