

Revelation Interpretation

My hope in teaching this book is to give you a greater understanding of God's Word. It is a difficult book to understand, using many metaphors and visions hard to understand. I will do my best to shed light on these things, according to my understanding through much studying and prayer. I cannot answer all questions. I try to give you different, yet reputable interpretations. Nobody has all the answers, and there are some things that God has disclosed until the appointed time. HE will unravel the scrolls when He deems necessary. A lot of Revelation you must take on faith, that it will be God's way in His timing. I cannot predict the time of Christ's return! Nor can I predict the time of Tribulation. I will not even try, it is fruitless and nonsensical. While there are things in Revelation that are frightening, because God is holy and to be held in awe by His children; I want to open up God's Word and shed light on these things and remove any godless fear. There is absolutely nothing to be afraid of for those who love Him and hold Him dear to their hearts.

I love this book. It is my favorite book of the Bible. It is the book that revealed Christ to me and continues to encourage me in my faith. It reveals Jesus as HE currently is- high and lifted up- and what He will be- Lord over all the earth.

Revelation 1:3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

This is the only book of the Bible that proclaims blessings and curses for reading and obeying it. There are obviously blessings for obeying God and curses for disobeying God found in other places of Scripture, Deut 28 for example; but this offer is unique to Revelation and thus to be entered into with the utmost in seriousness and earnestness. It is not just a "spiritual" book, but a practical one with great blessings and harsh criticisms.

My hope is that you will come to love it as much as I do and that you will grow in your love and understanding of Jesus and grow deeper roots in Him.

Thank you for joining me!

Blessings,

Pastor Crystal

Revelation Outline

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Author: John

Theme: Kingdom of God in Conflict and Consummation

Date of Writing: A.D. 90-96

Background

Revelation is the last NT book and the most unusual. It is at once an apocalypse (apocalypse as translated as "Revelation"), a prophecy, and a composite of seven letters. The book is an apocalypse in regard to the nature of its content, a prophecy with respect to its message and a letter in regard to its addressees.

Five important facts about the book's background are revealed in Ch.1:

1. It is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ"
2. This revelation was communicated supernaturally to the author through the exalted Christ, angels and visions.
3. The communication was to God's servant John.
4. John received the visions and apocalyptic message while exiled on the island of Patmos (50 miles SW of Ephesus) because of God's Word and John's testimony.
5. The original recipients were seven churches in the province of Asia.

The book's content reflects the historical circumstances of Domitian's reign as Roman Emperor when he demanded that all his subjects address him as "Lord and God". The emperor's decree undoubtedly created a confrontation between those willing to worship the emperor and faithful Christians who confessed that only Jesus was "Lord and God". Thus the book was written at a time when believers were going through a measure of serious persecution because of the word of their testimony, a situation that forms the background to Revelation itself.

Purpose

The purpose of the book is threefold:

1. The letters to the seven churches reveal that serious deviation from the NT apostolic standard of truth and righteousness was occurring among some churches in Asia. John writes on Christ's behalf to rebuke their compromise and sin, and to call them to repent and return to their first love.
2. In view of persecution resulting from Domitian's self-deification, Revelation was given to the churches to strengthen their faith, resolve and loyalty to Christ, and inspire them to be overcomers and remain faithful even unto death.
3. It was written to provide believers of all generations with God's perspective on their fierce conflict with Satan's combined forces by revealing the future outcome of history. It particularly discloses the events during the last seven years preceding Christ's second coming- that God will prevail and vindicate the saints by pouring out His wrath on Satan's kingdom; this will be followed by the second coming of Christ.

Survey

The prophetic message of this book is communicated through dramatic apocalyptic images and symbolism, depicting the consummation of the whole Biblical message of redemption. It features Christ's role as the worthy Lamb who was slain and the wrathful Lamb who is coming to judge the world and purge it of evil. The other major symbolic images in the book are the dragon (Satan), the sea beast (the antichrist), the earth beast (the false prophet) and Babylon the Great (the center of satanic deception and world power).

After the prologue (1:1-8), there are three main sections in the book. In the **first section** (1:9-3:22), John has an awesome vision of the exalted Christ in the midst of the candlesticks (churches), who commissions John to write letters to seven churches in Asia Minor. Each letter (2:1-3:22) includes a symbolic description of the exalted Lord from the opening vision, an evaluation of the church, words of commendation or rebuke or both, words of warning to five churches, an exhortation to hear and repent, and a promise to all overcomers. **Emphasis on the number seven indicates that the letters represent a collective fullness of what the exalted Lord says to the church in every city and generation.**

The book's **second main section** (4:1-11:19) contains visions of things in heaven and on earth concerning the Lamb and His role in the outcome of History. It begins with a vision of the majestic heavenly court where God

sits enthroned in holiness and unapproachable light. Ch.5 focuses on a sealed book of destiny in God's right hand and on the Lamb, who is worthy to break its seals and disclose its contents. The opening of the first six seals (Ch.6) continues the vision begun in Ch.4-5, except now the scene shifts to events on earth. The first five seals unveil God's judgments in the last days that lead up to the end. The sixth seal announces God's coming wrath. The book's "First Interlude" occurs in Ch.7, describing the sealing of the 144,000 on the threshold of the great tribulation (7:1-8) and the reward of the saints in heaven after the great tribulation (7:9-17). Chs. 8-9 reveal the opening of the seventh seal, unveiling another series of judgments, the seven trumpets. A "Second Interlude" occurs between the sixth and seventh judgments, involving John and a little book (10:1-11), and two mighty prophetic witnesses in the great city (11:1-14). Finally, the seventh trumpet (11:15-19) serves as a preview of the consummation (v.15) and a prelude to the final scenes of God's unfolding mystery (chs. 12-22).

The **third main section** (12:1-22:5) provides a detailed picture of the great end-time conflict between God and His adversary Satan. Chs. 12-13 reveal that the saints on earth must face a terrible conspiracy and triad of evil, consisting of the dragon (ch. 12), the sea beast (13:1-10) and the earth beast (13:11-18). Chs. 14-15 contain visions to reassure the tribulation saints that justice will prevail as God is about to pour out His final wrath on the civilization of the antichrist. A full disclosure of God's wrath then occurs in the series of seven vial judgments (ch. 16), the judgment of the great prostitute (ch.17), and the fall of Babylon the Great (ch. 18). At this point, great rejoicing burst forth in heaven, and the marriage supper of the Lamb and His bride is announced (19:1-10).

The grand finale is yet to occur. John then sees heaven opened and Christ riding forth on the white horse as the King of kings and Lord of lords to defeat the beast and all his allies (19:11-21). Satan's final defeat is preceded by his being bound for a thousand years (20:1-6), during which Christ reigns with the saints (20:4) and after which Satan is released for a short time (20:7-9) and then thrown into the lake of fire forever (20:10). The apocalyptic prophecy concludes with the great white throne judgment scene (20:11-15), the just doom of the wicked (20:14-15; 21:8), and the new heaven and new earth as the destiny of the saints (21:1-22:5). The book ends with warnings about heeding its message and entering into eternal life (22:6-21)

Special Features

Eight major features characterize this book.

1. Revelation is the only NT book classified as prophecy and apocalyptic
2. As an apocalyptic book, its message is conveyed in symbols that represent realities about future times and events while preserving a certain enigma or mystery.
3. Numbers are used prolifically, including 2, 3, 3 1/2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 24, 42, 144, 666, 1000, 1260, 7000, 12,000; 144,000; 100,000,000; and 200,000,000. The book especially features the number seven, which occurs no less than 54 times and symbolizes perfect completeness or fullness.
4. Visions are prominent, with the scenes often shifting in locale from earth to heaven and back to earth.
5. Angels are prominently associated with the visions and the heavenly decrees.
6. It is a polemical book that (a) exposes the demonic character of any earthly ruler's claim to deity, and (b) reveals Jesus as the exalted Lord and the ruler of the kings of the earth
7. it is a dramatic book that makes the truth of its message as vivid and forceful as possible
8. It breathes the spirit of OT prophecy without any formal OT quotations.

Interpretation

This is the most difficult NT book to interpret. The *propheticist* interpretation follows the interpretative principle used for OT prophecy where the prophetic word often has both (a) a shorter-term partial fulfillment for the prophet's generation, and (b) a long range future fulfillment at the time of the Messiah's coming. The book of Revelation is understood as having also (a) a prophetic meaning and partial fulfillment for John's generation in the Roman empire, and (b) a complete future fulfillment at the end of the age. The *futurist* interpretation approaches chs. 4-22 as prophecy concerning events that will occur only at the end of this age.

Revelation Ch. 1

1:1 This book is a revelation from Jesus about Himself. It reveals Jesus' evaluation of His churches 60-65 yrs after His resurrection and ascension, and it discloses future events concerning the tribulation, God's triumph over evil, Christ's return to reign and the eternal kingdom of God.

1:3 There are blessings to those who read, hear and obey the things written in this book. This is a practical book with moral instructions, not a mere prophecy of future events. It's meant to not only understand God's future program, but also to learn and apply spiritual principles.

1:4 Seven Spirits- a representation of the wholeness or completeness of the Spirit

Revelation is addressed to seven churches in the Roman province of Asia (today western Turkey)

Seven churches are mentioned in Revelation. *The number 7 being the number of completion*

these were 7 churches all about 30-40 miles away from each other in the Asian province. They not only represented the whole churches at that time, but also are representatives of the entire church throughout the church age. There were many other churches at this time in history, but these represented the spectrum of churches that existed in the first century, but also the spectrum of churches that exist now.

There were more well known churches- such as the church of Colosse and Manisa, but the Lord chose these seven because they represented conditions that have prevailed throughout church history.

In other words, there are 7 basic types of churches that exist in any time period of church history.

Every church that truly knows Jesus as Lord can be recognized as fitting one of these 7 models at some particular point in history. These letters also serve as a preview of the entire church history, from beginning to consummation- they represent 7 stages or key periods in church history. Seven is the number of completeness.

These 7 letters constitute the Lord's complete overview of the church, from beginning to end. ALL of Revelation was written for these 7 churches- each church is expected to know and understand the entire book. Revelation was not written to an individual, but the CHURCH. Therefore, it is His acknowledging of the church as a whole.

1:7 The primary purpose of this book is to describe the triumph of god's kingdom when Christ returns to establish His kingdom upon earth. It presents an eschatology of victory for the faithful, teaching that history will end in the judgment of Satan's system in this world

1:8 "Alpha and Omega" These are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. This is another way of saying that God is the beginning and the ending of all things, including human history. God is from everlasting to everlasting. He is Lord over everything from creation to consummation of history. To Him belong the final victory over evil and the rulership over all things.

1:9 Patmos is a small island in the Aegean Sea, about 50 miles SW of Ephesus. John was imprisoned there for faithfully proclaiming the gospel.

1:12 The seven golden candlesticks are oil lamps, (Zech 4:2) representing the seven churches

1:13 Son of Man, the exalted Christ as seen by Daniel, (Dan 7:13, 10:16) HE is king, priest and judge of His churches

1:16 Seven stars represent either angels who are assigned to each church, or the pastors of these churches. He holds the stars in His right hand, a symbol of His political authority; the church's ultimate destiny is tied to Christ rather than to Rome. "Two-edged sword" the Word of God which either cuts away sin from the church and brings His grace, or in judgment cuts a church away from the kingdom of God

1:19 Here is the outline of Revelation: the things John saw, the things that are now, the things that will take place in the future. Everything John writes down reflects what is already true in heaven and what is not yet true on earth. The Messianic Event, the truth of God is unchanging and eternal

1:20 We will look at a revelation of 1. what Jesus loves and values in His churches, as well as what HE hates and condemns. 2. clear statements regarding the consequences of disobedience and spiritual neglect, 3. the rewards for spiritual vigilance and faithfulness to Christ; 4. a standard by which any church may be judged for their true spiritual state before God, 5. Satan's methods for attacking the church or the individual

Chapter 2

2:1 Message to Ephesus- Jesus presents Himself as Lord over the church, restated here to remind a powerful Christian congregation, accustomed to a place of privilege, that even their conduct is scrutinized by the Risen Lord who keeps all churches equally under His constant care.

The city of Ephesus was one of the most important cities in the Roman province of Asia, a center of wealth and commerce and a crossroad of travel and trade, much like San Francisco or New York in our own era. Ephesus was a center of worship for the pagan goddess Artemis (also called Diana), and the world renowned Temple of Artemis was located here. The temple was longer than two football fields, and was considered one of the seven wonders of the world. Its ruins can still be visited today. The church in Ephesus was planted by the Apostle Paul (Acts 19). When Paul came to Ephesus on his third missionary journey, he discovered a number of disciples living there who had been given a sprinkle of truth by Apollos, the great orator of the early church. At the time that Apollos had been at Ephesus, he had only known the ministry of John the Baptist. Paul asked the disciples, "Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?" So Paul explained to them the good news of life, death and the resurrection of Jesus, and they believed and were baptized in the Spirit and in water. Thus the church at Ephesus was born. Paul spent two years in Ephesus, teaching and building up this body of believers. Later he sent Timothy to the Ephesian church to ground them even more fully in God's Word. Paul's letters to Timothy were written while Timothy labored in Ephesus. This church is rich in history.

The *Ephesian period* covers AD 70-AD 160, the middle of the second century when the temple of Jerusalem was destroyed. During that time, there were literally hundreds of churches that drifted away from a warm, accepting, compassionate ministry to the world, and toward a hard, formal, unloving institutional religion. The church became rife with conflict and theological arguments. Formalism and ritualism was on the rise.

2:2-3 commendations: not tolerating wicked persons; testing the life, doctrine and claims of Christian leaders; persevering in faith, witness, service and suffering for Christ- they are hard working, have sound doctrine, persevere and endure hardship.

2:4 condemnations: they left their first deep love and passion for Christ and His Word- knowing correct doctrine, obeying some of the commands, and worshiping in church are not enough, there must be a heartfelt devotion for Jesus and His Word. This all comes down to the motives of our heart- works of righteousness are not enough for Him who sees into our heart. Agape love and truth form the single, integral reality of real Christianity. 1 John 3:11-24

2:5 Repent. Christ will remove any church from its place if it does not repent of its declining love and obedience to Jesus. Some of suggested this "place" is its influence in the world. This is not an accurate representation of what is occurring. The church's place is in His hand. It will be removed. Remember, repent, return.

2:6 The Nicolaitans advocated too much accommodation with the surrounding social and religious order. Their practices did not distinguish keenly enough between their Christian faith and pagan religion to prevent their public appearance of capitulation to idolatry and sexual immorality. (Idolatry and sexual immorality always go hand in hand. Sexual immorality is worshiping your self centered lust.

2:7 "He who has an ear, let him hear" echos the demand of the Shema, Deut 6:4 "Hear O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one" which means, "be careful to obey so that it may go well with you" This is the measure of the church's first love, Deut 6:5 To him who overcomes- someone who by grace and the blood of Jesus has received new birth and remains constant in victory over sin, the world's system and satan. We are shown the Genesis story- an overcomer can eat of the tree of life, in the paradise of God echoing Genesis 1-3 what should have been man's inheritance; now through Jesus we are recreated to be what we always should have been and had access to. Adam and Eve forsook their first love and were kicked out of the garden as a punishment for their sin and Jesus makes it possible to be restored to our original intention for mankind. As a church, we are to bear witness that we are God's new creation.

2:8 Message to Smyrna-the opening address is a constant reminder of His resurrection power to a church that lives in poverty, has encountered intense religious opposition, and faces imprisonment and martyrdom

It was a thriving seaport city more than 3000 years before Christ, and it is still a thriving city today. During the time of Revelation, it was a center of commerce, wealth, architectural splendor, located about 40 miles north of Ephesus. The city fathers proclaimed it, "The Pride of Asia". Today, it is the third largest city in Turkey and a major international trade center, as well as the home of the NATO southern command headquarters and the prestigious Aegean University. The city is known as Izmir, but during the first century its name was Smyrna. The name means "myrrh", a fragrant spice or perfume obtained when the tender bark of the flowering myrrh tree is pierced or crushed. It is a fitting name for this church since it was often pierced, often crushed, often afflicted. The city was a center for idolatrous emperor worship. As early as AD 26, during the reign of Tiberius Caesar, a temple was erected the emperor, and all the citizens of Smyrna, including Christians, were expected to worship

the Roman emperor. If you were a Christian in Smyrna, you were called upon once a year to appear at the temple and either say, "Caesar is lord" or "Jesus is Lord". Those who refused to confess Caesar as lord were either imprisoned or put to the sword. Smyrna was a place of enormous oppression and persecution for the early church. This persecution was inflicted upon the church by the Roman government (it is important to remember that Jesus holds the stars in His right hand, showing His political authority), and it was inflicted upon the church by the Jewish community in Smyrna---a community that was fanatically hostile to the early church.

This is a church that receives no condemnations- Myrrh is an ingredient in the holy anointing oil that God commanded Moses to make in Exodus 30:22-33, which was used to consecrate the Tabernacle, the Ark, two of the altars, all of the utensils, as well as Aaron and his sons. In the book of Esther, the eligible maidens went through a 12 month preparation process to meet the king, six of those months was a purification with the oil of myrrh.

2:9 Persecution such as Jews in Nazi Germany- restricted travel, livelihood destroyed, church defiled, property seized, humiliated, smear campaigns, physically assaulted, children killed, reputation ruined

The *church in Smyrna* represents a period called "The Age of the Martyrs" AD 160- until the rise of Constantine AD 324 This age did not have the most martyrs as the new suggests, but rather Christians were persecuted in ways almost beyond our ability to describe. Their bodies were torn apart, joint from joint upon the racks. Fingernails pulled out. Wrapped in animal skins and thrown into arenas to be gored by wild animals for amusement. Covered with tar, suspended in Nero's gardens and set alight- human torches to illuminate the festivities of the pagans. Polycarp was burned alive at the stake in Smyrna.

2:9 They were extremely poor (perhaps because of the persecution), but rich towards God. Praised for: persevering in faith, love, witness, service and suffering for Christ

2:10 Tribulation 10 days- represents a 10 different seasons of suffering, persecution under the Roman Empire. Historically, from Domitian AD 96 to Diocletian (just before Constantine) there were 10 edicts of condemnation against the church. YET- there is a limit to suffering, the faithful receive the "crown of life", the wreath or victor's crown placed on the head of winning athletes, also used of the "crown of thorns" placed on Jesus, and of the crowns of gold on the 24 elders in Rev 4:4

"be faithful unto death" at the crucifixion, Christ was offered vinegar (wine) mixed with myrrh, which was used as a numbing agent (somewhat like opium) used to dull the senses of the one suffering- Jesus rejected the option of compromise that would ease His suffering and ultimately His sacrifice.

2:11 "he that has an ear" PAY ATTENTION the second death is eternal punishment, the lake of fire which only the overcomers will escape. First death= physical death, second death= eternal separation. (Heb 9:27) There is no intermediate group, to die a second time is to be disqualified from eternal life. (Jude 12-13)

2:12 Message to Pergamum- The Lord is the rightful Judge and He possesses a sharp, double edged sword that He will fight against and judge all lawlessness, false teachings, idolatry and sexual immorality within His church. This is an ongoing and eternal standard for every church.

the Roman capital of the province of Asia, boasting a population of around a quarter of a million. Located 50 miles north of Smyrna, it was the center of pagan idol worship and emperor worship. Jesus calls Pergamum the place "where Satan has his throne", that is the place where Satan rules. He also call it the city "where Satan lives"-- that is where Satan has his headquarters. Many Bible scholars believe this is a reference to the great altar of Zeus which stood on a hillside overlooking the city. This altar was in the form of a great throne, 40 ft high. From almost any place in the city, you could look up and see what Jesus called "Satan's throne". Because Pergamum was an influential center of pagan worship, the Lord portrayed it as the very focus of Satanic evil. There is a fascinating historical footnote in connection with Satan's throne. In 1878, an archaeological team, working under the auspices of the Berlin museum, began excavating in and around the site of ancient Pergamum. The team unearthed several historical finds, including a beautiful hillside terrace theater, a magnificent temple to the goddess Athena, and the great altar of Zeus, "Satan's throne" itself. Considered one of the most valuable and intriguing artifacts of the Hellenistic culture, the throne of Zeus is richly ornamented with carved figures from pagan mythology. It was removed from Pergamum and shipped to Germany where, for a hundred years it has remained on display in the Pergamum museum in East Berlin. Such sites as Hitler's bunker, the Nazi Reich

Chancellery, and the pre-unification communist government's palace of the Republic are located within 25 miles of "Satan's throne".

The **Pergamum** stage of history- the period of time between the accession of Constantine the Great in AD 324 to the sixth century when the era of popes began. The great council of churches (Constantinople, Ephesus, and others) determined the person of Jesus Christ as fully man and fully God. This was also the first marriage between church and state, when Constantine (not an Orthodox Christian himself) made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire. Pergamum means "marriage" from root word monogamy. The church enjoyed popularity, it came to be viewed NOT as a family of faith, but as a formal, institutional worldly kingdom. It's political influence grew while its spiritual influence waned.

"sword" symbolizes the eschatological (the theology concerned with death, judgment and the final destiny of the soul) word of God by which lawlessness is exposed and judged.

2:13 Commendations: they were holding fast to His name and not denying faith in Him. Antipas was recorded as being the first martyr under Roman persecution. Tradition holds that he was seared alive inside a hollow brass bull that was heated until it glowed white hot. It's important to note that Christ calls him by name.

2:14-15 Condemnations: tolerating false doctrine. Balaam was a false prophet who sold his services to a heathen king and advised him to tempt Israel to compromise their faith by idolatry and sexual immorality. The doctrine of Balaam refers to corrupt teachers and preachers who lead people into fatal compromise with immorality, worldliness and false ideologies, all for sake of personal advancement or monetary gain. Hold to the doctrine of the Nicolaitans (Gnosticism)

2:16 Jesus opposes any within the church who promote and tolerate an attitude towards sin. He promises to wage war with immoral professing believers if they do not repent.

2:17 "hear what the Spirit says" TAKE HEED. The overcomer receives 1. hidden manna- Exodus 16:31-35, John 6:26-40 Jews expected to be nourished by the same manna in the age to come, manna is another eschatological fulfillment, when God's people receive the promised blessing of salvation; 2. a white stone- Stones were used by juries, who gave an acquitted person a white stone at the trial's end. This is sure: the disciple who resists satanic repression inside and outside the church will be acquitted by the heavenly jury and so escape God's judgment.

2:18 Message to Thyatira- "Son of God" first and only time in entire book- referencing the deity of Christ. Psalm 2 Eyes- flames of fire, the ability to pierce the facades, disguises and pretenses of man, nothing is hid from His truth. His feet like fine brass, He has authority over and rules all nations, He is the government and He punishes evil

Thyatira was located 35 miles SE of Pergamum, a small but bustling commercial center on the main road between Pergamum and Laodicea. In many ways, modern Thyatira, the Turkish city of Akhisar, is much like it was in the days of John. Akhisar is still a busy commercial center, and even today its most important exports are essentially the same products that ancient Thyatira was known for: cotton and wool cloth, fruits and dyes. Thyatira was a city in which trade unions were very important. Carpenters, dyers, merchants, clothmakers, and other trade workers had organized into fraternal guilds even before the time of Christ. In Thyatira, the trades were so strongly unionized that it was difficult to make a living without being a guild member. The membership of these guilds was compromised largely of pagans. The problem for the Christians in Thyatira was that the meetings of the guilds were mostly devoted to idol worship and the licentious debaucheries associated with the Greek culture's erotic idols. Thyatiran Christians had to belong to a union in order to make a living-- yet belonging to a union meant they were pressured and sometimes required to participate in sexual practices and idol worship. Its local gods were dedicated to the city's economic well-being. Unlike Pergamum, which was the center of civil religion in Asia, the idolatry in Thyatira was materialism.

Thyatira church history- the most corrupt of the churches, symbolizing the darkest and most corrupt period of church history, covering the 6th century- 16th century- a thousand year period that's been called "the Dark Ages" "The Middle Ages" and even the "Devil's Millennium" The institutional church became powerful and corrupt. It defiled itself by combining pagan rites and magical practices with watered-down teaching. Believers were taught to venerate and pray to images. Church was organized into a massive, multi-level structure resembling worldly government. There were introduction of practices unknown in Scripture. Religious authorities sought to dominate the political spheres of power. The pope was more powerful than emperors and kings. There were

pockets of light, a remnant only- islands of light in a religious sea of darkness. It was a period of incalculable oppression, corruption, and depravity.

2:19 Commendations: love, faith, service and perseverance- it had a devotion to God and to each other

2:20 Condemnations: tolerance of false doctrine. Jezebel references Ahab's wife, particularly hated for having introduced and made popular the worship of Baal. Baal was a fertility god, worship involving obscene sexual practices and male and female temple prostitutes. Jezebel murdered Naboth so Ahab could have his vineyard. Thus, seducing believers into tolerating and accepting immorality and idolatry. Think- doctrine concerning the city's materialistic values, Jezebel's heresy is the ancient equivalent of the current "prosperity gospel" that equates the gospel with material blessings, "sexual immorality" denotes theological infidelity that misleads Christ's servants. (can be physical or spiritual) Another form of Gnosticism, not unlike the Nicolaitans

Special note-- the Nicolaitans and "Jezebel" did not understand themselves as "un" Christian or "anti" Christian, but as gifted teachers and leaders equipped with the charisma of the Spirit, helping the church to adapt to new times. It was a progressive doctrine of accommodation to the culture around them. Nicolas is the rough translation of "Balaam" in Hebrew.

Idolatry in Thyatira- wealth, success, ambition, power, fame, self-gratification

2:22 "bed of suffering"- those absorbed in her teaching, it may mean that the false teaching champions the opposite, an escape from suffering Repent- the purpose of judgment and discipline is purification

2:23 "kidneys (reins)- source of feelings, and hearts- will, decision making" God searches out both, our feelings are important and our deliberate choices, and we are held responsible for both. 1 Cor 2:10

The Gnostics would form "study groups" to advance their own private interpretations, justifying their trustworthiness as "divine revelations" or "deep things" from God.

2:24-25 Satan mimics God, but his "truths" are a twisted imitation of God's wonderful Truth. Remain faithful until the end.

2:26-29 Earthly kingdom of the millennium- ultimate rule with Christ over the nations. Psalm 2, speaks of authority (government) and judgment.

"morning star"- Venus was called the "morning star", appearing 3 hours before the sun, and later in 22:16 to Jesus. The star motif symbolizes the eschatological situation of the community of overcomers by pointing to its future participation in the triumph of God's rule over all secular and materialistic pretenders to the Lord's throne Could ref. the Rapture- occurring 3 years before He returns (mid-trib), escaping the great tribulation (last 3 ½ years of history, worst suffering ever)

3:1 Message to Sardis- one of the greatest cities in the world. It was at one time the capital of the ancient kingdom of Lydia and today its ruins can be visited near the city of Izmir, Turkey. In the sixth century BC, Sardis was ruled by a fabulously wealthy king named, Croesus, who became a byword for unimaginable wealth. Sardis was built on a mountain spur about 1500 ft. above the valley floor. It was regarded as virtually impregnable against military assault. Many armies laid siege to Sardis, but only two- the Persians and the Greeks- ever succeeded. Both victories were achieved by stealth, not force, because the over confident military of Sardis failed to post an adequate guard by its "impregnable" walls. Both times, small bands of spies climbed the sides of the ravine and entered an unwatched gate, "like a thief in the night". If there was one observation we could draw about the character of Sardis, it is that the city possessed a smug, complacent spirit. At the time of John's writing an earthquake had leveled much of the city and Sardis struggled to regain its past stature with economic assistance from Rome. Because the city was located at the western depot of the "King's Highway" that began at Susa on the Persian Gulf, the success of its rebuilding campaign was tied to its role as a trading center for the textile industry.

Church of *Sardis*- church of the walking dead. Dates from the last half of the 16th century (immediately following the Reformation) to about the middle of the 18th century, the beginning of the Great Awakening. A time of darkness and death. The light was not gone, but failing.

Such a serious state that Christ claims His lordship in the strongest possible way- "seven spirits and seven stars", the Holy Spirit and the angels are agents of His jurisdiction. He gives no praises, but immediately goes into condemnations- they were a dead congregation content with spiritual mediocrity, in desperate need of the revitalizing power of the Spirit.

3:2 “wake up”- a spiritual response, “strengthen”- apparently, some spiritual residue, “about to die”- an ironical, hopeful demand in light of His assertion “you are dead” The congregation has failed to meet the condition of faithfulness that Jesus has set down for His return.

3:3 Remember, obey, repent “wake up calls”. The renewal of the Spirit does not occur in a vacuum; the intended revival occurs when the book they have received and heard results in repentance. Revelation’s message calls for an obedient response. Spiritual renewal is mind renewal, Rom 12:1-2

“I will come on you as a thief” the evidence of conversion is a change of lords, from placing one’s confidence in the security of the city-state, destroyed by an enemy that came like a thief, to the returning Christ. Speculations about the exact time of His return are replaced by a confidence in its imminence.

3:4 “soiled their clothes” images of the textile industry, those overcomers who are worthy, made white by the blood of the Lamb, based on their faithfulness to Christ

3:5-6 “book of life”- the historic commencement of eternal life will be publicly decreed. Christ’s lordship over the church is decisive and ultimate; it is historically specific and deals with individuals by their name. Christ’s decision about a believer’s fitness to enter into God’s eternal reign is not based on a formal confession of faith; some in Sardis gave this outward appearance of true devotion “you have a name that you are alive”. The criterion of the Lord’s eschatological judgment is considered more demanding, requiring the believer to be worthy, utterly faithful to God’s eternal rule through Christ. “ears to hear” PAY ATTENTION

3:7 Message to Philadelphia- Philadelphia was located 28 miles SE of Sardis. It was the youngest of the seven cities of Revelation, have been founded about 150 BC by King Attalus Philadelphus. The name Philadelphus, meaning “lover of a brother”, was actually a kind of nickname. King Attalus was noted for the great affection and admiration he had for his brother Eumenes, and the city of Philadelphia was named in honor. In AD 17, Philadelphia and a number of cities in the region were devastated by a massive earthquake. Philadelphia suffered more than the rest in that it was not only leveled in the initial quake, but it continued to be jolted by serious aftershocks for years afterward. Many were killed and injured in this lengthy season of earth tremors. The Roman emperor Tiberius Caesar helped Philadelphia rebuild after the earthquake. In gratitude for him, the city changed its name to “Neocaerarea” (Meaning “New Caesar”), a name it bore for years. [perhaps a ref to “new Jerusalem” in v. 12] The history of this city and the suffering of the Philadelphian people which they endured during the years of the earth tremors are important to understanding the Lord’s message. This church is unique among the seven churches; the Lord registers no complaints. Here is a church He delights in.

“holy and true” used only here in Revelation, an attribute of His lordship and oneness with the Father

“keys of David” Jesus is the promised Davidic Christ, not the defeated “antichrist” of the unbelieving Jews

“opens and no man shuts”- His mission is to open and shut the door to salvation, even of Israel; to the Jewish opponents, He is the only entrance into God’s kingdom

Holy- without flaws and morally perfect; True-He is behind all that exists, He cannot be opposed

Church of **Philadelphia**- from Philadelphus “lover of a brother” a very rich and shining era: The Great Awakening of the 18th and 19th centuries following the decline of the Reformation church. Moravian missionaries were sent out all over the world, the Puritan movement in England, the Wesleyan Revival and George Whitefield’s preaching throughout England and America. Jonathan Edwards advocated Christian missionaries and Methodists rode horseback from church to church preaching the gospel. Saloons closed and churches opened. It was a time of tremendous missionary activity. The gospel was taken to India by William Carey and David Livingston and his father-in-law Robert Moffet took the gospel to untouched regions of Africa, missionary efforts to Burma and China and the native Americans. Great evangelists emerged: George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, Gilbert Tennent, Spurgeon, Charles Finny, Dwight Moody. God brought new light and new life, a new and vibrant awakening to those who “kept God’s Word and not denied His name”. Latter rain spoken by Jeremiah

From wikipedia “The Awakenings resulted from powerful preaching that gave listeners a sense of personal guilt and of their need of salvation in Christ”

3:8-9 commendations: “an open door is for those who keep God’s Word, not denied His name” This is not a Biblical justification of eternal security, but an image of His lordship, only He can determine for whom the door is open and for whom it is shut. He makes the determination based on DEEDS- true repentance is evidenced by good works. These are the deeds that mark out a repentant and faithful witness to Christ. The assurance of eternal life is not justified by those who merely claim God’s salvation but whose deeds are opposed to Christ’s reign. The church was mostly Jewish Christians and the surrounding Jews would recognize that the church is the true Israel. Those who claim to be Jews (physical or spiritual), but are liars (because of their deeds) are of the “synagogue of Satan”

3:10 “hour of temptation” 1 Thes 1:10 “wrath to come”; this hour includes the divinely appointed time of trial, wrath and distress that will come upon all the earth in the last years of this age. The true church and faithful overcomers of God will escape God’s wrath on the ungodly and unfaithful. [Isa 13:6-13, 17:4-11; Dan 9:27, 12:1; Zech 14:1-4; Matt 24:9-31; 1 Thes 5:2]

“to test those” metaphorically those who live as though this life is all there is, who have their minds set on things of this world.

3:11 “hold fast” hold on to eternal life, hold fast to His name and to His Word, so that “no one takes away your crown”- the expected vindication of their faithfulness and the reversal of their marginal status are at hand. There is a tension felt between the opening address, which reassures the reader that no one but Christ opens or shuts the door; and this closing exhortation, which implies evil powers could lead the believer away from the gospel of eternal life. God’s salvation is a partnership, a covenant with God’s people. A covenant envisions both conditional and unconditional aspects: it is a relationship entered into by God’s love through the church’s response of faith, but then maintained by divine love through the church’s faithfulness to the Lord.

3:12 “pillar” strength and permanence in the life to come (no more shaking, remember the quakes)

Three new names: “Name of My God”-godliness, godlike character; “Name of the city”- bride-like, adorned for her husband; “My new name”- Rev 19:12, we share in His new work. These are symbols of the community of overcomers, who will live in a new way toward God and each other. A name is symbolic of essence- the identity of the community.

3:14 Message to Laodicea-**Laodicea**

The city of Laodicea was located about 100 miles directly east of Ephesus. It was part of a tri-city area, closely associated with Colosse and Hierapolis. Laodicea was famous throughout the Roman province of Asia as a center of wealth, or bustling commercial activity, and of the medical profession, especially famous for its eye and ear treatments. Many large and beautiful homes were built in Laodicea, the ruins of which can still be visited. A textile and clothing industry flourished in Laodicea. A special breed of black sheep was raised in the area, producing a highly prized, glossy black wool. The city was also known for its eye salve, produced by the medical school of Phrygia located there. It was a center of wealth, commerce and medicine.

Archaeologists discovered an interesting fact about the city of Laodicea. The source of the city's water supply was a hot spring at Hierapolis, about 6 miles away. The water was carried by aqueduct from this spring, and by the time it reached Laodicea the water was no longer hot, nor was it cold. It was lukewarm.

The Laodicean period is characterized by the phenomenon of people dictating what will be taught, a church where the people tell the preacher what he is going to preach, rather than submitting to the authority of the Word of God. Laodicea means “the judgment of the people” or loosely “people’s rights”

Jesus presents Himself as the “Amen”- Verily, verily, amen and amen- what He is about to say is critically important and utterly true. He is the final Word and authority. Anyone who claims to give us a “new truth” is departing from the final truth. “Faithful” HE is not only tells the truth, but the hard truth. He faithfully, plainly, clearly reveals to the church everything it needs to understand “the beginning of the creation of God”- source of all creation

3:15-17 severest condemnation: “I know your works” cause for mourning, compromise spirituality for the sake of comfort

They were a self-satisfied church that led to self-deception. It literally reads, "I have enriched myself, by my own wisdom and virtue" This word "rich" has a double meaning and there is an allusion to material wealth, but also that they also boasted as being spiritually rich in external gifts from the great outpouring forth of the Spirit from the last church state; and in good works on which she trusts in for salvation, placing her righteousness in them. Jesus says, "YOU (emphasized in the Greek) say, I am rich; I have prospered and grown wealthy, and I am in need of nothing" "and increased with goods"- with outward peace and prosperity, with much natural and divine knowledge, with the purity of Gospel ordinances, beyond the former church state (new revelation) "I have need of nothing" they sat down in complacency and self-satisfaction, pride and arrogance. I am rich in spiritual gifts and endowments. I have need of nothing to make me happy and blessed and every day I am growing spiritually richer. I can provide these things for myself. Jesus says, "know not that YOU (*emphatic in the Greek*) are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked." The Laodeans did not see themselves as lukewarm, or indifferent- Jesus had to point it out. Why was their self-appraisal so far apart from the Lord's? They were measuring themselves by different standards. They were using the standards of the world- their church was a pleasant, respectable, comfortable body of believers. They thought they were doing splendidly. You are wretched and miserable- a most deplorable condition, one who is sunk into deep distress or affliction, in a state of unregeneracy, in danger of hell and destruction
 poor- they did not have the means to produce what they really needed, they did not have the necessities it would take to see them through a calamity
 blind- they could not see their state, nor their way, nor the danger they were in
 naked- spiritually naked, stripped of righteousness.
 3:18 "buy from Me" gifts of repentance- He has the solution, everything we need to live "gold refined"- refined, purified faith "white clothes" righteousness in Christ alone, not yourself, "eye salve" anointing of the Spirit to open your eyes to God's truth.
 3:19-20 "I stand at the door"- a sign of His present availability to restore fellowship to those who hear, repent and respond "sup"- to celebrate the restoration of fellowship
 3:21 As Christ has triumphed, He promises the community of overcomers that they will share in His reign "to him who overcomes" holding firmly to the end, not a passive resignation, but an active holding firm, having courage in the face of opposition, consistent resistance to oppressive power, stand one's ground, not give in

The Throneroom

Revelation 4

References Ezekiel 1, Daniel 7:9-10

In John's vision there is a throneroom for the universe, and the throne is not vacant. The universe is not a chaos nor is it ruled by blind fate. Someone is in charge. The words "one seated on the throne" occur twelve times in Revelation; it is John's way of saying "God". Like the drama as a whole, this scene is theocentric (having God as a center focus). ***Knowing the future is not a matter of obtaining information but a knowing of God who holds the future. The ultimate future is not an item of information to be analyzed but a person to be encountered.*** There is no description of the one who sits on the throne. John intentionally withholds any description of the central figure on the throne, leaving a blank center in the picture to be filled in by the figure of the Lamb-- yet another means of affirming that God is the one who defines himself by Christ.

These repeated references to the throne serve as a reminder that some of John's readers live in the presence of Satan's throne, the imperial claims of Rome expressed especially in the Caesar cult "Throne" like "kingdom", is an explicitly political term. John's vision of the one throne of God contains an implied political polemic, a claim to reveal who really rules. The repeated "You are worthy" (4:11; 5:9; 12) directed to God reflects the acclamation used to greet the emperor during his triumphal entrance. The title "Lord and God" (4:8) is paralleled by Domitian's insistence that he be addressed by this title. The twenty four elders may be influenced by the twenty four lictors (Roman civil servant who served as a body guard) who surrounded Domitian. The correlation of imagery from the imperial cult with that used to express faith in the sole sovereignty of God simply shows that

all earthly claims to sovereignty are only pale imitations and parodies of the One who sits upon the throne. Christians dare not give this homage to another.

4:1-3 A heavenly view. (revelation goes back and forth between events of earth and events in heaven) Ezekiel 1:26,28; Dan 7:9 “rainbow” Ez 1:28 a reference to Noah. God redeems the way He wants to redeem. The God who judges has made a covenant with all creation- a sign of hope by the Creator who has covenanted to bring His creation safely through to the promised fulfillment

4:4 24 Elders- Authority rather than age, ruling council, “crowns”- faithful unto death; “White garments”- washed in the blood; 12 tribes of Israel, 12 apostles= all those in Christ from OT and NT will rule with Christ and share the throne

4:5 “flashes of lightning”- Exo 19:16, God’s appearance at Sinai, God is terrible and presents, “seven spirits”- the eyes of God by which He watches over the universe; the fullness (number 7- completion) of God’s Spirit by which He is present to His creation

4:6 “sea of glass” held in check. Judgment of the flood is not threat in God’s presence

4:7-8 The number 4 represents government, these creatures are associated with God’s government, God is Lord over all creation- both of human affairs and of the created universe. He governs all creation and all creation worships Him. All creation gives praise- one creation celebrating the one God as Creator and Redeemer. Worship is in preparation of His coming judgment “Holy, holy, holy”- attributes absolute holiness to God, suggesting that He will not tolerate evil and is at odds with the natural inclinations of the fallen world and the anti-Christian kingdom that rules over it

4:10 humble submission

4:11 the holy God, who abhors evil and the worthy God, who is all powerful, is the LORD

Redefinition of Winning

Revelation 5

Within the throne room scene, John hears the question, "Who is able to open the book" and he weeps. His crying is interrupted by the announcement that the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has conquered and can open the book. John looks to the appointed place in the vision where the Lion was supposed to appear and sees a slaughtered lamb. The slot reserved for the great Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has been filled by the Lamb of God. This is the first occurrence of "Lamb" in Revelation. It is John's definitive title for Christ, occurring 29 times in Revelation. Two images of the Messiah, "Lion" and "Lamb", appear in this vision. The relationship between them is *crucial* to understanding all of Revelation's theology. The "lion" is really the "lamb", representing the ultimate power of God. The Lamb is powerful! The Lamb operates by the power of God, through the Spirit who speaks to the churches. The Lamb conquers by the power of God. The word "conquer", also translated "overcome", "prevail", "win the victory", "triumph" is the key christological verb occurring 23 times in Revelation, twice as often as in all other NT books combined. John explicitly points out that "conquering" is what binds together Jesus and His followers, and that Christians "conquer" not only by what they do but by what Jesus has done. "Conquering" in both cases, that of Christ and that of Christians, means no more or less than dying. Jesus stood before the Roman court, was faithful unto death, and this was his victory and his reign. John calls Christians to the same messianic conquest.

5:1 “the book” scroll of the law, the book of the prophets, the prophetic scroll, the book of life, heavenly book of deeds of humans, last will and testament normally sealed with 7 seals. “the seals”- “what I seal or sign, I guarantee by placing myself on the line”, “I attest to and sign”

5:5 root of David, conquering Messiah and eternal King, He overcomes sin and death, so will His followers

5:6 seven horns- power and strength of a ruler, seven spirits (see above note)

5:8 intercessory prayers of the saints, “Thy kingdom come”

5:9-14 all creation sings a “new song” not a new one, but really an old one Exodus 15, Rev 15:3 “song of Moses” a song of redemption- interprets the full significance of the Lamb’s actions in taking the scroll, for He is worthy **v.9-10** His death was payment for humanity, purchasing back creation from the evil one (type of purchase of people as slaves, points to Exodus tradition), He overcame sin and death by His blood and made us “kings and priests” to rule and reign with Him

5:13-14 The praise accorded the exalted Christ is due to His fidelity to God- Jesus submitted Himself to God as God's Christ, God's Son, God's Servant, God's Lamb and God's Lion in order to usher in the eternal age of God's blessing.

The community is exhorted to respond in faithfulness to God, confident that God's victory has already taken place through the Risen Christ, and it is exhorted to resist the evil one whose agents rule over the anti-Christian kingdom (Babylon) in trust that God will destroy it and establish an eternal reign of shalom

Chapter 6 Opening of the Sealed Scrolls

Three series of sevens: (seven as the number of completion)

Seals 6:1-8 beginning of woes

Trumpets 8:6-11:19

Bowls 15:5-16:21

Four Horsemen- all symbolic, spiritual forces, agents of God's judgment on earth. Four is the number of human government-

White horse- not Christ, but a Spirit of antichrist, appears good, lovely and true, appears to bring peace, but it is a lie; rise in demonic activity, chose to believe a lie comes a powerful delusion

Red horse- civil unrest, removes any real peace, desire to kill and destroy (the white and red together remove real peace from among the earth)

Black horse- represent famine, but not as you suppose, "a siege economy" food being weighed very carefully, three days wages buy a qt of wheat or even the cheaper barley. The rich will not be affected "do not touch the oil and wine", increase in lust and luxury, greed. This will be an economic upheaval- inflated prices, recession, panic

Pale horse- Gk word "Chloris", It greenish color. Matt 24, plague and disease follows so terrible that 1/4 of humans will be killed

These four seals confirm God's method of forcing men and women to face the truth about themselves. Romans 1, giving humanity what we demanded. The very structures of human existence (family, government, wars between nations and conflicts) have been so corrupted by rebellion that calamity and death are inevitable on earth and the apocalypse of God's salvation from heaven is necessary.

6:9-11 Time and eternity. We live in time. These events take place in eternity. Everything simply IS. God is Lord over time. Everyone who died in the past, who will die in the future, or who is dying at this moment in time emerge together for eternity. No past or future

6:9 "slain for the Word"- martyrs of the faith from all generations Altar- the great temple in heaven, the temple which Moses saw on Mt. Sinai Exodus 34-40. Temple of God- actually symbolic of redeemed humans, the ultimate dwelling place of God

6:10 those in heaven pray that the wicked who have rejected God and killed His followers will receive divine justice. The prayer is not for personal vengeance, but a holy righteous concern for God's righteous rule in the earth, to bring evil to justice and the suffering of His people to an end, think imprecatory psalm. This is a time of judgment, not grace

6:12-14 Nature in Chaos- Matthew 24:29-30, Luke 21:25-27; the catastrophic judgments of God involve a shaking of the world, cosmic upheaval, and great darkness and terror for earth's inhabitants of so great a salvation

6:15-17 terror and inconceivable anguish. Those who refuse to repent will reach a stage where they cannot repent 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 Practical use: these things should inspire us to witness to a lost world. There is an end to wickedness. Recognize evil, even though its cloaked in disguise. Judge and discern RIGHT from those things that just seem right

6:16 "the wrath of the Lamb" an interesting term, a little ironical in that the Lamb of God was sent as God's mercy in order to escape His wrath, not as an act of judgment. The term is used here in the face of those who rejected God's great mercy, distorting the cross. Hebrews 1:9

Chapter 7 AN interlude between the sixth and seventh seal revealing those who have been faithful to Christ - four corners rep. NSEW. Land- Order structure, stability. God as head, literal and spiritual nation of Israel, (two groups of believers, Jews and non-Jews) Sea- pagan nations, shifting and unstable w/o foundation, do not recognize the authority of God, worship idols. Trees- individuals in various places, Psalm 1, influential men/women who stand out. Seal- the Holy Spirit Ephesians 1:13

7:4-8 Israel means Israel- not the Spiritual Jews, but the literal nation of Israel. There are two tribes not mentioned: Ephraim and Dan. Ephraim appears under the name of Joseph. No Levi- tribe of priests, they were separated. Dan- tribe which introduced apostasy into the nation of Israel Genesis 49:17. Jews are to preach the gospel- Matt 10:5-23, charge to disciples, skips to prophecy to group of Jews to preach. Seal- does not mean they cannot die, but that they are protected from God's direct judgment

7:9-14 No chronological sequence, no time limitation, no past, no future in heavenly orientation. Martyrs- from all nations and races (Rev 20) God did not keep them from death, but rather saw the faithful through to the end. Those sealed are kept through, not from. Their robes are washed in the blood of the Lamb. Their own death is not an accomplishment they can boast- they have been given their Victor's garments and worship the Lamb of God. Their death has become one with the Lamb's death.

7:13-14 Great Tribulation. The tribulation is the last "seven" of history. Whether it is a literal seven years, or as the number seven means "completion", it is the completion of God's plan. A portion is call the "Tribulation" until the anti-Christ is made known, and then it is referred to as the "Great Tribulation". Just as the seven churches represent the whole church, throughout history- seven is never an exact number as we see it. It is a time period of God's judgment, and of Satan's wrath and persecution against God's faithful.

Another interpretation- a particular time period of salvation history- i.e. the entire church history- past, present and future

7:15-17 Throne of God- throne of the Father, universal reign Revelation 3:21, Christ's promise to the overcoming church. "He who sits on the throne"- Throne of Jesus on the new earth, reigning over all nations. "Temple" Micah 4:1-4 God's government, justice and peace will flow to all the earth. A time of Shalom.

Chapter 8 Seventh Seal Silence in Heaven

8:1 Silence- full of awe and anticipation, sense of drama, suspense and mystery. It is not over. This is a dramatic contrast to the shouts of praise.

8:2-5 The seventh seal initiates the seven trumpet judgments. The trumpet judgments are partial judgments against God's enemies revealing the triumph of God's rule so that those congregations, now spiritually lax, will turn their hearts back to the heart. "thunder, lightning, earthquake"- woes on the earth, global upheaval and violence in nature. "golden censor" container in which incense is burned, symbol of priestly function. "fire from altar" symbolic of Elijah on Mt. Carmel 1 Kings 18:36-38, purpose to "turn their hearts back again", fire that consumed the altar was in fact a revelation of God's lordship over even His enemies. "Prayers of saints"- indicating that intercessory prayer is extremely important in the destruction of wickedness and the establishment of righteousness. God answers prayers imploring God to act, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done"- time to be fulfilled. Zenith of judgment Matthew 24:21q, Dan 12:1, Joel 2:2

8:6 Seven trumpets were used to destroy Jericho, Josh 6:4,6,8 (note the Ark appears in heaven in Rev 11:19 upon the blowing of the seventh trumpet, as in the destruction of Jericho. Israeli public warning of imminent judgment

8:7 Both literal and symbolic, perhaps even worse than pictured. "Sun"- literal, symbol of light, knowledge and truth, "fire" literal, symbol of torment and judgment. Reminiscent of the seventh plague on Egypt. Devastation over 1/3 of the earth- "survivable" results, causing global chaos but not complete destruction. A plea for repentance- purpose of judgment is repentance. Literal and symbolic of Israel- Earth-Israel, leaders-trees, people-grass. Zeph 1:12-13 Jeremiah calls it "the time of Jacob's trouble

8:8-9 Sea attack- massive meteor/volcano, literal attack on the sea. Reminds of Egypt's plague of blood. Symbolic/figurative- great kingdom aflame with revolution, judgment on Babylon, Jeremiah 51:25-26 A symbolic image of the Anti-christ coalition will fall on the Gentiles of the world like a flaming, destroying

mountain, conquering the nations and destroying lives “1/3” divine number, God’s attributes (three) limited by grace

8:10-11 “great star”- likely a comet or something different carrying poison- form of radiation? Chernobyl is the Russian word for Wormwood. (You have to remember that John is seeing things he has never seen before trying to describe their appearance) bitter water- reminds of Israel grumbling at the waters of Marah Exodus 15:23- perhaps a more pointed rebuke to the disobedient church “Rivers” symbolic of great masses of people moving together in one direction- entire population caught up in one mind/idea. “Spring” symbolic of moral or philosophical leadership. “Star” prominent leader, widely recognized influential leader will suddenly reverse his policy. He will “fall”- people will be embittered by this leader’s turnabout. Many will experience moral and spiritual death.

8:12 Fourth trumpet- triggers a catastrophe which undeniably recalls the seventh Egyptian plague, Luke 21, literal event, fail to give light. Sun, moon, and stars- symbolizes earthly authorities (Joseph Genesis 37:9), morally darkened and evil judgment. No ethical restraint, no compassion, no justice. Recall that the unfaithful of the church is due in large measure to cultural pressures which mold and shaped Israel into a people more like Egypt than the kingdom of priests made by the Lamb.

Literary redemptive-destruction dualism: blood of the first two plagues, symbolic of the death of Christ to purchase all men in order to serve Him and not sin; sun- used for the exalted Christ (1:16), and as an object of divine judgment; Star- Christ is the “Morning Star”, another great star “Wormwood” is God’s current agent of destruction; “springs of water” to which the Lamb leads His sheep, are now poisoned by bitter waters

8:13 “Angel” is “eagle”- the warning of the Eagle (spoken from the highest point in heaven) to “those who make their home on earth”- live for this present life, care for nothing of God. The next three judgments will be much more intense and devastating than the previous. Echoes Exodus 19:4; Could be translated “vulture” and symbolic of the earth in the throes of death, Luke 17:37. A triad of “woes”, the repetition is impressive, adds emphasis, shouts the superlative nature of the “woe”.

Chapter 9

9:1 “bottomless pit” or “abyss” same word used for “Legion” in Luke 8:30; “Star”- quite possibly an angel with authority; an angel whose mission is destruction approved by God (given the key)- serve the redemption interests of God

9:2-6 physical signs of distress; “locusts” an increase in demonic activity, not literal locusts since they are told to not harm “any green thing”. Remember “Grass” represents people, “Trees”- leaders, who do not have the seal of God. Ref of Exodus locusts- eat up and consume people. “Sting” of the scorpion- demonic lies to ensnare people without God’s seal, ensnare hearts and minds consume and torture people demonically, increase in demonic mind strongholds as well as physical. Literal 5 months?? Five symbolic of the number of grace- it is limited to a certain amount of time, short term, there is still time to repent.

9:7-11 John is trying to describe something he has never seen in these scorpions, ref Joel 1:2-12, 2:1-11 Natural devastation portrays the spiritual condition of faithless people. John relates to us the NATURE of propaganda the antichrist will use on earth. These are demons that cannot be seen with human eyes. Jude 6 Locusts appearance of war horses, crowns of gold= authority and power. Human-like faces- intelligence, teaching of the antichrist will appear reasoned and appealing to the mind. Hair like women- alluring and attractive. Lion’s teeth- penetrating, cruel and frightening, deadly and devouring. Iron breastplate- hard and calloused, these demonic forces are pitiless, merciless, offer no relief and no escape. “sound of locust’s wings”- many horses and chariots rushing into battle- the antichrist message is overpowering, forceful, irresistible to the masses, and widely popular. “Stings of scorpions”- terrible aftermath of antichrist influence: mental, emotional, spiritual torment. The delusion warned of 1 Tim 4:1. The lead demonic angel over the locusts is named “Abaddon” in Hebrew or “Apollyon” in Greek which means Destroyer or Destruction. This work is nasty, but temporary. There is still time to repent. Job 3:21, Job felt persecuted by God, misunderstanding his suffering. It will be misunderstood- suffering is to bring repentance. “Apollyon” is connected to the Greek deity Apollo, who was followed by the same Caesars guilty of persecuting the church. Domitian believed himself to be Apollo reincarnated. John may

have been alluding to: the destructive host of hell has as its leader the emperor of Rome (why John references the angel's name is unclear)

9:12-16 Sixth trumpet- Return to the golden altar- prayers are once again offered for vindication by divine judgment. Fallen angels released for this "very hour and day and month". (these angels have been bound, suggesting they are evil) Euphrates- ancient boundary between East and the West. Eastern boundary- Roman empire, Western boundary- warlike Parthians (Iran and Turkey)F, the world's finest fighting cavalry, thrashing Rome twice. FOUR angels- four rep. Euphrates also was the landmark for the Garden of Eden, promised land Government, a world-wide government from NSEW. 200 million soldiers (a vast and unbelievable number) come from all directions, not necessarily from one country. All gather to one place- Rev 16- Armegeddon, Mount Megiddo, Northern Israel.

9:17-19 Did John understand what he was looking at? Future warriors and armory, weapons? Try describing a bomb or tank to John. Breastplates of various colors- tanks, troop carriers, missile launchers, rocket batteries, artillery pieces, aircraft of various countries? Lion's mouths of fire and smoke- canons, mortars, rocket launchers, missiles, fire, radiation, poisonous gases, weapons of mass destruction. Horses tails like snakes- modern armament, helicopter gunships with rotors mounted on their long tail assemblies, missiles which leave snake-like trails of smoke

9:20-21 After all this, catastrophes and upheaval, the human race remains unrepentant and hard-hearted. Rebellion against God is idolatry and is self-destructive. If God's chief desire is to restore humanity, and to rebel against God is to repel God's chief desire, then to sin is to forsake the spiritual powers of personal transformation. People willingly wrap themselves in satanic delusion. Irrational and self destructive unwillingness to repent 2 Thessalonians 2:11 "powerful delusion". Even God's judgments do not bring people to repentance. This is the depth of human depravity for sinful pleasure. Last days prevalent sins: worship of demons and participation in "spiritualism", idolatry which is rebellion, occult practices and magic, murder and violence, magic arts- Gk "pharmakeia", which involves drugs, occult worship and witchcraft, sexual immorality, lust and pornography, thefts and lawlessness. Hebrews 2:3 Sorceries- associated with the occult, includes contact with the dead, supernatural powers, paranormal energies, demonic forces in order to gain or manipulate or influence things or people. Sorcery and drug use are inter-related

Chapter 10

10:1 Interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets- the return of John's attention to the believing community. Cause the readers to pause and think and assess their present crisis in terms of God's triumph in Christ. The people's vision is blinded by the propaganda of the surrounding world order; is your life anchored by faith in a sovereign God or by a false confidence in the idols of the antichristian world? "Another mighty angel" sent from the throne of God, some suggests it is Jesus from the way in which He is clothed, and that He swears by raising His right hand, to Himself, because HE can swear to know greater Hebrews 6:13 His identity suggests that his role is continuous with that of the first "mighty angel" who called our attention to God's scroll (5:1) and to the worthy Lamb; these phrases echo Ezekiel's theophany of God's throne (Ezek 1:27-28)

10:2-4 a little book or scroll- suggesting this scroll has a more narrower, microscopic vision that affects the destiny of the whole earth. Sevenfold message- significance of the culmination of all things, John doesn't hear the first part, but hears seven thunders as the effects of God's ruling glory as in Psalm 29- the triumph of God, sealed, secrets that only God will reveal in His time. John has "insider information". Seven thunders- John is forbidden to disclose the message indicating that during this time period, judgments not revealed will still occur. Therefore, no one knows in advance everything that will happen. We cannot be dogmatic about the time/ sequence of end time events.

10:5-7 The angel takes an oath, "There will be no more delay" Dan 12:5-7. v.7 "mystery of God"- the content of the gospel message, the fulfillment of the prophetic promise of God's salvation, which is the atoning death and exaltation of Jesus. The truth is about to be revealed. The OT prophets prophesied of a time when God would redeem humanity from sin and restore all things to their proper, created order. Here is the mystery- Christ has already accomplished God's promised of salvation, yet there is a delay of its earthly effects.

10:8-10 Ezekiel's situation, both exiled prophets, commissioned to eat scrolls consisting of divine revelation (Ezekiel 2:9-3:3), and both scrolls tasted as sweet as honey in their mouths. John is commissioned to speak Ezekiel's message to an obstinate people: first warnings of death result when a righteous person turns to evil; but second a promise that life results when a righteous person heeds the prophet's warning and does not sin. "Bitter belly"- a visceral response to the hard prospect of convincing obstinate people that God's warnings of death are real and severe. Symbolism of eating the word- the truth becomes real and personal, metabolize and assimilate the Word into the body; take it internally, become personally involved, changed and ultimately it becomes a part of one's DNA.

10:11 John must prophesy before many peoples, nations, languages and kings. His death is unknown, not much is recorded of him after being exiled. Tradition holds he spent his last days in Ephesus. Thus, this Word is meant to be a prophesy to all who will HEAR from every nation throughout history.

Chapter 11

After eating the scroll- John has a pronounced change of scene and perspective. He is sent back over the terrible scenes of judgment to bring detailed, magnified, zoomed in highlights of the judgments of the last days.

11:1 Continuation of interlude. Measure the Temple- OT prophecies of Ezekiel and Zechariah.

Revelation Part 2

Chapter 11

After eating the scroll- John has a pronounced change of scene and perspective. He is sent back over the terrible scenes of judgment to bring detailed, magnified, zoomed in highlights of the judgments of the last days.

11:1 Continuation of interlude. Measure the Temple- OT prophecies of Ezekiel and Zechariah. A discussion of Israel and the temple and gives an appraisal of her spiritual life. The events recorded here occur in the city where the “Lord was crucified”, Jerusalem. Israel is still in unbelief during this part. The “temple of God” may imply the existence of a temple in Jerusalem at this time, if so, it will be desecrated by the antichrist. Measuring signifies the spiritual condition of Israel.

Another interpretation- AN image of Ezekiel’s eschatological temple as its background (Ezekiel 40-48)- an angel commissions Ezekiel to “pay attention” as a man using a measuring rod (40:3) in order to measure the temple of God and the altar for a restored Israel. There is a hint that the fulfillment of Israel’s full restoration is the church that is in Jesus. Thus restored Israel has been fulfilled in Christ. John’s task of measuring is to protect the inner sanctuary (where the true worshippers are) from destruction and defilement. The outer court is excluded- it is the place of non-believers.

11:2 “tread under foot” The “holy city” could be Jerusalem and thus will be oppressed by the Gentiles and suffer greatly for 42 months (Luke 21:24). Israel will be severely judged and condemned like that of Sodom because of her rejection of Christ. 42 months= last 3 ½ years also known as the “great tribulation”

Another interpretation- the unbelieving world trample on (Gk pateo) the holy city, both the “holy city” and the “temple of God” refer to God’s people (1 Cor 3:16), and not a geographical location. Likewise, 42 months or 1260 days represent an indefinite period of time during which increased distress and harassment for God’s people underscores the immense of Christ’s return and God’s triumph. (John’s commission to only measure the inner sanctuary= the church)

11:3-6 A literal interpretation- A ministry of two men who will preach, die and be raised. The two olive trees represent an abundance of oil, the anointing of the Holy Spirit flowing through possibly 2 men of God- perhaps Zerubbabel and Joshua, (Zech 4:2-6) two leaders who were to lead God’s people into a spirit-filled life of holiness. Royal and priestly ministries- king and priest made one in Christ. Rev 1:6 By using this language John says they will be abundantly empowered by the Spirit and represent the church of Jesus as God’s clear witness and mouthpiece to perform miraculous signs to the unbelieving.

1260 days- 42 months, 3 ½ years, ½ of the 7 year week in Daniel. Two 3 ½ year periods

Another spiritual interpretation- two witnesses represent the renewal and restoration of God’s relationship with His people, through the two ministries of King Zerubbabel and the priesthood of Joshua (Zech 4). Zechariah commends Zerubbabel’s work in completing the temple and Joshua’s ministry in purifying God’s people. This spiritual reality is indicated earlier by John’s final stanza of a “new song”. The “two lampstands” fed and empowered by the oil, Holy Spirit symbolize the church; thus the two witnesses then are a figure of speech for the community of faithful disciples. The number 2 referring to the number of witnesses required by Judaism to admit evidence in a court of law. The ministry of “two witnesses” is in continuity with the “testimony of Jesus Christ” to provide a valid testimony to God through their death and God’s resurrection of them.

“clothed in Sackcloth”- not for own sins, but in humble dedication to God, to His redemptive interests. (Dan 9:3-19) The church receives divine power to prophesy and fiery power like that of Elijah (2 Kings 1:1-18) to devour enemies. Echoes the biblical traditions of Elijah (1 Kings 17:1; James 5:17-18) and Moses (Exo 7:20; 8:12; Heb 11:23-29), John interprets the church’s ongoing witness to God by OT prophetic witness- a single-mindedness to proclaim and embody the word of the Lord rooted in faithfulness. The two witness could well refer to only a portion of the church, already represented by the two faithful congregations of Smyrna and Philadelphia, which exemplify single-minded devotion to God and power over sin under difficult circumstances.

11:7-10 NO one can interfere until the work of the two witnesses is done- they must fulfill their God-ordained and empowered testimony. **The limits of evil are established by God and ultimately serve God's purposes.** This is the first appearance of the beast, personifying evil power and is prominent in the rest of Revelation. v.7 "overcome" or "overpower" describes the beast's empty defeat, since they receive the reward of eternal life; a temporary defeat. "where also the Lord was crucified", could be literal Jerusalem or spiritually (as the church has died with Christ and will be raised again in eternal life) Like Jesus, suffered an apparent defeat; we will appear to be defeated by the beast, but will be raised in resurrection and vindication. Point- faithfulness unto death is always the ultimate measure of the disciples faithfulness to God. "Great city", not a specific city but a place where people congregate- in such places the beast's powers is felt. Any city can turn into wicked Sodom or Egypt within a short amount of time, 3 ½ years. The "worldwide celebration" suggests that special festival days have been instituted for this occasion. There is a complete breakdown of basic, social convention, "men gazing on their bodies, refuse them burial", creating a public spectacle of death, acting with unbridled disrespect. Without social manner, there is left anarchy and chaos. 2 Tim 3:1-9

11:11-14 Literal interpretation- because of the resurrection of the two witnesses and the judgment of God, a remnant in Jerusalem will receive the message of the two witnesses.

Spiritual- a vital importance of a congregation in a city is that they restrain evil. The church is taken out of the way at this point- come up like Elijah, rapture of the church. God's promise to the faithful church of Philadelphia, Rev 3:10 "keep from the hour of temptation". There is a change of tense from present tense to past tense in the resurrection and ascension of the two witnesses, echoing Jesus' ascension in Acts 1:9-11. Promising John's audience: the ascension makes certain His return. John substitutes enemies for disciples because the former enemies become disciples responding to the resurrection of the two witnesses in the same way the disciples first responded to Jesus' resurrection: in holy terror, Mark 16:8. "Breath of life from God" draws upon the OT images of God giving man life, promising a new life to an exiled Israel- bringing a new Israel back to life. v. 13 an earthquake (crucifixion) , 1/10 city collapses, 7000 people killed- the resurrection of the Lamb as well as the two witnesses demands a call to repent. Third woe comes soon.....

11:15-19 Dan 7:9, Psalm 2, Matt 25:31-40 Judgment. The seventh trumpet brings an announcement that the world has become the kingdom of Christ and He will reign forever. It involves events extending to Christ's return, including the 7 bowl judgments. The 24 elders prophesy what will happen at Christ's coming (v. 18)

v.19 John's use of the heavenly temple symbolism establishes the basis for Christian hope that God's salvation will win out in history: what is true in heaven will be true on earth. The symbolism of the ark, points to a covenantal relationship between God and His people also signifying the promised presence of God in the midst of a forgiven people. Since the ark stands in the inner sanctuary, where no one enters except the high priest on the day of Atonement, John's reference to it here underscores the status of the faithful: their sins are forgiven and their relationship with God will stand firm to the end because of Christ's atoning death. In this regard, note the opening line of the preceding hymn (v.17) "We give thanks to You" encompasses the very attitude required of the worshiping community. "flashes of lightning..and a great hail storm" (4:5) symbolize God's reign, reminding the reader that the heavenly temple, ark, altar, its slain Lamb, and all those who were purchased by His blood are ultimately for God, and must bear witness to God's triumph over all who oppose Jesus and His people.

**Significantly, the only other place in Revelation where "hailstorm" is found is at the onset of the seventh bowl (16:21), which marks the final destruction of the anti-God kingdom. The heavenly temple is linked in this way to Babylon's fall in earth, since both events are the result of God's triumph in Christ.

Chapter 12

Beginning with Ch. 12, John introduces new characters who challenge the reign of God and the objective value of Christ's work for life on earth- the "red dragon" and the two "beasts". He draws upon a new vocabulary which describes hostility to and warfare against God. We are viewing earthly scenes from heaven's viewpoint- time is not a factor. THIS VISION DOES NOT PRESENT A SEQUENCE OR AN ORDERED CHRONOLOGY. We are shown what happens not when it happens.

12:1 a woman clothed with the sun, the moon is under her feet, and a crown of 12 stars on her head. Symbols clustered together from another place, Genesis 37, the story of Joseph. The woman represents the children of

Israel. Romans 9:5 (another interpretation- she symbolizes the church- however she is depicted as giving birth to Jesus. The church did not produce Jesus; Jesus produced the church. The church was born out of the wounded side of Jesus)

12:3 a great red dragon, satan. “red” symbolizing his murderous nature; the overall description of his head (idolatry-promotion of secular power) symbolizes his hideous strength and fullness of evil. The dragon empowers the government of the antichrist or “sea-beast” (13:1-2) In every way possible the dragon opposes God’s redemptive mission in the earth.

12:4 Satan’s attempt to kill Jesus in the days of the Roman Empire and King Herod the Great. “Stars” perhaps could be 1/3 of angels that fell with Satan. 1/3 could mean just a limited amount of power and scope.

“Stars” in Rev frequently symbolize prominent human leaders. Could be leaders of the nation of Israel. Isaiah 9:14-15 “the prophet who teaches lies, he is the tail”. Satan accomplishes his deceptive, destructive work through false, lying prophets. Leaders of Israel (stars) being deceived and brought down from their moral position before God, and the dragon’s tail (lying prophets) are the means by which Satan deceives.

12:5 a child who will “rule the nations with a rod of iron”- only ref is to Jesus, Psalm 2. Takes a sudden jump from His birth to His ascension- His beginning and ending of His earthly ministry. “Snatched up to safety” perhaps a reference to the rapture of His church, His body- the church and the Lord together are the body of Christ. “Saul, Saul why are persecuting Me?” Who was he persecuting? The church.

12:6 “the fleeing woman”- a remnant of Israel who believe in Christ, reject the rule and religion of the antichrist and flee to a desert place prepared for her for a time period of 1260 days- the last 3 ½ years of the seven-year Tribulation period. Zechariah 13:8-9, Deut 4:30-31; Ezekiel 11:14-21

12:7-9 War in heaven- An abrupt change of scene, perspective changes- we are spectators to a scene which takes place in heaven, a conflict, invisible to the people of earth, yet profoundly affecting every life. We conclude that until this time, Satan has access to heaven. (Job, Zech, “spiritual forces in heavenly realms”) God has had enough of Satan’s presence, He sends Michael to drive out him forever. Same event depicted in Rev 9:1, Ezekiel 28, Isaiah 14 Satan is banished to the earth- the place of his penal colony.

12:10-11 Satan accuses us of serving God for personal gain (Job 1:6-11) and we overcome him and His deception by the blood of the Lamb- Trust in His sacrifice; determine to speak for Christ, share your testimony and a willingness to serve Him until the end, “because they did not love their lives even unto death”

12:12 Rejoice all the heaven! But woe to the inhabitants of the earth intensified horror and suffering are coming. Satan knows his time is short, he will be defeated soon and he has great wrath and fury for those who resist him and remain faithful to God.

12:13-17 This situation follows the believers of Israel, a remnant interpreted as an Exodus event. Exodus 19:4, like the Pharaoh of old, Satan follows in close pursuit, intent on destruction, “The time of Jacob’s trouble” Jeremiah 30, eagle’s wings Exodus 19:4, “when the enemy comes in like a flood” Isaiah 59:19. “the remnant of her seed who keep the commandments of God” perhaps the 144,000 sealed

Chapter 13

13:1 “sea-beast rising up out of the sea”- Daniel 7 the fourth beast with ten horns and seven heads (seven mountains, Rome) identified as the Roman Empire, history’s final world government, consisting of 10 kingdoms that under the control of the government, “sea” rep turbulence among several gentile nations, the same beast in Rev 12,

13:2 the 4th sea-beast has all the characteristics of Daniel’s other beasts, rolled into one. Lion-like ferocity of Babylon, bear-like Medo-Persians power to crush and dismember, leopard-like swiftness of the Greeks; undre the power, control and authority of the dragon (Satan)

13:3-4 Revelation 17:8-9 (the woman who rides the beast signifying the same beast, a revived form of the Roman Empire. This government will be a “religious” institution that the world will worship, a “sociopolitical” program. Not unlike what was experienced in the first century church (remember the persecution of the seven

churches) with Caesar worship. This beast is a parody of Christ- an anti-Christian movement, counterfeiting the real power of God. The unbelieving world is in awe and find themselves unable to resist

13:5-6 “blasphemy”- to claim godlike powers, to claim oneself to be God, or to identify God with objects or lesser persons. Idolatry is blasphemy because it reduces God to the same level as an idol. Self-fulfillment movements are idolatry because it places humans on the same level as God. Daniel 7:8 The religion of the antichrist will be divinity of humanity

13:7-8 the beast is given enormous power, including the power over life and death- his aim is complete domination over the world not unlike Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, Napoleon or Hitler. There will be no superpower to oppose him. Many will die and he will make war with the saints and “seemingly” overcome them. There will be a great deal of martyrs for the faith. Those who oppose the beast and stand firm in Christ will be written in the Lamb’s book of life. The “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world”- the redemptive death of Christ for the salvation of man was decreed from the very beginning of the creation of the world. The theological conviction expressed by this phrase is not that God predestines the elect to follow the Lamb unto life and the non-elect to follow the beast unto destruction, but that God is faithful to the promise of salvation now fulfilled through the slain Lamb.

13:9-10 PAY ATTENTION! Have ears to hear. v. 10 echos Jeremiah 15:1-2 The law of consequences- warning the believing community against compromising its devotion to God. v.10a Accept the current difficulties as the reality of living out the Christian faith in an anti-Christian world; v.10b hopes for vindication for saints who overcome the beast’s rhetorical and political threats.

13:11-15 Another beast. This is the false prophet, coming out of the beast’s sociopolitical religion embodies the same evils, exploiting all its authority towards political and institutional ends in order to establish the antichrist kingdom. Implements the dragon’s vision. The “two-horns like a lamb” signify his attempt to deceive by portraying himself as a loving, gentle and caring person, Christ-like, seducing other to embrace lies as God’s truth. His appearance is deceptive- probe more deeply. The nature of his deceptions is to convince people that the falsehoods and fictions of secularism are viable substitutes for Jesus Christ. His ministry will counterfeit the supernatural ministry of the Holy Spirit by lying signs and wonders.

When anyone places their version of institutional truth over God’s gospel and their values over God’s reign, they promote idolatry. When the interests of any culture seek to corrupt the single-minded devotion of the church to God’s incarnate Word, the work of the anti-Christian kingdom, its beasts, and its dragon will have succeeded.

The false prophet may not be an outsider to the Christian faith, but an insider, a “false apostle”. Three basic credentials given to the apostles: 1. successors of the risen Christ in both ministry and authority; 2. their preaching had authority in that it was centered on the resurrection of Jesus to which they were witnesses; 3. they did miraculous “signs and wonders” (parallel the second beast). The most subtle secularism is the one promoted by those charged with the spiritual care of a congregation, when the proclamation of the gospel takes its clues from the surrounding social order rather than from the Word of God.

13:16-17 The antichrist will seek to gain total economic control of the world. No one will be able to buy or sell without this “mark”; economic pressure will be a real and present threat. The “seal” is a mimicking of God’s seal of the Lamb; it is a symbol of ownership or allegiance to someone in authority. This seal secures one’s place within the anti-Christian kingdom, including temporal, material well-being. At the same time brand one as an opponent of God’s kingdom. Actual choices reflect real commitments.

13:18 the number of the beast: 666. This number represents man as god (man was created on the 6th day, 3 is the number of God, trinity). In Gematria (an ancient method of biblical interpretation using numerical equivalents for letters, such equivalents have prophetic importance) Using this interpretation and John’s words “it is a man’s number”, perhaps having a certain man in mind. Using the Hebrew alphabet, the name that equates to the number is “Caesar Nero”, a horribly evil, malicious and a man who set himself up as god (as most others Caesars). He is the ongoing model for all of history’s “Caesars” who rule over the anti-Christian kingdom. The wisdom required of Revelation’s readers is to recognize false prophets and apostles who promote humanism as the way to eternal life.

Chapter 14

14:1-2 This first section is the most enigmatic in the book (14:1-5), a very difficult passage to interpret. Kingdom of priests from Ch. 7. Is it a literal 144,000? Some interpretations suggest it is those of Jewish lineage who preach the gospel during the tribulation. The number could symbolically represent the most consecrated and faithful of God's people of all time, the large number may mean it is not limited to that number. Could be literal Jews, or eschatological Jews, i.e. the church. Standing on Mt. Zion, refers to the place where God's promise of Israel's restoration will be fulfilled, a place of profound significance. "Father's name written in his forehead" as opposed to the mark of the beast. This faithful remnant belongs to God

14:3 "new song" in continuity with those of the earlier "new song" found in 5:9-10, as well as with the remnant's subsequent songs of "Moses and the Lamb" found in 15:3-4, then this hymn celebrates God's deliverance of the faithful Israel from its evil enemy. Only those who have been purchased for God by the slain Lamb could learn the song.

14:4-5 "virgins"- the community's sexual purity is metaphorical of its "pure" or sanctified relationship with God. This is consistent with the OT which compares the faithfulness and unfaithfulness of Israel to sexual fidelity or infidelity. To keep pure, then, is to resist evils which undermine our covenantal relationship with God. "women" as represented by the evil women of Revelation: Jezebel who misleads believers into committing sexual immorality (spiritual infidelity) and idolatry, the great prostitute of Babylon. They keep themselves from the world, they follow Christ closely as discipleship requires more than purity but a consistently and pervasively faithful walk, give themselves fully to God, and do not speak lies (or rather untainted by the lies of the world) and God partners with the believer as we walk with the Lamb. These are faithful to God as a response to His empowering and enabling grace.

14:6-7 Continuation of judgment. The function of angels in Revelation is to facilitate God's redemptive program. During this time, the eternal gospel (from the foundation of the earth) will be preached by an angel or angels to the entire world. This gospel is intended for the lost still on earth who worship the beast. The eternal gospel heralds what every creature must acknowledge: the course of human history is undermined by the beast's evil intentions; it is a liberating word, a way of escape for those who feel lost and trapped by the anti-Christian kingdom. The proper response is to fear God and give Him glory, and worship Him only- repentance. Repentance is an eschatological decision simply because it recognizes that eternal life is granted to those who believe, and wrath to those who do not.

14:8 Babylon is mentioned for the first time here, explained more in Ch. 17 and 18. Babylon is the false church, or rather political, commercial and religious system of the world. Echoes Isaiah's oracle of the city's eventual destruction and the discrediting of its false religion (Isa 21:8-10) Announces the end of evil's reign and the renewal of Israel's worship. "made all nations drink"- she is deceptive and coercive, resulting in idolatry for want of material survival.

14:9-11 Third angel marks the end of a series of announcements growing in intensity. First message of divine grace: proclaim the gospel to all; second announces the defeat of evil; third clarifies the harsh message of eternal separation from God for rejecting the gospel. There is no contradiction in God's character in the manner of wrath and grace. "in the presence of the angels and the Lamb": The torment of the people does not give any satisfaction to the angels or the Lamb. It is merely the certainty of God's punishment of evil because of the completion of the Lamb's ministry.

14:12-13 John offers a two-fold commentary on what he has been shown, a new period of intensified suffering: obey God and remain faithful, a call for patient endurance, implies temporary hardship and heartache. Second: faithfulness to Christ involves martyrdom, but the faithful to the end will find rest.

14:14-20 The exalted Christ with a sickle in His hand, a symbol of judgment (end time harvest) Isaiah 63:1-6 Two visions of harvest: a harvest of grain and a harvest of grapes. The harvest of grapes refers to God's harvest of judgment and wrath against those who follow the beast in the final rebellion. The harvest of grain (**Matt 13:24-30, 36-43 read**) "the harvest is the end of the world" may refer to the great end-time harvest of salvation, when the earth is on the threshold of its greatest judgment.

14:19 the great winepress: in Biblical days grapes were put into a large trough and trampled by foot to remove the wine. The treading of grapes was used in the OT as a figure for the execution of divine wrath upon the ungodly. At the return of Christ at the end of the tribulation, all unbelievers will be gathered and judged in the valley of Jehoshaphat (Ps 110:6, Joel 3:2, Matt 25:32) and killed.

14:20 A great slaughter occurs in the last days of the tribulation- the battle of Armageddon (Zech 14:1-4) blood bath a distance of 1600 stadia (furlong, 1/8 mile), a multiple of 4, symbolic of the four corners of the earth, the global scope of God's judgment. A multiple of 40, which symbolizes a traditional period of punishment for the Jews (Num 14:33) a judgment also against the unfaithful of the believing community. "outside the city" alludes to Jerusalem and Christ's death Hebrews 13:12, envisions a theology of the cross by which all is measured.

Chapter 15

15:1 Seven last plagues- contain the final judgments of God upon the earth during the tribulation. They are called the "seven golden vials"

15:2 Standing on a sea of glass "mingled with fire" (persecution) in the throne room of heaven are those who did not abandon their faith in Christ when persecuted, threatened or killed by the antichrist. The Holy Spirit, the holiness and purity the Spirit departs to us standing in God's presence. "The beast" is the supreme example of disordered thinking. He imprisons, tortures, murders Christ followers under the illusion that he is demonstrating his absolute power and ridding himself of his enemies; but in reality he is running a shuttle bus to heaven.

15:3-4 They are given harps, representing worship, by God Himself, and they sing in God's immediate presence "the song of Moses" and the "song of the Lamb", songs of triumph. Two songs of the martyrs: song of Moses- Exodus 15, the song of deliverance from Egypt (the world). Song of the Lamb- these are the first and last songs recorded in Scripture. Both songs of deliverance by Divine Power and by the blood of redemption (Passover, Crucifixion) *there's not one word about the martyrs own achievements or faithfulness.

15:5 John sees the temple in heaven like the OT tabernacle that contained the 10 commandments signifying that the judgments are the result of God's opposition to sin and of human rejection of His law and Word

15:6-7 This will be the last judgments upon a wicked world before the reign of Christ. The fact that no one can enter the temple until the plagues are completed means that no one can intercede to stop the judgment. God has declared the end; His judgment will be complete and without mercy.

15:8 God's final wrath- smoke fills the temple, repentance is no longer possible.

Chapter 16

16:1 The wrath of God- pouring out the seven bowls of the wrath of God now begins, just before Christ's return. A great war against God involving the whole earth will occur towards the end of these judgments. These are more intense and severe than the preceding ones. AN intensification of judgment

16:2 sores- outward pain, but inwardly a symbol of of the inner corruption, pain and ugliness of sin

16:3-4 The sea, rivers and springs become polluted that every living creature dies; symbolically the sea represents the Gentile nations, especially those around the Mediterranean Sea within the old Roman Empire. Rivers and springs symbolically represent pollution of the fountains of wisdom and refreshment in society- leaders of thought, philosophies, politicians, writers, scientists; benders of the minds

16:5-7 Even the altar speaks- God is just and right in His judgments. Those who question the righteousness of God in His judgments do not understand sin's terrible evil or God's intense hatred of it. A holy and just God must of necessity oppose and punish evil. The altar is the place of redemption, substitute sacrifice, shedding of innocent blood that removes the penalty of sin from the guilty

16:8-9 A great heat wave (perhaps solar flares) will spread across the earth and become unbearable that people will blaspheme God (are they aware that this is a judgment from God?). Their hearts will be so hardened that they refuse to repent. Compare with those in heaven, "neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat" 7:16

16:10 the fifth bowl begins to throw the antichrist into confusion. This special judgment focuses on his headquarters and followers- limited to revived Roman Empire. Unexplained darkness- strange, unforeseen, inexplicable, unexplainable; yet utterly terrifying. (3 hours of darkness during the crucifixion). Symbolic-removal of moral light, truth and righteousness, foreshadows “outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth)

16:11 still refuse to repent and to persist in their rebellion

16:12 kings of the east- China, India, Japan other Asian countries, Euphrates river from 9:14 dries, where the 4 angels were released- prelude to ultimate war. In 1991 Gulf War- the Euphrates formed an impassable barrier, bottling up 30 countries. Men in their pride assume they control events, when it is actually they who are controlled by events and by unseen spiritual forces.

16:13-14 three evil spirits in appearance of frogs- proceed out of the mouth of the demonic trinity: dragon, scarlet beast, false prophet. Demonic miracles to deceive, manipulate and maneuver into the final war. Frogs capture prey with their tongues- could refer to counterfeit miracle of the gift of tongues. Miracles prove only one thing- supernatural power; Satan mimics God

16:15 An interlude- 1 Thes 5:1-3 “Behold I come like a thief” HE is coming to strip off the garments of hypocrisy. “keeps his garments” those washed white and pure in His righteousness

16:16 A time of terror and unparalleled destruction. 200 million warriors will gather into Armageddon, north central Palestine, “the mountain of Megiddo”, the center of the battle. The OT prophets prophesied this event (Deut 32:43; Jer 25:31; Joel 3:2, 9-17; Zeph 3:8; Zech 14:2-5) The focal point will be in the land of Israel, but it will involve the whole world

16:17-21 Wrath poured out upon the air, atmosphere- perhaps nuclear radiation? God replies to the poisoning of the atmosphere with a great shaking- the greatest earthquake ever. Topography of Israel will be altered (Zech 14) God will judge Babylon (false church), ice weighing over 100 lbs- outlandish proportions. Forces of nature in complete upheaval (Luke 21:26, Ezek 39) REMINDER- This was written to the 7 churches- represent all churches at all times and all generations. This is a right now word- given to us now to apply today in order to change our lives.

Revelation Outline Part 3

Chapter 17 The Great Harlot

17:1-6 The prostitute, or KJV whore, represents the religious Babylon and encompasses all false religions, including apostate Christianity. In Scripture, prostitution and adultery are used figuratively to denote religious apostasy and unfaithfulness to God (Isaiah 1:21; Jer 3:9; Ezek 16:14-18, 32; James 4:4) and signify a people who profess to serve God while actually worshiping and serving other gods. Images of Rev 2:18-29 Christ's message to Thyatira

17:2 true kinship of the great whore is not with Christ, but with the world. Compromise with political power and toleration of unrighteousness are her trademarks. As a prostitute, the false religion sells her favor to the world at every opportunity. "Earth's inhabitants are made drunk with the wine of her fornication"

17:3 This beast is the world government or political Babylon which supports the religious system.

17:4 the cup full of abominations and filthiness but beautiful on the outside, reveals the spiritual condition of false religion (including apostate Christianity) offering people both God and worldly satisfaction

17:5 Babylon originates from "babel" which signifies unified false religion, sorcery, astrology, and rebellion against God. "Babylonianism" a Babylonian Christianity- a religion that takes extra biblical teachings from pagan sources and brings them together under the guise of "Christianity"

17:6 this false religion is the persecutor of all who are devoted to Christ and the Biblical faith

Ten Clues to the prostitute's identity:

Clue 1: A prostitute, sexual overtones, indicates gross, obvious, physical wrong doing, ultimate in promiscuity, unfaithful behavior, unfaithfulness to God in someone who claims to honor Him

Clue 2: Universal influence "sits on many waters"- universal people, multitudes, nations and languages. People all over the world are influenced by the teaching of this prostitute. She exercises great power over the beast, the political system of the world, "kings of the earth commit adultery"; misleads great populations "inhabitants of the earth intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries"

Clue 3: Seated upon the beast, there's a relationship between the prostitute and the beast; she steers the beast for a short time (v.16-17)

Clue 4: Purple, scarlet, gold and jewels, wealthy and expensively adorned; wears fabric dyed in purple and scarlet, costly clothes; gold, precious stones and pearls- symbols of precious spiritual truths used as an outer garment to make her outwardly attractive

Clue 5: the golden cup- outwardly pleasant and pleasing to the eye; gold- symbol of divine activity, appearance of being a utensil of God's service, yet filled with "abominable things" spiritual adulteries and filthiness

Clue 6: "Mystery, Babylon the Great" inscription of "mystery" something deeper, spiritually identified with Babylon- the practice of spiritual adultery and idolatry

Clue 7: The Mother of Prostitutes; she is not alone in her adulteries, she has spiritual offspring who practice her idolatry and spread her false teachings

Clue 8: Persecutor of Christians, she's a persecutor of true believers in Jesus. She's intoxicated by drinking the blood of the righteous. She cannot tolerate opposition from those who would bear witness against her falsehoods and adulteries

Clue 9: v. 9 Seven heads are seven mountains, use wisdom. City built on seven hills- Rome. The famous seven hills are as follows: Aventine, Caelian, Capitoline, Esquiline, Palatine, Quirinal, Viminal

Clue 10: the great city- v. 18 Rome literally ruled over the kings of the earth

Perhaps the Roman Catholic Church???

17:6 “when I saw her I was greatly astonished” At the time of John’s writing, the church in Rome was the church of the catacombs. It was persecuted and suffering, having no earthly power and no worldly influence. John was shocked to see it would become a great and powerful force (the institution, hierarchy, pope, but not the people)

*Note- the Vatican has vast international influence, the status of a separate, sovereign nation within the city of Rome and its own diplomatic embassies in the capitals of many nations.

17:8 the book of life written from the foundation of the world- not a case for predetermined individual election to salvation or to damnation. It is understood in the Greek text that the book of life existed from the creation of the world, not the names written in it.

The beast is the revived Roman Empire (not a person who died and rose from the dead) Rev 13

17:9 seven hills of Rome

17:10 Seven kings-seven kingdoms or world empires. The five fallen kingdoms are most likely Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Medo-Persia and Greece (Dan 2) The one that is: the Roman Empire, and the one to come- a revived “Roman Empire” like kingdom feet of “iron and clay”- will be worse than anything the world has ever seen

17:11 the antichrist will be the head of the final world empire. He is “of the seven” (meaning like them, in a “Nero-Hitler” way) but he is the eighth. He belongs to the same ungodly system as the seven, yet he is not part of them.

17:12-13 Ten horns=ten kings, ten nations will give political support and influence to the one world ruler and his sociopolitical kingdom

17:14 This kingdom and its ruler are at war with the Lamb and His faithful people, Christ will overthrow the Antichrist and those who align themselves with him.

17:15 “waters” unified, world wide religious-political system

17:16-18 at some point, the prostitute will be hated by the antichrist and his supporters, and they will utterly destroy her. This is God’s judgment against the world’s religious system that rejects His precepts and commandments

Chapter 18 Judgment of the Great Whore, the false church

18:1-3 Babylon the Great portrayed in its commercial and political dimensions-1. She has become demonic, no restraint of evil; 2. commercially and politically she committed adultery, lusting after earthly power and influence; 3. she has lavished her riches upon herself, commercially she sold herself

18:4-5 Like Lot, true saints are called to come out before it is finally destroyed because those among God’s people who remain in the ungodly system will inevitably “partake of her sins”. The call to be separate from the world and false religious institutions has been an essential aspect of salvation throughout redemptive history.

18:6-8 The suffering and misery to fall upon commercial Babylon will be in proportion to the self-glorifying and luxurious lifestyle she lived. The law of reaping and sowing, multiplied; she will be judged for her arrogant, self-indulgent pride. The rich, powerful and unscrupulous enterprisers who piled up wealth for themselves will be stripped of their wealth in one day. A judgment of torture, grief, famine and death

18:9-10 Sudden destruction (Rev 16- great earthquake); kings mourn at her calamity but not really for her, but for their own loss and what this destruction means in their own lives

18:11-13 They mourn because their business has been ruined (Acts 19:24-41, 2 Timothy 4:14 Alexander the coppersmith) False religion has been good for business. “Souls of men”→ Slaves that have given themselves over to the false religion because of mistaken devotion to a false religious system.

18:14-19 more lamenting over their loss; “one hour”- swift and sudden destruction

18:20 “REJOICE” Saints, apostles and prophets. Rejoice over evil destroyed. Whenever religious error opposes the truth, the frontline defenders of the faith are made to suffer for it. God will avenge and

those attacks do not go unpunished. The true children of God will be distressed by the immoral conduct and injustices of evil around them. They will be tormented day after day by the lawless deeds they see and about which they hear.

18:21-24 In her as found the blood of the prophets and the saints. AN angel declares the final fall of political Babylon, the antichrist and the ungodly world system will be totally destroyed (Dan 5)

Chapter 19

19:1-5 After these things- 19 deals with the end of the tribulation and Christ's glorious second coming to earth to destroy the beast, the false prophet and the ungodly, and to reign with His saints "Alleluia" This is the first of four times the word "alleluia" occurs in the NT (all in this passage). Halal, means "praise" and jah, meaning "Yahweh" or "Lord". The people in heaven praise the LORD because God has judged the world and avenged those who suffered at its hand, and because Jesus is returning to earth to reign. This is heaven's "Alleluia Chorus"

Gone is the religious system that introduced lies, error and abominations into the world in the name of Jesus

God will not tolerate "Babylonianism"- using religion and God's name to glorify ourselves using God's truth as a means of enriching ourselves, and mingling error with God's truth

There are trends taking shape all around us that will have their ultimate and cataclysmic effect in the last days.

19:6-8 the woman of virtue- the true Bride of Christ in vivid contrast to the whore (Eph 5:25-27) The Lord claims His bride for Himself. Judgment of believers has taken place, a time of evaluation, degree of rewards (2 Cor 5:10, 1 Cor 3:12-15) self glorification or self gratification v. Jesus glorification and Jesus gratification (motives and purposes of heart)

19:7 The bride has made herself ready- The chronology of Ch. 19 places the bride already in heaven before the coming of Christ to earth. Many interpreters believe this indicates the church has already been caught up to heaven before Christ's coming pictured in v. 11-21. Two reasons are given: 1. the Bride is entirely dressed and ready in heaven for the "marriage of the Lamb"; thus the church must already be raptured and in heaven. 2. The bride who is already in heaven is fully clothed in "the righteousness of saints" (v.8). For the righteous acts of the saints to be complete, they must be in heaven and delivered from impurity

19:9 Anyone who will come is invited to the wedding feast, suitably attired in the righteousness of God (Matthew 22)

19:10 the spirit of prophecy- all prophecy points only to Jesus, His redemptive work and will exalt Him as Lord, bears witness to Jesus

19:11-16 This is the event the faithful of all generations have been waiting for!!

The rider on the white horse- the coming of Christ (Matt 24:30)

1. Faithful and True- He judges and makes war, His judgment and warfare are just. He is not an aggressor but a Holy Avenger

2. An unknown name- "blazing eyes" full of discernment, penetrating knowledge; "many diadems"- full authority, omniscience and omnipotence- vested in a man, a man who manifests the fullness of God

3. The Word of God- sharp and alive (Heb 4:12) Jesus is the Word, piercing and sharp. The blood that now stains His garments is not the blood atonement. It is the blood of God's vengeance. (Is 63:1-4) The Warrior-Messiah (Jude 14-15) armies in heaven- the armies who return with Christ include all the saints who are already in heaven

4. King of kings and Lord of lords- iron scepter, stern and righteous justice, the standard of God's morality and it cannot be bent, diminished or turned aside

19:15 HE is coming back to smite the nations- punish the wicked, destroy the wicked, "winepress" indicates the awfulness of His judgment

“fierceness and wrath of Almighty God”- a stern reminder that God hates sin. The sentimental view that Christ tolerates sin and immorality because of His love finds no place in Christ’s own revelation of Himself in this book.

19:17-18 The last battle: Armageddon (Ez 38, 39; Joel 2; Daniel 11; Isaiah 24) the destruction of God’s enemies. “supper of the great God”-God will provide food for the birds of prey

19:19-21 Fate of the anti-Christian enemies, an unequal contest. “lake of fire” Rev 21 and 22- the second death. God’s Word alone kills His enemies. Just as the universe was created by the Word of God, so His enemies are destroyed by His Word

v.19 to make war- through demonic agents, nations gather together in the vicinity of Armageddon, a world wide war

v. 20 false prophet- John again describes the false prophet by one outstanding characteristic: he deceived many by performing miraculous signs. Satan can only counterfeit the genuine things of God. God will do great and mighty things in the end-time; therefore Satan seeks to counter and deceive by his own counterfeit miracles. We cannot base truth solely upon outward success or miracles (Matt 24:24)

v.21 God destroys the wicked throughout the whole earth. Therefore no unsaved or unrighteous person will enter God’s 1000 year kingdom reign. (2 Thes 2:11-12, 1 Cor 6:9-11; Gal 5:19-21; Matt 25:31-46)

Chapter 20 One Thousand Years of Peace

20:1-3 “pre-mills” premillenniumism v. “a-mills” amillenniumism (non-millenniumism)

pre-mills- a literal 1000 year reign of Christ on the earth, fulfilling OT prophecy

a-mills- non-mills, no 1000 year reign in the future; rather we are in it. The present age church being fulfilled in a metaphorical, symbolic way. The “binding of Satan” (v.2) took place on the cross.

20:2 The binding of Satan- this implies a complete cessation of his influence during this time. After the 1000 years, he will be released for a time in order to deceive those who rebel against God’s rule

1. The binding of Satan comes on the heels of the return of Christianity

2. binding done by an angel into the abyss

3. angel shuts and locks the door- it is sealed

4. the door cannot be opened by anyone, even from the outside

5. “after that”, Satan is released for a short time. “time” is “chronos” from Greek “chronology”- a specific period of time, “1000” years is repeated six times in this chapter

20:4-6 The reign of the saints- three different groups: “thrones”

the first resurrection:

Group 1- Matt 19:28 12 disciples- restored Israel; Rev 2:26-27 “overcomers”, the believers of the church age; 1 Cor 6:2-3 saints

Group 2- tribulation martyrs

Not in the first resurrection:

Group 3- unbelieving dead, do not reign with Christ but will appear before the great white throne judgment

“resurrection”- a dutch word “oopstanding”, a spirit cannot stand, nor can a soul, they are immaterial. Only a body can stand.

“first resurrection”- literal raising of the body 1 Cor 15:20-23

Two resurrections- resurrection of life- only for those in Christ; resurrection of judgment (John 5:25-29)

v4. Reigned with Christ a 1000 years- the miliennium

1. predicted in the OT (Is 9:6; 65:19-25; Dan 7:13-14; Mic 4:1-8; Zech 14:1-9)

2. Satan will be bound

3. Christ’s reign will be shared by the faithful of His churches, possibly by OT saints and tribulation saints

4. the people ruled by Christ will consist of those on earth who were faithful to Christ during the tribulation and who survived until the Lord's coming and those born during the millennium. (14:12; 18:4; Is 65:20-23; Matt 25:1)
5. No unsaved person will enter the kingdom
6. those reigning with Christ stand far above all the nations, they will minister and rule the nations with Jesus (Zeph 3:9-20)
7. there will be peace, safety, prosperity and righteousness throughout the earth (Is 2:2-4; Mic 4:4; Zech 2:5; 9:8-10)
8. Nature will be restored to its original order, perfection and beauty (Ps 96:11-13; 98:7-9; Is 14:7-8; 35:1-2, 6-7; 51:3; 55:12-13; 65:25; Ezek 34:25; Rom 8:18-23)
9. the nations during this reign are obliged to continue in faith in Christ and obedience to His rule. However, some will choose the way of rebellion and disobedience and will be punished
10. At the end of the 1000 years, the kingdom will be handed over by Jesus to the Father (1 Cor 15:24) then will begin the final and everlasting kingdom of God and the Lamb

20:7-10 "After that" Satan's release. Satan is deceived into believing he can still defeat God, and he will be allowed to deceive those who desire to rebel against Christ's rule and will gather a multitude of such rebels "Gog and Magog"- derived from Ezek 38-39, represents the nations of the world and their spirit of rebellion against God and righteousness.

This is the last rebellion against God in history.

Q: why Satan's release?

A: 1000 years of peace and blessing in a world without Satan is designed to demonstrate beyond question that the Bible's diagnosis of the human condition is true: we are a fallen race and every human is born with a sinful, evil nature. (Jer 17:9 the heart is deceitful)

Is 2:4, 65:20-25 there will be sin that needs a judge, even with Satan gone

Death and sin still occur- but righteousness rules, people will still resent Jesus' righteous Lordship (possibly those born during this time?) Satan will hunt these people and rebel, he is eventually thrown into the fire (v.10) and fire from heaven destroys His enemies. Eternity will be spent in Heaven or the Abyss

20:11-15 Judgment

John 5:22 "The Father judges no one, but entrusts all judgment to the Son"

"according to what he has done"- deeds reveal the condition of the heart and true or false belief

v. 14 "lake of fire" is a literal place

tribulation and anguish- Rom 2:9

weeping and gnashing of teeth- Matt 22:13

Everlasting destruction- 2 Thes 1:9

furnace of fire- Matt 13:42, 50

chains of darkness- 2 Peter 2:4

everlasting punishment- Matt 25:46

hell, fire that cannot be quenched- Mark 9:43

lake of fire burning with brimstone- Rev 19:20

the smoke of their torment, they have no rest- Rev 14:11

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God- Heb 10:31

The NT preachers were keenly aware of the fate of those who live according to their sin. It was for this reason they preached in tears (Acts 20:19) and defended God's infallible Word and saving gospel against all distortion and false doctrine

Chapter 21 New heaven and new earth

21:1 The final goal and Biblical expectation of the redeemed are a new, transformed and redeemed world where Christ lives with His people and righteousness dwells in holy perfection. (Ps 102:25-26; Is

65:17; 66:22; 2 Peter 3:13) To erase all traces of sin, there will be a destruction of earth, stars and the galaxies. Heaven and earth will be shaken (Hag 2:6; Heb 12:26-28) and vanish like smoke (Is 51:6) NO more sea (turbulent times, only peace)

21:2-3 new Jerusalem already exists in heaven, it will soon come to earth as the city of God- the Bride makes her entrance, a new city made up of the transformed and redeemed of God- redeemed bodies, real, visible and tangible; but incorruptable and immortal. God will dwell with men. Because it comes down from heaven, the holy city symbolizes a new order of human existence. God's promised salvation will be historical and public rather than spiritual and private.

21:4 NO more tears! The effects of sin, sorrow, pain, unhappiness and death are gone forever.

21:5-6a "It is done" It is finished. Redemption is complete. God's plan is accomplished. His Words are true and faithful, it will happen just as He has said.

21:6a-7 Purpose of a new heaven and new earth- our inheritance and home of the redeemed (1 Peter 1:4) "I will be His God and He will be My Son" Davidic covenant fulfilled in the redeemed. "He that overcomes" God declares who will inherit the blessings of the new heaven and new earth—those who faithfully persevere as Christ's overcomers, overcoming Satan, sin and ungodliness

21:8 God mentions several classes of people whose place will be in everlasting darkness.

Three attitudes:

1. Cowards- the fearful, unwilling and afraid to take up the cross, to confess Christ, unwilling to be unpopular and in the minority
2. Unbelieving- willfully refuse to believe and obey; include former believers who "believed in God" but did not "believe God" unbelief and disobedience go hand-in-hand
3. Vile or abominable- love the stink of their own sin, rejoice in their sins, feed on sinful behavior

From these three attitudes flow evil behavior: murder, sexual immorality, sorcery or witchcraft (rebellion is witchcraft) idolatry, lying or hypocrisy

No one who practices these will be found in the city of God.

21:9-14 Same angel shows John the bride- we are shown a city, but a city with walls and gates cannot be the bride. When Jesus wept over Jerusalem, the city was there, but it was really the people He was really weeping over. Rev 21:2 John uses symbolic language to describe the holy city, whose glory cannot be comprehended by human understanding. Rev 21:27 reveals the city is filled with people whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

The city: literal and symbolic- city portrayed as a cube (1 Kings 6:20) the holy of holies was a cube "high wall" speaks of separation and intimacy, free will to chose Him, we are His prized possessions "gates" entering and leaving the city, 12 gates could represent Israel and the 12 foundations represent the church, emphasizing the continuity between God's people in the OT and the NT

"tribes of Israel" salvation is of the Jews, a reminder that we have access through Israel

"foundations" stability and permanence

Language is inadequate to describe its beauty and truth.

21:15-17 Length- when God measures it's a sign of His ownership, the number "12" often symbolizes government Isaiah 6:9 "the government will be upon His shoulders"; 1500 miles is NY to Denver; a perfect cube same as the Holy of Holies, the place where His presence dwelt in the Tabernacle

21:18-21 Materials- Jewels represent the purified people of God (the 12 stones representing the 12 tribes of Israel on which the high priest wore on his breastplate) Multicolored foundations- 12 apostles, Eph 3:10 "manifold" means "many colored". God's brilliant wisdom manifested through the apostles' 12 gates, each composed of a pearl. "Pearl" beauty born out of pain- a grain of sand in an oyster; the redeemed emerge like a pearl from the pain of Jesus (Matt 13:45-46)

21:22 God's nearness and presence permeate the entire city, not just a temple. There is a temple in heaven and a temple during the millennium, but no temple in the new earth. The LORD is the temple 1 Cor 6:19 Just as our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit

21:23 Light- no impurity, truth, no night- Jesus is the Light

21:24-27 The new Jerusalem has open gates- no enemies, no harm. The new Jerusalem is a city and may be the capital of the new earth?

v.25 no night there- The light of the glory of God Himself will fill the city so there will be neither night or need for the sun. However, John does not say that there is no night or day, a need for the sun on the new earth. Some believe there will be night outside the city.

Chapter 22 Its blessings

22:1-5 Abounding fertility, life on every side, river of life, tree of life- yields life-giving fruit and leaves for health (Ps 46:4; Ez 43:6-7; 47:1-12)

“tree of life” garden of Eden (Gen 2:9)

“River” Holy Spirit

“leaves of the tree” Jesus Himself is the way, the truth and the life

From the holy city flow three ministries of the saints:

1. empowered service- joyfully serve God
2. Intimate fellowship- see Him face to face
3. Enlightened authority- saints reign forever

There is no selfishness in heaven- we shall see Him face to face! This is the ultimate goal of redemptive history: God living among His faithful people on an earth purged from all evil. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God”

22:6-21 Epilogue, bookend

22:6 this vision is trustworthy and true

22:7 the words of this prophecy are to be read, studied and kept

22:8-9 Praise God! God’s plan should always lead us to worship Him and keep His Word

22:10-11 There are two distinct destinies:

1. We are growing closer to God, walking with Him, obeying Him, learning from His Word, fellowshiping with Him since the community of overcomers exists in harmony with the character of a Holy God, OR
2. We are retreating from Him

We are called to examine our lives in the prophecy of this book, because the time is near.

22:12-16 Jesus declares his credentials- Alpha and Omega, First and Last, Beginning and the End, He is God, Creator, Root of Offspring of David

“I am coming soon” time and eternity transcend human understanding

v.15 “who let the dogs out?” Do not give that which is holy to the dogs. This chapter focuses on lying. Those who practice falsehood are mentioned three times: 1. all liars have their place in the lake of fire, 2. those who “make a lie” will not enter God’s eternal city; 3. those who love and practice falsehood will be outside God’s eternal kingdom. Lying is the last sin condemned in the Bible, possibly because it was a lie that brought the fall of the human race. Let this be a solemn word of warning to all those who believe that God tolerates lying and deceit.

22:17-19 “Come!” an invitation inspiring the church to be courageous and faithful through the blessed sacrifice of Christ

v.19 John ends this revelation of Jesus by warning about the terrible possibility of losing one’s share in the tree of life and the holy city. We must not have a careless attitude toward this book (or any other part of God’s holy Scripture). Such an attitude is manifested if we choose to believe only certain parts of God’s revelation and reject other parts as unworthy and untrue. The same warning applies to those who add to the Word their own ideas as if they were a part of God’s revelation itself. As in the beginning of history, failure to take the Word of God with absolute seriousness is a matter of life and death.

22:20-21 “Surely I come quickly” The Bible ends with Jesus’ promise that He is coming soon, to which our proper response should be, “even so, come, Lord Jesus”. This longing is shared by all true

Christians. It's a confession that, until He comes, our redemption remains incomplete, evil and sin are not yet overthrown, and this world is not yet renewed. His return is our unfailing hope and joyful expectation.